

Isle
of
Dogs

Screenplay by Wes Anderson
Story by Wes Anderson, Roman Coppola,
Jason Schwartzman and Kunichi Nomura



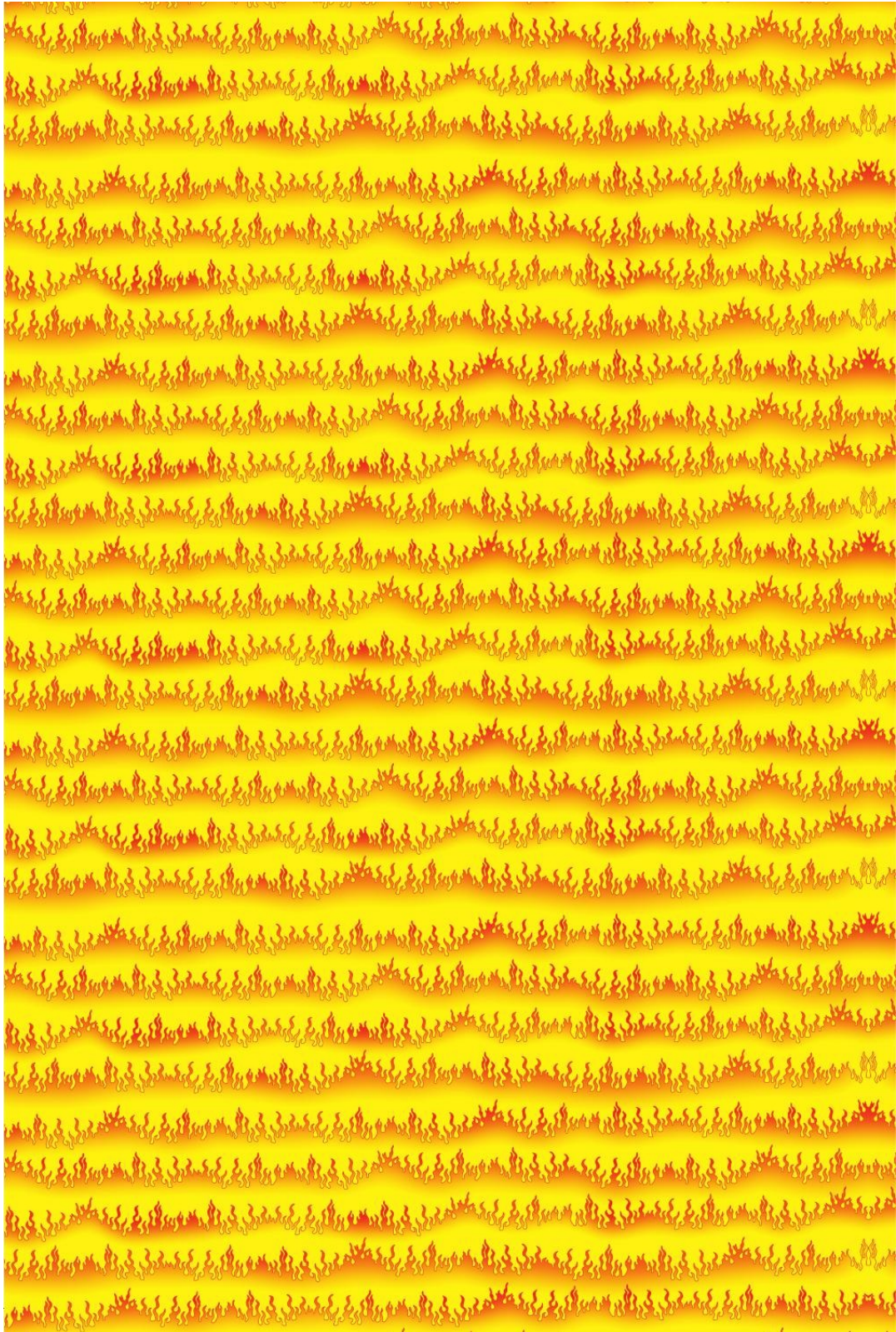


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FABER & FABER

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Introduction

The following took place in London during the post-production of Isle of Dogs. The conversation included Wes Anderson, Jason Schwartzman, Roman Coppola, Kunichi Nomura, and Faber's editor, Walter Donohue

WALTER How do four people write a script?

WES We learned from our colleague Lauren that in his writers' room Kurosawa had one special collaborator named Oguni who was called – what was the name of it?

ROMAN The Command Tower.

WES Kurosawa and his co-writer or team of co-writers worked together to form the initial ideas and scenes of the films – but, as they progressed, they would periodically show them to the Command Tower, Mr Oguni. He would then tell them what was good, what was bad – basically critique their work and steer them back on track when they were off the rails. And that's how they shaped the scripts. It's quite a common thing in Italian cinema as well – writers working in teams. I think more or less all the Fellini movies and the Rossellini and the DeSica and the Pietro Germi: you even see their names on each others' movies. I think maybe even Pasolini worked on *Nights of Cabiria*. Anyway, obviously, it can be a good system! We've worked together on several scripts. Kun, of course, is the only one among us who is actually Japanese. Half the movie is in Japanese, and it's set there, and Kun is the only one who actually knows what anyone is saying. He translated most of it and helped us try to always look to Japan as the inspiration for our little

reality.

WALTER Was it all four of you at the same time or just three of you working up the story?

ROMAN Well, even going way back to our earlier collaborations on *The Darjeeling Limited* and *Moonrise Kingdom*, so much of it seems to start with life stories. We start with memories and people and so on. Things that seem relevant bubble to the top, and you grab on to them. It's never been a one-step-after-the-next format for us.

WES It's more like an ongoing conversation. The conversation, in this case, began on a boat.

WALTER A boat at sea?

WES A boat at sea. We were afforded the opportunity to go on a wonderful ocean liner to show some of our movies and do talks about them, which we all did together.

WALTER Where was this? The Mediterranean?

WES No, it was transatlantic.

KUN I was in New York and you wrote me and said, 'We're taking the *Queen Mary*, want to come?' But I couldn't make it.

WALTER It takes a week, doesn't it?

WES Eight days. So that's where we started, though we had done a bit before.

JASON In a way, it was a metaphor for the creative process: out at sea, no land, will we get there? Who knows.

ROMAN I can remember there were lots of conversations before that, too. I was on the phone with you from Palm Springs, and I remember we were talking about fleas and rats. I was on the phone with you from a balcony in Brooklyn, and we talked about Chief nearly biting off the hand of the child of the family that had adopted him.

WES We wrote that part over the speakerphone.

ROMAN There was also the train ride where we watched the Studio Ghibli animated film, the one with the small princess.

KUN *Arrietty*.

WALTER In French cinema there's a tradition of having two writers on a film. One works out the structure and plot and the other does the dialogues. Do you three divide up the writing like that?

ROMAN No, we talk around it. Maybe, Jason will say something that'll spark off an idea, or a piece of dialogue. Wes is pretty meticulous about taking notes. He writes it all out. And then, sometimes, we'll assume the roles of the characters. We did this a lot on *Darjeeling* because there were three main characters, and three of us.

JASON When we were writing it, I expected to play one character, and I ended up playing another! Often Wes might have a notion or an idea about what the movie is – something very basic, a feeling for what it's about. So our process is to figure this out. That's what is interesting to me: trying to understand what this feeling is about. What he thinks he's looking for.

WALTER Did the project start with dogs? Or Samurai dogs?

WES It started with dogs before it moved to Japan.

ROMAN It was always about dogs who were decrepit and abandoned and wasted.

WES Yes, and a pack of dogs who all saw themselves as the alpha.

ROMAN And there was always a boy.

JASON And a garbage dump. With fleas and rats.

ROMAN The setting was always a blighted, urban, garbage dump. And the dogs sent away from their masters. That was there from the beginning.

WALTER So when did it become Japanese dogs?

WES Kun, when did we first talk about this?

KUN From time to time I suddenly get a very short email from you, and it's the start of something big. When the email is short, I know it's a bad sign. You said you were thinking of an animated movie taking place in Japan, and you needed my help. Just a two-line email. Three years later, it's not over yet.

WES It's not over yet, but it *will end*. One day.

kun You wanted me to help work on the script and the story. Also, someone else was working on the translation, but we knew I had to make it sound like you.

WES Yes, the translations needed to have the voice of the movie.

KUN You have your own voice, so the translating was really hard. Then you asked me to record some of the characters to see what

they sounded like. Kobayashi, the Professor, some of the women.

WES We had characters speaking Japanese, so we needed to start recording voices so we could do the animatics of our storyboard version of the movie. One of the voices Kun did was Mayor Kobayashi, and we ended up keeping Kun's voice, because he has such a low, powerful voice. Nobody sounded as formidable as Kun. Although Kun is much younger than the character.

JASON His voice *records* even lower and more powerful than his normal voice.

KUN I have my own radio show, which I do every week. Wes asked if I could record the voices properly. So when I was recording the show, I asked the technicians if they could stay half an hour more so I could record the characters' voices. They were really curious because I was in the studio alone, yelling, 'Banish all dogs!' And they asked me, 'What's it all about?'

WES And then I asked you to help me direct all these performances!

WALTER Do you remember when you made the decision that it should take place in Japan? What was there in the story that would make it work better if it was located in Japan?

ROMAN Something about the sci-fi genres of Japan. It's funny, when we started it wasn't necessarily a feature film. It was just a story, a part of a bigger piece.

WES Originally, it was a short story that was part of a little collection of movie short stories. But maybe the Japanese setting was more to do with being inspired by Japanese movies – a whole world of cinema that is so interesting and vast and complex. Kurosawa, in particular, is the biggest influence on this movie. It's really as

simple as: we love these movies, and wouldn't it be nice to make our version of being in the Kurosawa world. When you're doing a stop-motion movie, you can say a character should be played by someone like Toshiro Mifune, and you can make your own Toshiro Mifune. More or less.

WALTER Whenever there's a novel or film set in the future, you take something that people are especially used to now and say: what if we no longer have it? Or what if we have something else instead?

WES Well, I guess our film could really be set today. It's not really very far in the future. The futuristic aspect of it is pretty limited. In fact, the original situation we began with was that the story began in the year 2007, except the movie has supposedly been made in 1962. So it was only the future from that perspective.

WALTER Like *Blade Runner* was made in 1982 but set in 2019?

WES More like if the new *Blade Runner* pretended to have been made in 1983. Frankly, it became a bit of a struggle to communicate this idea, pretending to be an old movie set in 2007. I'm confused even trying to explain what we failed to do. Anyway, I guess we thought of the setting as being the Japan of *The Bad Sleep Well* (1961) or *High and Low* (1965). We were trying to make it look like that period of Kurosawa's work. Also, the movie reflects the genre of Japanese disaster movies – the Godzilla world of movies. It has quite a few links to that kind of thing too, which is not exactly science fiction; it's more like disaster fantasy, monster fantasy. *Isle of Dogs* is about a political monster.

WALTER Because it's animation, did a lot of the decisions have to be made early, or was your particular way of working together an ongoing thing all the way through?

WES We had a script. My impression is that sometimes when they do an animated movie they don't exactly start with a script. They just start storyboarding. They have a story, and then go directly to a storyboard. But we had a finished script first, and then we did the storyboard version.

ROMAN But there's another layer to the writing where we may feel the need for another scene or to clarify something. There was a complete script, which you would have for any normal feature, but it shifts and grows and shrinks more this way.

WALTER So when you started storyboarding it, it might suddenly become clear that you needed another scene or a flashback.

WES Right. As you make the movie, you mock up the movie, edit it so you can see how it works. And, in this case – with many of the voices not being actors – with drawings, which is sort of a simulation of the movie, which is sometimes a complicated thing to make, which is why it takes a long time to do. You end up rewriting and revising. You have much more freedom when it's drawn, you can change it readily. There's a lot you have to figure out in advance because it takes a long time to make the puppets, to make their faces, etc. You've got to know some weeks before shooting the scene that this puppet has to be angry, or have a frown, or have a certain gesture, depending on what range of faces you have for that puppet, because some of the puppets have replacement faces. You can't just say, 'I want him to be wide-eyed,' as that face doesn't exist to put on him; it has to be sculpted and painted and prepared. You have to make a mould. Many of the faces are made of resin, they've got to be painted – it's a whole process. And then you look at it, and it might not have turned out very well. In that sense, you have to think in a long-term way, on a different timeline.

WALTER Does that process help shape the dogs' very specific personalities?

WES Actually, it's only the human characters who have the cast-moulded faces. The faces of the dogs: the animators can do what they want with them. They have the equivalent of muscles in their faces. The faces of the humans are cast. It's a different method. They're more like dolls, really. Hundreds of changing doll faces.

WALTER How did you work out which personality each dog had?

WES Basically, you have to dream up a cast of characters. So we started by figuring out where they came from. We knew we wanted a gang, before we knew who they were individually. First of all, we probably had a sense of Chief and Spots. The two brothers.

ROMAN Though we discovered that they were brothers later, along the way.

JASON I recall that Duke's ability to overhear and know about gossip became part of his character.

ROMAN That's because I would say to Jason, 'Did you hear about the guy and what he said about this thing?' and Wes would say, 'What's that? ...'

WALTER It's a good device for revealing information.

JASON Dogs have really good hearing; they're the best animals for eavesdropping.

WALTER When you've got the characters, do you say, 'Well, Bill Murray could play this part'?

WES We didn't really write this one for actors. We just wrote

characters.

ROMAN At one point, we talked about having a cast of all very, very alpha men: Bruce Willis, Sylvester Stallone, Arnold Schwarzenegger. All action stars. But then we decided to go in another direction.

JASON We'd have conversations and one of us would say to the other, 'I thought you were going to say ...' Someone will say something, and then we'll do an inversion because you'll misunderstand or you'll take another train of thought from what has just been said.

WES An idea can sort of come from any direction: 'I thought you were going to say the opposite of what you just said, but this is better!'

ROMAN Jason will sometimes say, 'Here's the worst, corniest Hollywood version ...' and we immediately perk up and say, 'Give it to us,' because it usually means it's a nuts-and-bolts version of what we want to say. We'd say, 'Well, that's a good start. That would actually *work*.'

WALTER Does the fact that there's three of you mean that you don't get deadlocked because if two of you get deadlocked, the third one can unlock it?

WES/ROMAN/JASON Command Tower!

WALTER Given the series of conversations on trains, phones, etc., was there a point where you had to be in one room?

ROMAN The crucial work is almost always the work we do in a room together.

WES As cousins, Roman and Jason have known each other since the occasion of Jason's birth. Roman occasionally prefers to take up a position on the floor, and Jason often seems to find his stocking feet resting on top of Roman like an ottoman. They're very comfortable together in a confined space.

WALTER The fact that all three of you have worked together for so long suggests that you share something which probably couldn't be articulated.

WES We've been trying to articulate it to you for the past hour. So, if we haven't succeeded, then it's probably time for this interview to come to an end.

Principal Cast

CHIEF Bryan Cranston
ATARI Koyu Rankin
MAYOR KOBAYASHI Kunichi Nomura
REX Edward Norton
BOSS Bill Murray
DUKE Jeff Goldblum
KING Bob Balaban
SPOTS Liev Schreiber
TRACY WALKER Greta Gerwig
INTERPRETER NELSON Frances McDormand
MAJOR-DOMO Akira Takayama
PROFESSOR WATANABE Akira Ito
PROFESSOR watanabe Akira Ito
JUPITER F. Murray Abraham
THE NARRATOR Courtney B. Vance
ASSISTANT-SCIENTIST YOKO-ONO Yoko Ono
GONDO Harvey Keitel
SCRAP Fisher Stevens
ORACLE Tilda Swinton
SIMUL-TRANSLATE MACHINE Frank Wood
EDITOR-HIROSHI Nijiro Murakami
HEAD SURGEON Ken Watanabe
AUNTIE Mari Natsuki
NEWS-ANCHOR Yojiro Noda

Principal Crew

Directed by Wes Anderson
Story by Wes Anderson, Roman Coppola, Jason Schwartzman
and Kunichi Nomura
Screenplay by Wes Anderson
Produced by Wes Anderson, Scott Rudin, Steven Rales and
Jeremy Dawson
Lead Animators Kim Keukeleire, Jason Stalman and Antony

Elworthy

Animation Director Mark Waring
Director of Photography Tristan Oliver
Production Designers Adam Stockhausen and Paul Harrod
Supervising Editor Andrew Weisblum
Music Composed by Alexandre Desplat
Head of Puppets Department Andy Gent
Senior Visual Effects Supervisor Tim Ledbury
Animation Supervisor Tobias Fouracre
Animation Producer Simon Quinn
Co-Producer Octavia Peissel
2D Animation and Design by Gwenn Germain
Editors Ralph Foster and Edward Bursch
Taiko Composer/Advisor Kaoru Watanabe
Music Supervisor Randall Poster
US Casting by Douglas Aibel
Executive Producers Christoph Fisser, Henning Molfenter
and Charlie Wuebcken

ISLE OF DOGS

(NOTE: the opening titles of this film play over a shot of three shirtless *taiko* barrel-drummers in a large, black studio pounding a relentless, ferocious beat.)

EXT. ROOFTOP. NIGHT

A densely populated coastal city. In the foreground: the old district of wooden shrines, red-light streets, and jingling bicycles. In the background: the new business-complex of high-rise super-structures, signal-towers, and rapid-transit skyways. A massive, stone edifice topped by a wide hemisphere of glowing, vaulted glass dominates the middle-distance. Our narrator announces ominously:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Japanese archipelago, twenty years in the future.

INT. MUNICIPAL DOME. NIGHT

A crowded hearing-room in the building's central rotunda. Hundreds of spectators murmur in the high galleries which circle the chamber floor. The officers of various legislative committees and members of the press mill about at their desks, whispering and shuffling, anxious. There is a burst of applause as a stout and powerful silver-haired politician in his early sixties ascends to the podium and stands before the assembled audience. He is Mayor Kobayashi.

The mayor puts on his glasses, adjusts a microphone, activates a teleprompter, and begins his speech: a ferocious, furious diatribe. The hushed audience watches and listens.

(NOTE: the humans in this story are, by and large, Japanese citizens, and speak primarily in their native tongue. The dogs bark in English.)

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Canine Saturation has reached epidemic proportions. An outbreak of Snout-Fever rips through the City of Megasaki. Blizzards of infected fleas, worms, ticks, and lice menace the citizenship. Dog-Flu threatens to cross the species threshold and enter the human disease-pool.

Above the mayor's head, a projected montage flickers onto a huge

viewing-screen showing: a propaganda portrait of the mayor; footage of a horde of drooling street-dogs flooding a narrow street; angry dog-patients with blood-shot eyes and runny noses; bugs and parasites crawling on microscope slides; and a subway-car crowded with frightened people wearing surgical-masks, all staring at a lone terrier growling ominously.

(ADDITIONAL NOTE: photographs and still-images in this story are generally presented in the form of traditional, full-color *Nishiki-e* wood-block-prints.)

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In a special midnight-session at the Municipal Dome, Mayor Kobayashi of Uni Prefecture issues emergency orders calling for a hasty quarantine: the expulsion and containment of all species, both stray and domesticated. By official decree, Trash Island becomes an exile colony.

The mayor builds to an impassioned, rabble-rousing crescendo. His hands slice through the air as he bellows with finality (in English):

MAYOR KOBAYASHI

Banish all dogs! Save Megasaki City of Uni Prefecture!

The crowd erupts, cheering and roaring as the mayor unfolds a document at his podium. The projected image of the document appears on the viewing-screen with a heading in bold at the top of the page: The Trash Island Decree. Confetti falls from the rafters. The narrator concludes:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Isle of Dogs.

The mayor pauses gravely. He raises his hand for silence and explains (subtitled in English):

MAYOR KOBAYASHI

Our legal-system provides for Dissenting Opinion.
Science-Party Candidate Professor Watanabe.

As the mayor steps down from the lectern, he crosses paths wordlessly with his younger, taller, skinnier, handsomer colleague. Professor Watanabe wears a short white lab-kimono and dark sunglasses. He withdraws a thin stack of index cards out of his pocket. The room waits, doubtful. He begins calmly with one quiet sentence.

Up above the nosebleed section, a woman in a glass booth with an electronic head-set on her ears translates into a bouquet of microphones labeled with international flags and media-symbols. She speaks with a strong, Midwestern-American accent:

INTERPRETER

It's not fair to the dogs.

The professor furthers his argument in Japanese as the interpreter furthers her translation:

INTERPRETER

The path favored by Mayor Kobayashi is cruel, cold-blooded, and unscientific.

On the screen, commemorative wood-block-prints of: a heroic rescue-dog posing with a child in front of a burning building; a seeing-eye-dog posing with a blind man in a city park; a team of sled-dogs posing in a blizzard; a police-dog posing in uniform with a garland of flowers around him and R.I.P. printed below; a symbolic tsunami crashing over the city.

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

For a thousand years, these resilient animals have loved, served, and protected us. Now, in their time of greatest need, we forsake them? A tidal-wave of Anti-Dog hysteria has crippled our moral judgement.

The frowning audience listens: bitter, old men in business suits; protesters in Anti-Dog head-bands; reporters and photographers, students and teachers, workers and bosses. One solitary figure listens to the professor with interest, hope, and respect: a fourteen-year-old American girl with a wild mass of curly, golden hair and the sole Pro-Dog head-band in evidence. (We will later come to know her as Foreign-exchange-student Tracy Walker.)

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

Give me six months, and I will deliver a serum. I'm this close, dammit. Dog-Flu will be eradicated. Snout-Fever will be defeated. Canine Saturation will be returned to sustainable levels -- and without mass-neutering!

The professor stares at the audience. There is a catch in his voice as he concludes, almost inaudibly. The interpreter pauses, moved. She swallows.

INTERPRETER

Whatever happened -- to man's best friend?

The mayor watches coolly. A woman in her own white lab-kimono wrings her hands as she listens. (She is Professor Watanabe's Assistant-Scientist, Yoko-ono.) The professor tucks his index cards back into his pocket and folds his arms across his chest.

Silence.

The crowd explodes, jeering and chanting. People jump to their feet and shake their fists. Professor Watanabe stands, stoic, as the protesters hurl open trash cans in his direction, littering the stage with filth and debris. Chairs fly. Ballots and propaganda flyers flutter. Yoko-ono rushes to shield the professor from the barrage. The interpreter continues her commentary:

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

No, no, no! The crowd is calling for the immediate ratification and approval of the mayor's proposal.

Mayor Kobayashi gently guides Professor Watanabe and Yoko-ono aside. He signals again for order, but the mob continues its frenzied demonstration. He motions to the wings; and a tall, crooked man with white hair and a ghostly, powdered face emerges from backstage carrying a large plastic dog-cage. He is Major-Domo.

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

As a gesture of public solidarity, Mayor Kobayashi is calling upon his Assistant Hatchet-Man, Major-Domo, to furnish the personal bodyguard-dog of the mayoral-household, Spots Kobayashi, into the possession of the Committee for Canine Desaturation. Spots will be the first dog to be officially deported from the city.

Inside the cage, there is a snowy-white hound, lean and muscled, clean and groomed. He has floppy ears with black spots all over them. There is a secret-service-type earphone in his left ear. (A diode-light on the wire blinks green.) He wears a hand-dyed silk dog-collar with an I.D. tag that reads, simply: Spots.

(Another image appears on the viewing-screen: a publicity wood-block-print of the mayor posing with a Siamese cat in his arms and a small boy in military-school uniform standing beside him.)

Major-Domo ceremoniously places the dog-cage on a decorative display-stand. More cameras flash. Spots smiles and poses

uncertainly behind the wire bars of his cage's plastic door. He looks off, house-right, to a small, thin, silent figure watching from the back-stage shadows. He is barely visible in the darkness, partly hidden behind the open theatre-curtain (and dwarfed by the surrounding adults). His dead arms hang flat at his sides.

With a sudden flourish, the mayor produces a heavy, steel stamp-hammer and decisively thumps the seal of his office onto the document at the podium in red ink -- formally activating the Trash Island Decree.

INT. ELEVATOR. DAY

A high-speed service-elevator filled with barrels, buckets, sacks, and cans of assorted protest-garbage. A janitor stares at the climbing numbers on an electronic gauge. (The dog-cage sits on top of a bin. Spots looks uneasy.)

EXT. ROOFTOP. DAY

A loading platform with a view across the grey city-scape and the rising sun. The janitor pulls-down a steel handle, and a telescoping crank-shaft lifts a rubbish-filled iron trash-tram up into the air. (The dog-cage sticks out over the rim of the cart. Spots looks worried.)

EXT. AERIAL CABLE. DAY

The trash-tram rises-up to a suspended wire and jolts to a stop. A clutch engages, a gear crunches, and the trash-tram launches away sideways along a high cable. (Spots is now a passenger. He looks panic-stricken.)

EXT. MEGASAKI CITY. DAY

An immense metropolis circled by a wide river. Numerous trash-trams whiz along their cables over rooftops and in-between skyscrapers.

GRAPHIC:

A wood-block-print sea-chart of a waterway labeled: Sapporo River. Dotted lines map a course from Megasaki City across to Trash Island.

EXT. TRASH ISLAND. DAY

A vast land-form piled with endless refuse. There are mountains

and valleys of demolished vehicles and pulverized appliances; bridges and towers of obliterated furniture; spill-off rivers, storm-sewer lakes; mounds of noxious, left-over food-stuffs. Barges cruise the shores searching for empty spaces to deposit new waste. Trash-tram cables zoom-across the white waters toward the island from every direction.

CUT TO:

Spots' trash-tram screeching to a stop above the coast of the junk-yard island. A rotary mechanism grinds and groans as the bottom of the cart opens like a set of bomb-bay doors, and a sizeable quantity of rubbish plunges out with an angry whoosh.

CUT TO:

Ground-level. Spots in his battered cage crashes down to the earth and lands with a brutal jolt, more or less upright, as the last of the falling garbage litters around him. The trash-tram above creaks away and moves on.

Spots stands-up awkwardly inside his cage. He winces and cradles his fore-paw gingerly. He looks up, down, side-to-side. (The diode-light on his earphone now blinks red.) He says finally into his earphone-mic:

SPOTS

Master Atari, do you read me?

A filthy, flea-infested, black rat skittles out of the trash heaps and approaches, wary. Spots studies the lock on his cage. A crack of thunder shakes the land-fill and rumbles in the distance. The rat scratches at the freshly fallen debris. Spots waits in silence, overwhelmed and frightened. He shivers. The camera slowly zooms out as a soft rain begins to fall and a mist rolls in. The trapped dog and the skittering rat and the expansive trash landscape all disappear into a thick white cloud that fills the screen entirely.

TITLE:

6 Months Later

The mist clears to reveal the same view, now cluttered with several hundred empty, fallen dog-cages.

INSERT:

A scruffy, black owl with one eye and featherless patches. It

rattles its beak against an icy, metal sign-post. The sign reads:
No Landing. Beware of Dogs.

EXT. SHORE-LINE. DAY

Shredded newspapers quiver in the snowy breeze along the freezing water-front. Flurries twist and somersault among hunks of dirty cardboard, cracked plastic, and crushed metal. The camera dollies inland along a winding junk-path through a frosty architecture of garbage -- liberally dotted with wandering dogs.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Nomadic packs of once-domesticated house-pets, sick and hungry, rove the garbage canyons and filthy ravines, scrounging for scraps.

The camera passes through a dirt-tunnel and emerges to reveal an expansive, horrifically barren valley littered with jagged debris and roaming, scavenging gangs: five tired sheep-dogs; six hungry pit-bulls; seven skittish bird-dogs; eight shivering beagles; two dozen disoriented, staggering little poodles.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

One hundred percent test positive for the Dog-Flu germ. Symptoms: weight-loss, dizziness, narcolepsy, insomnia, and extreme/aggressive behavior. Three-quarters display signs of early-onset Snout-Fever: high temperature, low blood-pressure, acute moodiness, and spasmodic nasal expiration.

A sad, filthy mutt in the foreground looks back into the lens and sneezes.

(NOTE: all the dogs on Trash Island sneeze frequently throughout the story.)

Below an over-turned wheel-barrow, a mother suckles a litter of pups. The runt drinks from a puddle of beige rain-water. A trash-tram approaches over a jagged plateau above the face of a rubbish-cliff and comes to a stop.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

New litters add to the dog-food shortage at an average rate of 3.5 new births per week. The exiled dog-population grows weaker, sadder, angrier.

A large sack of garbage drops slamming onto the ground. It splits slightly, spilling kitchen scraps and smashed-up egg cartons. The

trash-tram rattles away.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Desperate.

Slowly, the pack of sheep-dogs emerges slinking out of the surrounding refuse and creeps-in toward the fresh trash. Their tongues hang out of the sides of their mouths. Suddenly, one of them freezes, sniffs the air, and listens. The sheep-dogs all stop together in their tracks and stare beyond the garbage sack at:

A second group of five big, starving, greasy, dirty mutts spaced-out across the width of the plateau, calmly watching them. This is our Hero Pack. It consists of:

1. A wiry, wire-haired mutt with spiky, mottled coat and the eyes of an Arctic sled-dog. His ribs stick out like a cast-iron radiator. He is Rex.

2. A graceful, red-haired mutt with a sable snout and a handlebar moustache. He is dappled with scabs, scars, scuffs, and scratches. He is King.

3. A stout, liver-spotted mutt with black paws and a tail like a stubbed-out cigar. He wears a soiled, grimy, unraveling, striped, woolen dog-sweater with embroidered baseballs and the word Dragons scrolled across it in cursive. He is Boss.

4. A bohemian mountain-dog. Slender face, sleek ears, and a ballet-dancer's overly nimble gait. He has seven missing teeth and a consumptive dry-cough. He is Duke.

5. A coal-black hound with long legs, black nose, a boxer's jaw, and floppy, black ears with white spots all over them. He has the sturdy frame of a middle-weight, but the starved mass of a long-distance runner. He is Chief.

Rex, King, Boss, and Duke (like nearly all dogs on the island) wear collars with I.D. tags. Chief's neck is bare.

The misty wind whistles.

The Hero Pack approaches, stealthy. The ten dogs face-off in two fierce, opposing semi-circles. They shift on their paws and lower their snouts, glaring and growling. Just as they are about to all pounce en masse onto the garbage sack and explode into an inevitable brawl, Rex pauses and stands up straight.

REX

Wait a second.

The other nine dogs pause, as well. The sheep-dogs eyeball Rex, wary and suspicious.

REX

Before we attack each other and tear ourselves to shreds like a pack of maniacs -- let's just open the sack first and see what's actually in it. It might not even be worth the trouble.

The sheep-dogs debate the question at some length, murmuring with each other, bickering at a whisper. Chief, King, Duke, and Boss look somewhat doubtful, too.

Silence.

The biggest of the sheep-dogs nods to Rex curtly. Rex cautiously approaches the sack and slits it with a careful claw. He opens it like a surgeon. The gathered dogs move closer and study the contents.

INSERT:

A complex mixture of decaying food-items and live vermin which Rex lists rapidly to himself under his breath:

REX

A rancid apple core; two worm-eaten banana peels; a moldy rice cake; a dried-up pickle; a tin of sardine bones; a pile of broken egg-shells; an old, smushed-up, rotten gizzard with maggots all over it --

CHIEF

(interrupting)

OK, it's worth it.

All at once, the dogs attack each other ferociously, howling and yelling, fangs bared, launching into brutal, spectacular, rip-roaring combat. They whirl and spin, snapping and tumbling, tearing at each others' flanks and throats, a cyclone of flying fur and paws and teeth and claws. Finally, Chief plunges his canines deep into the scalp of the biggest sheep-dog, who yelps bloody murder.

The fight stops short.

All the panting sheep-dogs catch their breath. They look battered

and dazed. They turn to the biggest one. His fur is matted with blood. His tail is twisted like a cork-screw. His eyes are bruised, and his paws are purple. He has tears in his eyes. Chief's jaw hardens.

CHIEF

Get out of here, and don't come back.

The biggest sheep-dog turns away, limping and hopping. The others follow. The smallest among them pauses and looks back.

SHEEP-DOG #2

Sheesh, Igor. I think he chewed your ear off.

The biggest sheep-dog sees his ragged, detached ear in the dirt. He is surprised and a little embarrassed. He shrugs, then drifts away with the rest of his company.

Chief flicks away the severed-ear. He and the others look after the sheep-dogs and at each other (significantly the worse for wear) with savage, victorious expressions on their faces. Finally, they begin to pick through the putrid trash, nibbling uncertainly, spitting out seeds and bugs, avoiding the most toxic bits. On-looking dogs watching from nearby nooks and perches return to their business.

(NOTE: every corner of Trash Island now brims and bristles with dogs at all times; digging, scrounging, sleeping; on ridges and in crannies; far-away, close-by. They appear in the background of nearly every shot.)

Rex stops. He takes a step back. He says evenly:

REX

I don't think I can stomach any more of this garbage.

King, Duke, and Boss mumble and mutter simultaneously in agreement. ("Me, neither." "Same here." "It's horrible." Etc.) Rex snuffles. He says, pained:

REX

I used to sleep on a lambs-wool bean-bag next to an electric space-heater. That's my territory. I'm an indoor dog.

KING

I starred in twenty-two consecutive Doggy-Chop commercials. Look at me now. I couldn't land an audition.

BOSS

I was the lead mascot for an undefeated high-school baseball team. I lost all my spirit. I'm depressing.

DUKE

I only ask for what I've always had: a balanced diet, regular grooming, and a general physical once a year.

REX

(quietly)

I think I might give up.

King, Boss, and Duke hesitate. They are not entirely sure how to interpret this last remark.

DUKE

Right now?

REX

Right now. There's no future on Trash Island.

Pause. Duke nods. He says soberly:

DUKE

You heard the rumor, right? About Buster.

Rex, King, and Boss mumble and mutter simultaneously again. ("Maybe not." "Remind us again." "What happened to him?" Etc.) Duke says bluntly:

DUKE

Suicided. Hanged himself by his own leash.

The group falls into a solemn, contemplative silence as they ponder their mortality. Rex says desolately:

REX

I want my master.

Chief snorts. He scoffs. He snorts again, scoffs again, narrows his eyes, and growls:

CHIEF

You make me sick. Excuse me.

Chief turns aside and vomits briefly. He grits his teeth.

CHIEF

I've seen cats with more balls than you dogs. Stop

licking your wounds!

Duke is, in fact, licking a wound on his left flank. He freezes with his tongue out, caught in the act.

CHIEF

You hungry? Kill something and eat it. You sick? Take a long nap. You cold? Dig a hole in the ground, crawl into it, and bury yourself -- but nobody's giving up around here, and don't you forget it, ever.

Chief prowls among the others like a deeply disappointed drill-sergeant. He motions to their I.D. tags, one-by-one.

CHIEF

You're Rex! You're King! You're Duke! You're Boss! I'm Chief. We're a pack of scary, indestructible Alpha Dogs. We just chewed somebody's ear off. You're talking like a bunch of housebroken --

(searching for the *mot juste*)

-- pets.

King, Boss, and Duke (with their tails between their legs, mentally and literally) turn to Rex. Rex stares at Chief.

REX

You don't understand. How could you? You're a --

Rex hesitates. Chief nods, hurt but deeply guarded:

CHIEF

I'm a stray.

Rex sighs. He looks guilty. King, Boss, and Duke start poking awkwardly at the trash again. Something topples down a nearby ridge with a metallic pling-plong-plang.

The five dogs turn sharply and look.

CUT TO:

An almost feline, lank-limbed spaniel. She has a blonde coat with a high sheen. She licks a bit of grit off her fur and twists her body, stretching, then flicks her brown eyes for an instant to the watching dogs.

INSERT:

The female dog's I.D. tag which reads: Nutmeg.

Nutmeg slopes away down the hill, out of sight. All five male dogs stare after her. Chief raises an eyebrow. Rex whistles softly. Duke licks his chops. Boss attempts a glamorous pose. King says, curious:

KING

How's she keep her fur so clean? There's no shampoo on Trash Island.

No one responds to this, ostensibly, rhetorical question. Duke says confidentially:

DUKE

You heard the rumor, right? About her and Felix.

Chief, Rex, King, and Boss mumble and mutter simultaneously again. ("Maybe not." "Who's Felix?" "What happened to him?" Etc.) Duke says bluntly:

DUKE

They mated.

Chief, Rex, King, and Boss are deeply impressed and slightly taken-aback. Chief raises his other eyebrow. Boss says philosophically:

BOSS

All the ones I like: they're never in heat.

Pause. Rex looks up suddenly to the clouds. He says vaguely:

REX

That puddle-jumper's flying crooked.

Chief, King, Boss, and Duke all turn to the sky, as well. A distant engine sputters. King, Duke, and Boss mumble and mutter simultaneously again. ("You're too low." "Throttle-back." "Pull-up." Etc.) Chief cocks his head to one side and says curiously:

CHIEF

He's going to lose a wing.

CUT TO:

A tiny, single-engine, miniature airplane the approximate length of a ten-speed bicycle. (A decal below the nose-cone reads: Self-Kit Junior Turbo-Prop XJ750.) It bounces violently in the turbulent air. A tram-line clips off a wing. The airplane improbably, some might say even miraculously, continues to fly

for another few seconds, jerking and bobbing. Finally, it pitches hard to one side, attempts a desperate recovery climb, then curls over and drops like a cannonball straight down behind a far-away refuse-berm.

The explosion reverberates, and a plume of white smoke billows up into the sky.

REVERSE:

The five dogs watch, impressed. Boss looks to the others and marvels with a wildly dazzled look on his face:

BOSS

Wow.

Chief, Rex, King, Boss, and Duke all scramble away toward the crash-site.

EXT. BEACH. DAY

A clearing along the dreck-ridden shore-line. There is a long, deep rut through layers of garbage which leads to the smoldering airplane. The fuselage is intact, but both wings are missing. Smoke pours from the tail-fin.

The twelve-year-old pilot in an extra-small flight-suit with stainless-steel elevated-sandals staggers from the wreckage, hobbling on the beached-debris. He is Atari. (A patch on his pocket states this explicitly.)

A parachute swirls on its extended lines from Atari's backpack up into the air. A detached section of the plane's broken propeller-clutch sticks out of the side of his helmet into which it appears to have been violently imbedded like a hunk of shrapnel.

Atari limps as he struggles to unhook his chin-strap, then collapses.

TITLE:

Part One:
"The Little Pilot"

The wind whips and whistles the white parachute. The white smoke spirals. The white river laps at the filthy beach.

CUT TO:

The five dogs watching from a nearby trash-ridge.

CHIEF

Small guy. Not much meat on him.

DUKE

Is he dead?

KING

He looks dead.

BOSS

I have a question. Are we eating him, or is this a rescue?

CHIEF

We don't know yet.

REX

(angrily)

Nobody's eating the little pilot. Not even the dead body of him. Dogs don't eat masters.

CHIEF

(harshly)

You're not our leader. We all are. Let's take a vote.

REX

(instantly)

All in favor of not eating the little pilot, say "Aye".

The five dogs vote: four "Ayes" and a simultaneous "Nay". Chief grumbles to himself bitterly. Rex descends down the trash-ridge to the crash-site. The other dogs follow him. They circle Atari's comatose body. King nips at the parachute lines, setting the silk free like a kite. The fabric wisps away up into the sky, strings dangling. Inside his helmet, Atari's eyes are closed.

REX

First-things-first: let's open his helmet so he can breathe some air (if he's alive), then see if we can pull that hunk of broken propeller-clutch out of the side of his head (if it doesn't kill him). Does that sound right?

There is a murmur of approval. Rex peers over Atari's helmet and studies it. He wiggles his fore-claw under a latch. There is a click, and Atari's face-mask jolts open.

Atari's eyes are staring up at Rex's face. Rex looks startled. Atari whacks Rex's nose with his fingers and bolts upright. The five dogs all leap back.

Pause.

Atari launches into a heated explanation in Japanese with the broken propeller-clutch still sticking out of the side of his head. He goes on at some length. He climbs to his feet, unsnaps his breast pocket, and withdraws a little card which he holds up for each dog to see, one-by-one.

INSERT:

A publicity wood-block-print of Spots in his dog-cage.

Atari jabs his finger at the picture and repeats emphatically:

ATARI

Spots-u! Spots-u! Spots-u!

The five dogs study the picture. Rex nods. He says urgently:

REX

We get the idea. You're looking for your lost dog,
Spots.

(to the other dogs)

Anybody know him?

King, Boss, and Duke shrug and shake their heads. They look behind them at various other on-looking-dogs in the background. None of them are familiar with Spots, either. (Chief, standing apart from the rest of the group, makes no comment whatsoever.)

Atari looks frustrated. Suddenly, he grabs the broken propeller-clutch and pulls on it angrily, struggling as the alarmed dogs watch. It jerks out of his head/helmet with a crunch. The five dogs gasp.

Atari keels-over again, out-cold.

INT. ARENA. NIGHT

Two gargantuan *sumo* wrestlers stand hunched, facing-off on a sandy clay platform. Neither moves a muscle. An eye darts. A finger twitches. Knees shudder slightly. A referee in a metallic gold kimono eyeballs the two fighters tensely.

Suddenly, one wrestler lunges for the other's lower-leg and

flips, hurls, kicks, and slaps him out of the ring. The audience roars and cheers. The dominant wrestler immediately turns away, preening, gloating, and throwing salt absently across the floor.

In the audience: Major-Domo squeezes down an aisle, stepping over legs. Mayor Kobayashi is seated in the first row between two bodyguards. Major-Domo whispers something into his ear. The mayor frowns and shouts over the din:

MAYOR KOBAYASHI

Atari-kun?

Major-Domo nods. The mayor curses, then stands up and charges out of the arena with Major-Domo and the bodyguards at his heels.

INT. SOUND-STAGE. NIGHT

On a television monitor, a well-groomed news-anchor behind a desk reads from a teleprompter in Japanese. The usual interpreter translates:

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

In response to questions regarding the purported disappearance of his ward Atari, Mayor Kobayashi offers no comment and urges reporters to respect the privacy of the mayoral-household. Atari, aged twelve, was last seen early yesterday morning rolling a small airplane onto a runway at Megasaki Executive airport.

EXT. HILL-TOP. DAY

A dog-hovel at the top of a high trash-mound. There is an entrance tunnel below a plastic-bag canopy (which rustles in the breeze). Hundreds of other make-shift animal-residences surround the area in rows and tiers. Industrial machines grind and crank in the distance. A tug-boat's air-horn echoes.

TITLE:

24 Hours Later

Atari emerges crawling from the tunnel. He has removed his helmet, but a small section of the broken propeller-clutch remains lodged in the side of his skull. There is a secret-service-type earphone in his left ear. (A diode-light on the wire blinks red.) He gets to his feet and pauses.

Rex, King, Boss, and Duke wait, standing at attention. Chief sits, slouched and surly, beside them. Atari approaches. He pats

Chief on the head. Chief jerks away and issues a sharp warning:

CHIEF

I bite.

Rex, King, Boss, and Duke frown at Chief. Rex says, mortified:

REX

I beg your pardon. Ignore that dog. He's got Snout-Fever.

Rex leads Atari away. King, Boss, and Duke follow soberly -- leaving Chief behind, alone.

(NOTE: Atari walks with a noticeable limp for the entirety of the story.)

EXT. JUNK-YARD. DAY

The four dogs walk with Atari among dozens of scattered, upended dog-cages. On-looking-dogs watch them from a distance. Rex explains as they go:

REX

I never met him, but I asked around. I understand he made a lot of friends. He had a very good-natured temperament, I'm told. Of course, you would know best. It's just a bit further up here on the left. Anyway, as I say, he seems to have been an extremely pleasant animal.

Rex stops at a plastic dog-cage in the exact position where Spots originally fell. There is a dog-skeleton inside. Atari stares down blankly.

INSERT:

A hand-dyed silk dog-collar. Its I.D. tag is caked with mud, but the first three letters remain clear: Spo-.

Atari clenches his fists. Rex says softly:

REX

Unfortunately, nobody could figure out how to open his dog-cage.

King, Boss, and Duke nod sadly.

CLOSE-UP:

Atari's troubled face.

TITLE:

3 Years Earlier

INSERT:

A television screen mounted high on an ice-blue wall below an acoustic-tile ceiling. The news-anchor reports while the interpreter translates:

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

The sole survivor of last week's colossal bullet-train disaster, a young boy named Atari, awoke from a deep-coma early this morning to learn of his parents' tragic deaths --

The reporter continues over a pre-recorded feed of: footage of Mayor Kobayashi smiling broadly as he poses holding-up a wood-block-print yearbook-picture of Atari; footage of the wreckage of a derailed commuter-train; a wood-block-print of Atari's deceased parents at their wedding; footage of a traditional Japanese funeral; a post-card-image of the imposing, Gothic mayoral residence; and Spots' official wood-block-print press-portrait.

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

-- and also the intention of his distant-uncle, Mayor Kobayashi, to personally adopt him as ward to the mayoral-household. Upon his release from Megasaki General, Atari (who suffered the loss of his right kidney and numerous broken bones in the crash) will live in sequestered quarters within the confines of Brick Mansion, where he will be educated in solitude by private tutors. Atari has also been assigned a security-detail for his own protection in the form of a highly-trained bodyguard-dog named Spots Kobayashi.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM. DAY

Atari lies in traction propped-up on an electric bed with both legs elevated by pulleys and harnesses, one broken arm encased in a plaster-cast, and a swirl of bandages wrapped around his head. Spots waits, obedient, on the floor. He looks worried and sad. In a scratchy, sinister voice (in Japanese), Major-Domo explains the details of the current situation to both the boy and the dog. Spots adds gently:

SPOTS

You're my new master. My name is Spots. I'm at your service. I'll be protecting your welfare and safety on an ongoing-basis. In other words: I'm your dog.

Atari hesitates. He extends his good hand, palm down. Spots promptly approaches, licks the back of Atari's hand, and bows, deferential. Atari strokes the top of Spots' head and scratches under his chin. Against their best efforts, they both begin to quietly cry.

Major-Domo watches, mortified. He interrupts with a sudden question in Japanese. Atari and Spots both look at him. They hesitate. Major-Domo explodes (subtitled in English):

MAJOR-DOMO

Security-detail! Bodyguard-dog! Not pet!

Silence. Atari and Spots look at each other again, confused and troubled. They do not know what to do.

A technician enters the room carrying two secret-service-type earphones. He installs one in Atari's ear and one in Spots'. (The diode-light on each wire activates, blinking green.)

Major-Domo instructs Atari briefly. Atari reluctantly puts his finger to his earphone and, looking to Spots, speaks at a low whisper. A few words of distinct Japanese crackle from Spots' earphone. His eyes light-up. He blurts eagerly, moved:

SPOTS

I can hear you, Master Atari-san!

Atari's eyes continue to well-up with tears. His lips quiver as he whispers to his dog; and Spots' body shakes as he listens, nodding and repeating softly:

SPOTS

I can hear you. I can hear you. I can hear you.

CUT TO:

The dog-skeleton.

Atari unzips a pocket and produces a small, orange locker-key labeled: Master Pass-Key. He kneels and pulls a safety-catch before unlocking the bolt and flipping open the door. The living-dogs groan and grimace with frustration. Rex mutters:

REX

You need a key.

Atari wipes away his tears with his sleeve. He turns and walks away. Rex, King, and Duke follow him. They stride past several on-looking-dogs -- including Chief, who, at some point, has seated himself in the path behind them. He does not acknowledge them as they pass.

Boss pokes his nose into the cage. He looks down at the dirty I.D. tag.

INT. LABORATORY. DAY

A hydraulic sliding-door opens, and Professor Watanabe and Yokono enter a bright-white scientific research facility. A junior-scientist gives a progress-report about a research-dog with tubes in its nose, I.V. drips in its legs, pulse-sensors on its paws, and a thermometer in its mouth. The juniorscientist checks the dog's temperature and injects it with a shot of blue serum. He hands Professor Watanabe a computer punch-card.

INSERT:

The punch-card. There is text all over it in Japanese. The one sentence in English is a bold-faced:

Dog-Flu: CURED.

The camera dollies half-way across the laboratory to a second junior-scientist who gives a progress-report about a research-dog with wires attached to its legs, neck, ears, and tail. There is a wooden dowel clenched in its mouth, and an I.V. drip of blue serum in its veins. The junior-scientist pulls a switch, zapping the dog with a high-voltage electro-shock. The dog grits its teeth and convulses. The junior-scientist checks a zig-zagging brain-monitor read-out and makes a careful notation. He hands Professor Watanabe another computer punch-card.

INSERT:

The next punch-card:

Snout-Fever: TREATABLE.

The camera dollies the rest of the way across the laboratory to a third junior-scientist who gives a progress-report about two research-dogs waiting on a platform amidst a profusion of cameras, lasers, microphones, and various data-gathering devices.

The junior-scientist drops a droplet of blue serum onto each dog's tongue. He toggles a lever, and an X-ray screen rises-up from the floor in front of the couple to display the activity of their bones only as they begin to mate. The male dog turns to look uncertainly toward the viewers. The junior-scientist hands Professor Watanabe another computer punch-card.

INSERT:

The final punch-card:

Litter-Reduction: 72%.

The X-ray screen goes blank and slides back down into the floor. The two dogs approach politely. The lead junior-scientist gives them each a treat.

The camera dollies into a small chamber where a fourth junior-scientist fills a rack of precisely-calibrated test-tubes with clear liquid from a beaker. He pipettes a droplet of red into each sample. Professor Watanabe, Yoko-ono, and the four junior-scientists each pick up a test-tube, clink them together, and congratulate each other in Japanese. They drink the contents down in one slug.

MONTAGE:

1. A cut-away view of a hole in the ground three feet deep. The dog-cage with the skeleton inside descends on the end of a dirty rope and comes to rest at the bottom of the pit. Rex, King, Boss, and Duke begin energetically piling dirt and garbage into the open grave as Atari recites a prayer in Japanese. On the top of an adjacent ridge, Chief ignores the funeral-goers as he digs through a trash-pile.

2. The crash-site. Atari whistles a bellicose Japanese folk-tune as he hammers dents out of a detached plane-wing. Rex, King, Boss, and Duke gather assorted bits of wreckage and help clean the cockpit and fuselage. On a nearby rubbish-heap, Chief ignores the repair-workers as he hunts for rats.

3. Atari whistles the folk-tune as he sits with Rex, King, Boss, and Duke in a row at one end of a metal beam like a high-rise construction crew. They eat grimy dinner-scrap out of cans, jars, and paper bags. Alone at the far other end, Chief chews on a broken chicken-bone.

4. Atari continues whistling the folk-tune as he wires a half-

dead car-battery to the electronic core of the plane's instrument panel. All the gauges on the instrument panel suddenly spring to life. Atari yelps with enthusiasm. Rex, King, Duke, and Boss look impressed. Atari immediately begins to tinker with switches and knobs. As he does so: The camera booms down to the underside of the fuselage revealing a small black-box labeled in Japanese and English: Flight-Data/Transponder. A tiny red light on the bottom of it blinks-on and pulses. (Atari and the five dogs are unaware of this occurrence.)

5. A control-tower with views of the river, air-traffic/war-room-type consoles, and an enormous, illuminated, Plexiglas table-map of Trash Island. Large glowing letters across the wall read: Municipal Task Force, Dog-Catchers Division. A blip appears on the map. A technician presses buttons and zooms-in on it. He turns and shouts to his supervisor in Japanese.

EXT. BEACH. DAY

Atari sits inside the little airplane's cock-pit, strapped-in with his helmet on. The propeller is spinning. Dust kicks-up all around. He gives a salute.

Rex, King, Boss, and Duke wait at the water's edge. Rex nods, proud and respectful. Further down the shore, Chief sits, watching.

(Parts of the airplane appear to be held together with rope and twine, while other parts seem to have been replaced with bits of scrap-metal and salvage-plastic. One of the wheels of the landing-gear comes from a wheelbarrow.)

Atari throttles forward. The engine sputters, then roars. The airplane inches along the bumpy shore-line and begins to slowly pick-up speed. Rex frowns. He squints at something attached to Boss' collar.

REX

Where'd you get that?

Boss hesitates. King and Duke stare at Boss' collar: he is wearing two I.D. tags. Boss stammers:

BOSS

What? I always had this. The Dragons gave it to me.

(pause)

I stole it off the dead skeleton.

Rex bolts. Boss looks to King and Duke, confused.

CUT TO:

The make-shift runway as the airplane rattles frantically, speeding over the trash-littered sand. Atari pulls back on the yoke, and the wheels lift-up off the ground. The airplane rises smoothly into the air. Atari adjusts the flaps. He looks sideways.

Rex is running at a desperate sprint just below and alongside the airplane. He shouts wildly, but his voice is drowned-out by the blasting engine. Atari hesitates. Rex screams:

REX

The wrong dog died!

Atari looks perplexed. He makes a snap decision and slams back on the throttle. The airplane drops roughly back down to earth and bounces twice, rocking and twisting. Rex looks terrified. The wheels chop into the sand. Atari steers serpentine among garbage-bags like traffic on a motorway. A hunk of rubble clips off one wing. A chunk of scrap clips off the other wing. Atari hits the brakes, hollering, as the airplane skids, kicking up a shower of dirt, then slams nose-down into the ground.

Atari rockets shattering through the glass cockpit-canopy and lands seated on top of a gravel-pile. He flips-open his face-mask. Rex dashes up to him and says breathlessly:

REX

The wrong dog died.

Boss, King, and Duke arrive at Rex's side. Rex motions to Boss' collar.

INSERT:

The dead skeleton's I.D. tag with the dirt cleaned-off. It now reads, in full: Sport.

Atari stares at the tag. He looks to Rex, electrified. Rex nods.

REX

He's not Spots.

Atari nods and repeats this in Japanese. Chief, some distance away with his back to the others, says darkly:

CHIEF

Who's that?

A single, very large dog in black silhouette sits watching from the top of a rise across the clearing. Its eyes glow like two beady little yellow light-bulbs. Chief sniffs the air and says curiously, puzzled:

CHIEF

I can't smell him.

INT. MAYORAL RESIDENCE. DAY

A dimly lit private bath-house. There is a large landscape-mural on the back wall depicting a pastoral brook with footbridges, cherry trees, a snow-capped mountain in the distance -- and numerous prancing cats all across the landscape. Mayor Kobayashi soaks in a round, wooden tub while Professor Watanabe sits next to him on a cedar bench with Yoko-ono at his side. Major-Domo, in a black kimono, ladles a spoonful of water over a dish of hot rocks on top of a small, glowing furnace. Steam sizzles into the air.

Professor Watanabe is in the middle of an impassioned plea in Japanese. As he describes his methods, solutions, and determinations, he hands the mayor the three punch-cards from the laboratory and summarizes in English:

PROFESSOR WATANABE

Dog-Flu: no more. Snout-Fever: no more. Canine
Saturation-level: sustainable.

A black telephone rings. The mayor holds up his finger for the professor to wait. He picks up the receiver and talks briefly in a brusque whisper. He finishes his conversation and hangs up.

Pause. The mayor examines the punch-cards individually, back and front. He shakes his head and mumbles. He re-examines the punch-cards, mumbling further. Finally, he opens the door of the furnace with a pair of tongs and slips the punch-cards neatly into the fire. They instantly burn to ash and smoke. The mayor shuts the furnace and says, smiling gently, almost laughing (in English):

MAYOR KOBAYASHI

Dogs stay Trash Island.

The mayor turns away and stands up in the tub. (His back is

covered with *yakuza* tattoos.) Major-Domo appears. He snaps open a white towel and holds it out for the mayor, and the mayor steps out of the tub, whisking the towel around himself. Major-Domo follows him briskly out of the room.

The professor and Yoko-ono sit in stunned silence.

EXT. SECOND CRASH-SITE. DAY

Atari, Chief, Rex, King, Boss, and Duke crouch on the ground next to the re-demolished airplane. Whirling winds blast around them. Atari squints and shields his eyes as he looks up to: a rumbling rescue-drone thirty feet above, slowly descending. Steel rotors whir on the top of the machine. Small propellers spin on the bottom of it. Decalced around the base is: Municipal Task Force.

Atari looks left to: a robot-dog (in military mode) twenty feet away positioned calmly on the inland side of the clearing, blocking Atari and the five dogs' path.

Atari looks right to: three men in silver jump-suits and metallic helmets ten feet away on the shore in front of an amphibious, six-wheeled landing-craft. Stencilled across each man's chest is: M.T.F. Dog-Catchers Division. One dog-catcher carries a telescoping dog-net that opens and closes automatically. One carries an electronic billy-club with a cattle-prod zapper on the end. The third holds a silver remote-control.

INSERT:

An electronic-eye mounted on the underside of the rescue-drone. It pans slightly.

A booming voice over a loud-speaker addresses Atari by name and gives urgent instructions in Japanese. Atari glares-up at the hovering vessel. He shakes his fists and unleashes a stream of Japanese profanity. Rex says strategically:

REX

Chief, you fight the robot-dog. King, Duke, Boss? You attack the three dog-catchers. I'll guard the little pilot. On my command. Ready? Sic-'em!

CHIEF

(interrupting)

Wait a second! I'm not going to fight this robot! I'm against the little pilot. I don't even believe in masters.

REX

(fired-up)

You're the best in a scrap. We all know that. You like to fight. Just be a distraction, and we'll do the rest.

DUKE

(reasonably)

Let's take a vote.

REX

(instantly)

All in favor of Chief fighting the robot-dog, say "Aye".

Four "Ayes" and one "Nay". Chief frowns. Atari unzips one of his pockets and produces a bamboo sling-shot. He loads it with a lug-nut.

INSERT:

A monitor-screen at the control-tower. A technician watches an infra-green image of Atari aiming his sling-shot and firing at the lens of the electronic-eye. The screen splinters into minutely-fragmented cracked-glass. The technician chatters rapidly in Japanese with two other technicians watching over his shoulder.

CUT TO:

Atari grinning furiously as he loads-up a second lug-nut and prepares to shoot again -- but, just at that instant:

The rescue-drone peppers Atari and the five dogs with pellets from a small-gauge repeater-gun. The dogs jump and yelp. The first dog-catcher immediately slings his dog-net over Atari's head in one swoop. The dog-net contracts instantly, and jerks Atari into the dog-catcher's grip. Atari fights and yells in a fury. The second dog-catcher zaps-away at the dogs again. The third points his silver remote-control at the robot-dog and presses a button.

A brief, electronic roar blasts across the landscape. (The robot-dog's bark sounds like a cross between an elephant and a 747.) A set of bayonets emerges from under the robot-dog's metallic skin. Its canine-teeth retract and are replaced by even longer, sharper blades. Protective metal fighting-screens close over its glowing eye-balls. It charges in an explosion of spectacular, murderous violence.

Chief looks grievously annoyed. He intercepts the robot-dog, bobbing, weaving, snapping, and biting in angry desperation and terror.

INSERT:

Chief gets his jaws around one of the robot-dog's ears. It pops-off suddenly.

Chief and the robot-dog separate and pause. They both look surprised. The robot-dog sees its ear held gingerly in Chief's teeth. Chief bolts, racing away in a circling retreat around the ongoing dog/dog-catcher fracas with the enraged robot-dog an inch behind him.

The first dog-catcher fights Rex and Atari, scratching and shouting. The second dog-catcher fights Boss, biting and zapping. The third dog-catcher punches more buttons on his silver remote-control as he watches the robot-dog chasing Chief in a frenzy.

From two directions at once: King and Duke launch slamming into the third dog-catcher's body. The remote-control spins out of his hands and skitters away across the filthy ground.

Rex rips into the dog-net with his teeth and unzips it from around Atari's head. Atari wrestles-free and jumps away as Rex seizes the first dog-catcher's ankle.

The robot-dog catches Chief by the tail, pins him to the ground neatly with its paws, roars again, and strikes at Chief's jugular vein -- but, in a flash:

The robot-dog reverse-transforms into a robotic lap-dog and sits-back on its hind-legs.

Chief looks shocked. He spits-out the robot-dog's detached ear. He turns immediately toward the others and sees: Atari hunkered behind a half-buried, side-long refrigerator with the silver remote-control in his hands. He presses a button on it.

The robotic lap-dog rolls over and begs.

Up above: the rescue-drone rotates one way then another, adrift. It bounces slightly off a tram-cable. Sparks shower.

INSERT:

The shattered-screen live-feed as the technician at the control-tower struggles to blindly operate the rescue-drone, typing

commands, spinning knobs, toggling a joy-stick.

CUT TO:

The confused dog-catchers looking from the meandering rescue-drone to the robotic lap-dog and back again as: Chief quickly staggers off in one direction; Rex, King, Duke, and Boss scramble off in another; and Atari dashes away excitedly in a third.

A wire snarls around the rescue-drone's tail-rudder. The rescue-drone pulls and stretches in an attempt to free itself -- then the cable snaps and flies-up into the whirling rotors. The tangled rescue-drone recoils and teeters, struggles and sputters, then inverts and shoots-flat straight down into the ground as the dog-catchers race away in different directions.

There is a thundering impact; then a miniature, but nevertheless impressive, nuclear explosion.

INSERT:

An infra-green, security-camera still-image on the screen of a television set showing: Atari on the beach glaring up at the electronic-eye, teeth gritted in a look of sheer, warlike determination. The five dogs at his side look angry and ferocious. (A caption on the image reads: Rescue-Drone Surveillance-Feed.) A dynamic, local-news wipe brings us to a talk-show set with two swiveling arm-chairs where the news-anchor interviews Mayor Kobayashi in Japanese. The mayor pets a Siamese cat in his lap while he talks. The interpreter translates the mayor's statement:

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

My ward, Atari, has been kidnapped against his will by a pack of disobedient, contagious, infected animals. He will be rescued promptly, returned to safety, and grounded for the duration of his childhood years. His five dog-abductors have been identified through the use of advanced Tooth-and-Tail Recognition Software:

MONTAGE:

An elderly man surrounded by children in a math classroom holds up a wood-block-print of a clean and cheery Rex. A rotund man in a white apron standing in front of a hundred stacked cans labeled Doggy-Chop holds up a wood-block-print of a fresh-scrubbed King. The captain of a high-school baseball team down on one knee alongside his team-mates holds up a wood-block-print of Boss

gripping a baseball in his teeth. A middle-aged matron holds up a wood-block-print of Duke soaking in a bubble-bath. An expressionless dog-catcher holds up Chief's dog-pound wood-block-print mug-shot.

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

They will, of course, be captured and violently destroyed.

The news-anchor looks to the camera. The stage-lights dim for a commercial. Mayor Kobayashi jerks a lavalier off his lapel and strides off the set in the darkness with his cat in his arms.

INSERT:

A battery-powered torch-light hanging from a discarded coat-tree. A small plastic badge reads: Atari K.

INT. DOG-HOVEL. DAY

The interior of the five dogs' cave, a formation of smashed car-parts and crushed kitchen-machines. Under the torch-light's glow, Atari administers first-aid from a flight-kit. Rex's leg has three bandages on it. King's right eye has a gauze patch adhesive-taped over it. Duke wears five bright-blue stitches across his forehead. Atari plucks a last pellet from Boss' right flank with tweezers. Boss mutters:

BOSS

Chief ought to get a check-up, too. He looks worse than anybody.

Chief has a split lip, a bloody nose, and one eye nearly swollen-shut. He stands alone just outside the pooled light. Atari stands up and begins a speech (in Japanese). He goes on at some length. He points his finger into the air and shakes his fists. Duke says, aside:

DUKE

I wish somebody spoke his language.

Atari scrunches up his face in pain and rage. He shouts (subtitled in English):

ATARI

Starting right now. From this second: you are all my dogs!

(thundering in semi-English:)

Sit-o!

KING
(briskly)

Well, I understood that. Sit down.

Rex, King, Duke, and Boss all sit down at once. Atari's face fills with strange emotion and power. He hollers a defiant oath in Japanese. He frowns. He repeats:

ATARI

Sit-o.

Rex hesitates. He turns and sees: Chief has remained on his feet, obstinate. Rex hollers:

REX

Chief! Sit!

CHIEF
(simply)

I don't sit.

Rex seethes. He growls, furious:

REX

You're disobedient!

Pause. Chief curls away and disappears through a drain-pipe. Atari looks hurt. He scratches his head. He flicks a switch on a transistor-radio. A martial-version of the folk-tune with drums and chants echoes from a tinny little speaker. He stands akimbo and stares into space. The remaining dogs look intrigued but uneasy.

CUT TO:

Another rescue-drone gliding through the air with its helicopter-spotlight searching and scanning across the landscape. It pivots left and right before it continues away into the background. Two more rescue-drones criss-cross in the middle-distance. The camera booms down to reveal the dog-hovel's entrance tunnel. Chief's head pokes out.

EXT. JUNK-YARD. NIGHT

Black rats crawl and screech in the rubble around the base of a waste-water tank. A leaky water-spout drips into a tin garden-pail. Chief approaches. He sits back on his hind legs and watches the droplets plip-plop, one-by-one. A cricket chirps. Waves roll. Chief laps-up a sip from the bucket. A smoky, alto-voice says

from above:

NUTMEG

I wouldn't drink that, if I were you.

Chief jumps and looks up to the top of the water tank where Nutmeg (the long-limbed spaniel with the shampooed coat) stares down at him from behind her silky ears. She lies on her stomach with her front paws hanging draped over the edge of the tank.

NUTMEG

It's full of toxic chemicals.

CHIEF

(with his mouth full of water)

How do you know?

NUTMEG

Because my sister-in-law drank it, and her tongue turned black.

CHIEF

Oh.

Chief spits out the water. Pause. He blurts:

CHIEF

You're Felix's mate.

NUTMEG

(taken aback)

I beg your pardon?

CHIEF

(back-peddling)

I mean, I think you mated with Felix, if I heard it right.

NUTMEG

(deeply insulted)

That's none of your business.

CHIEF

No, I don't suggest whether it actually happened or not. I'm just saying I recognize you from when I heard that rumor.

NUTMEG

(with finality)

I think I'm going to say good-night.

CHIEF

(desperate)

Wait. Start over. Who cares about Felix? I'm Chief.

(quietly)

That's my name.

NUTMEG

(evenly)

I see.

CHIEF

(clearing his throat)

I'm introducing myself. Who are you?

NUTMEG

I thought you knew all about me.

CHIEF

I don't know anything. I should've kept my mouth shut. It's all hearsay. Anyway, you're Nutmeg.

NUTMEG

So you do know me, after all.

CHIEF

After all? Yes.

Pause. Chief lowers his voice, provocative:

CHIEF

You a show-dog, Nutmeg?

Nutmeg bristles. She says coolly, defensive:

NUTMEG

I was bred as a show-dog. I was groomed for that purpose. It wasn't my choice, and I don't consider it my identity. Anyway, look around. What difference does it make now?

CHIEF

So that's a yes.

NUTMEG

So that's a: yes, I used to be.

CHIEF

(suddenly)

May I join you?

Without waiting for an answer, Chief disappears behind the water tank, clanks up what sounds to be a metallic spiral-staircase, and presents himself directly in front of Nutmeg. Only now does she see his injuries. She gasps slightly:

NUTMEG

You've been attacked.

CHIEF

(shrugs)

What else is new? You should see the other dog. Actually, I think he's made of stainless-steel. I couldn't get my teeth into him.

NUTMEG

(pause)

Who is the little pilot? What'd he do? Why are they after him?

CHIEF

Nobody knows.

Chief and Nutmeg look out at the city, across the river. The distant rescue-drones cruise and circle. Nutmeg asks softly:

NUTMEG

You're a stray, aren't you?

CHIEF

I'm a stray, sure --

(with *savoir-faire*)

-- but aren't we all? In the last analysis, I mean.

Pause. Nutmeg licks a speck of dirt off her paw. She sits up tall, especially poised.

CHIEF

Were you trained? For competition.

NUTMEG

(shrugs)

I was a show-dog.

CHIEF

(seen-it-all)

You know a few tricks, then.

NUTMEG

A few.

CHIEF
(suddenly eager)

Can I see one?

NUTMEG
(gently)

Maybe if I get to know you better.

CHIEF
(pause)

Fair enough.

NUTMEG

It's not true, by the way. About me and Felix. For the record.

(pause)

I wouldn't bring puppies into this world.

Chief nods. He says carefully:

CHIEF

I don't believe in masters. I never did. It's against my principles -- but this is no place for a dog like you. You belong somewhere. You've got papers.

NUTMEG
(playful)

I'm full-grown, sweetheart. You don't have to worry about me.

(pause)

Good-night.

Nutmeg trots across the top of the water tank to the staircase. Chief hesitates. He stutters slightly:

CHIEF

I hope I'll see you again.

Nutmeg waits a beat. She turns around and stares at Chief. She says finally:

NUTMEG

Here's one.

CHIEF
(pause)

One what?

Nutmeg springs up onto a single hind-leg, spins a rapid rotation, then raises a front-paw into the air and stares up at it.

NUTMEG

I'm supposed to be spinning a nine-pound bowling-ball over my head at this point, but you just have to imagine that part.

CHIEF

(instantly)

I can picture it.

Nutmeg ends the trick. She asks softly, just-curious:

NUTMEG

Will you help him? The little pilot.

CHIEF

(long pause)

Why should I?

NUTMEG

(surprised at the question)

Because he's a twelve-year-old boy. Dogs love those.

Nutmeg pads away down the steps. Chief sits alone, silent.

CUT TO:

Atari curled-up under a tarp. The music has stopped. Rex, King, Duke, and Boss sit huddled on the floor nearby. They confer in hushed voices:

KING

Spots, whoever he is, might be alive, and he might be dead, but one thing's for sure: he's nowhere around here. He's not in the dog-community.

DUKE

There's probably another five hundred Japanese-hectares of unmapped wasteland on Trash Island (at least). Where do we start?

BOSS

Also, the mental-health question: maybe it's because of that propeller-clutch stuck in the side of his head (I can't say, I'm not a doctor), but I think the little

pilot's got a screw loose.

REX

Those are the cons.

DUKE

(interrupting)

You heard the rumor, right? About the little pilot.

Rex, King, and Boss mumble and mutter simultaneously again. ("What rumor?" "Remind us again." "I never heard it." Etc.) Duke says, mysterious:

DUKE

Kobayashi's his distant uncle. He's the mayor's ward.

Rex, King, and Boss look surprised and slightly perplexed. Rex resumes his speech:

REX

Be that as it may, let's look at the pros. That boy flew here, all alone, and crash-landed onto this island for one reason and one reason only: to find his dog. To the best of my knowledge, no other master, not one single human master, has made any effort to do that. They've forgotten all about us.

King, Duke, and Boss nod, thoughtful, taking the point. Rex says soberly:

REX

I propose we start tomorrow at first-light. We'll cross the Middle Fingers. We'll find the Tug-boat on the Dune. We'll go see Jupiter and Oracle. They'll know what to do. Let's take a vote. All in favor say "Aye".

They vote: four "Ayes" -- and an unexpected, off-screen "Nay". Rex frowns.

REX

Who's the nay-sayer?

Three "hims", one "me". They all stare at: Chief, who has quietly joined them just outside their circle. He says soberly:

CHIEF

That kid's going to get us all put to sleep. Euthanized.

Chief approaches. He lowers himself to the ground and says with dead-certainty:

CHIEF

We won't find the dog, but we'll die trying.

Rex nods. He shrugs and says quietly:

REX

Not a bad way to go. You're out-voted, anyway.

EXT. TRADITIONAL INN. DAY

An ancient, wooden building on stilts over a winding brook. Two bodyguards with sub-machine-guns flank the entrance. The news-anchor, standing in a Zen garden in front of the structure, speaks into the camera while the interpreter translates:

INTERPRETER

Science-Party Candidate Professor Watanabe has been placed under house-arrest today at Toho Mountain *Ryokan* after offering sharp criticism last night of the Kobayashi Administration's Canine Saturation-crisis policy:

INSERT:

A portable television set with a plastic label which reads: A.V. Dept. On-screen: Professor Watanabe rants in a furious rage to an off-camera interviewer. Yoko-ono waits, uneasy, in the background. The interpreter delivers a somewhat softened version of the professor's comments:

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

Respectfully, I submit that the dog-banishment program known as the Trash Island Decree serves neither the public welfare nor the civic good. My simple message to Mayor Kobayashi: terminate your unjust policy.

Without explanation: Professor Watanabe reaches into his breast-pocket, takes out a serum-vial of the blue liquid, and shows it to the camera. He looks exhausted, on the verge of tears.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL. DAY

A classroom over-looking an elevated motorway. A bold-faced banner above the chalkboard reads in English: Megasaki Senior High Daily-Manifesto. A fifteen-year-old student dressed in black, military-style school-uniform with a Mao-jacket powers-off

the television set with a crackle. He is Editor-Hiroshi.

As he paces, Editor-Hiroshi talks rapidly, out-loud but half to himself. Nine other students in the same black uniforms seated in a sprawled jumble (they comprise the Daily-Manifesto staff) join in jabbering in a general cacophony. One wears a black beret; another has on beatnik-style sunglasses; several wear Pro-Dog head-bands. Suddenly, Editor-Hiroshi stops short and shouts for silence. He points.

CUT TO:

A slender white hand raised-up into the air in the back row behind the rest of the Daily-Manifesto staff. Everyone turns around in their school-chairs and looks, revealing: Tracy Walker (the golden-haired girl from the Municipal Dome audience). She is dressed in the female version of the black school-uniform, which roughly resembles a sailor's costume. Editor-Hiroshi gives her the floor.

EDITOR-HIROSHI

Foreign-exchange-student Walker.

Tracy stands up. She speaks politely but assertively. (This conversation is conducted in English.)

TRACY

Thank you, Editor-Hiroshi. You all know me. I speak my mind, and sometimes that ruffles some feathers. Please, forgive my bluntness. Mayor Kobayashi is a crook, and I hate him. Right now, he faces a divided congress during a hotly-contested re-election year. Dogs are dying on a miserable island. Gullible masters have been brainwashed. The Science-Party Candidate is being held against his will with no recourse to legal counsel. Somebody's up to something.

A wave of murmuring ripples through the Daily-Manifesto staff. Editor-Hiroshi asks Tracy, intrigued:

EDITOR-HIROSHI

You have a conspiracy theory?

Long pause. Tracy concedes:

TRACY

I have a hunch.

Another wave of murmuring. Editor-Hiroshi says brusquely,

dismissive:

EDITOR-HIROSHI

I don't print hunch.

Editor-Hiroshi turns away and begins to write in Japanese on the chalkboard. An eraser slaps into the back of his head with a puff of chalk. He spins around. Tracy, now on her feet, brandishes a second eraser. She says with dark drama:

TRACY

I'll spell it out. I believe Municipal Dome propaganda has deliberately stoked irrational, Anti-Dog fear and suppressed a medically proven Dog-Flu treatment in order to promote a secret campaign to turn the country against its innocent house-pets. There. I said it.

The room erupts with a chattering range of reactions: surprise, disbelief, vindication, alarm, and amusement. Editor-Hiroshi silences the room again and says to Tracy:

EDITOR-HIROSHI

Can you prove it?

Tracy takes a deep breath. She says earnestly:

TRACY

I don't know. To tell you the truth: I don't know.

The Daily-Manifesto staff mulls this over. Editor-Hiroshi says finally:

EDITOR-HIROSHI

You got forty-eight hour.

INT. MAYORAL RESIDENCE. NIGHT

A boardroom with a long, black-lacquered conference-table and a landscape-mural on the wall depicting a snowy garden outside a *Shinto* temple. Mayor Kobayashi, at the head of the table with his Siamese cat in his lap, addresses (in Japanese) a seated group. A middle-aged, balding stenographer taps away throughout the meeting. There is a small device labeled Simul-Translate attached to the stenotype machine. Its slightly metallic voice renders the mayor's comments into English:

SIMUL-TRANSLATE (V.O.)

As you know, we all hate dogs.

The camera pans from the mayor to a reedy, bespectacled-executive in a three-piece suit. A short-haired white cat with a ring around its eye sits in his lap.

SIMUL-TRANSLATE (V.O.)

Chairman Fujimoto-san, President of Kobayashi Pharmaceutical. You secretly introduced mega-quantities of infected fleas and contagious tick-larvae into a metropolitan city center, creating an unprecedented animal-disease outbreak. Thank you.

The group applauds politely as the camera pans from the bespectacled-executive to a high-ranking, square-jawed military-officer in uniform with medals and decorations displayed across his breast-pocket. A spotted yellow tom-cat sits in his lap.

SIMUL-TRANSLATE (V.O.)

General Yamatachi-san, Commander of the Kobayashi Municipal Task Force. You oversaw the deportation of over 750,000 caged-animals to a nearly uninhabitable, off-shore refuse-center. Good work.

The group applauds politely as the camera pans from the military-officer to a technology-tycooness with a shellacked-bouffant hair-do and a boldly patterned kimono with a fur collar. A fluffy orange tabby sits in her lap.

SIMUL-TRANSLATE (V.O.)

Supervisor Kitano-san, Director of Kobayashi Robotics. You developed the most promising artificial life-form in the history of corporate-technology -- and a powerful new weapon, to boot. Well done.

The group applauds politely as the camera pans from the technology-tycooness to a *yakuza*-gangster in a Nehru-jacket featuring a diamond-stud just below the neck. A white-eyed black cat sits in his lap.

SIMUL-TRANSLATE (V.O.)

Yakuza Nakamura-san, Head of the Clenched-Fist Gang. You eliminated all Pro-Dog opposition through the use of bribery, extortion, intimidation, and violent force. My compliments.

The group applauds politely as the camera pans from the *yakuza*-gangster back to the mayor.

SIMUL-TRANSLATE (V.O.)

Brains have been washed. Wheels have been greased. Fear has been mongered. Now we prepare for the final stage of our conspiracy-theory: the permanent end to the Canine Saturation-crisis.

CUT TO:

A sign being hoisted above the entrance to a construction-site. Bold, metallic letters in Japanese and English read: Trash Island Temporary Dog-Camp #1. Two bull-dozers shove rubbish back-and-forth along the edges of a freshly cleared plot. Rows of chain-link fencing divide and segment the compound into numerous paddocks and corrals. Plastic refugee-dog holding-pens have been installed in long rows and columns stacked three-high. A metal control-shed has been erected near the entrance. Dog-catcher construction-crews drill, saw, and hammer.

Nearby, a broad-shouldered commanding dog-catcher (wearing a cap rather than the helmet worn by the others) responds to questions from a TV news-reporter while the interpreter translates:

INTERPRETER

We believe we've recovered a viable DNA sample from this article of damaged aviation equipment. We're going to check it right now if you care to observe.

The commander holds-up a ziploc bag labeled: Clue-Pouch. He unzip-locs it and withdraws Atari's broken propeller-clutch, then kneels down in front of one of the robot-dogs and holds-up the propeller-clutch to its nose. A pair of small ducts on the robot-dog's snout slide-open. It electronically inhales. A little speaker emits a low-pitched ding. A tiny screen on the robot-dog's throat lights-up.

INSERT:

The screen. It flickers rapidly, shuffling like a slot-machine -- then freezes, showing: the infra-green Atari/sling-shot image.

The robot-dog turns away, searching the ground to pick-up the scent, as the other four robot-dogs wait in line to sniff the broken propeller-clutch.

The camera dollies to Atari's destroyed fuselage. A very young rookie dog-catcher (tall, exceedingly skinny, thin-necked, wearing round spectacles inside his helmet) twists and tugs at something in the wreckage. He pulls out: the Flight-Data/Transponder black-box. He stares at the device. He looks

around, furtive, then tucks it secretly inside his jump-suit.

INSERT:

The publicity wood-block-print of Spots in his dog-cage held in Atari's hand as his feet march along a sandy shore.

TITLE:

Part Two:
"The Search for Spots"

GRAPHIC:

A wood-block-print map of Trash Island. It identifies the three major sections of the land-mass from south to north: The Metropolitan Dumping-Grounds, The Middle Fingers, and The Far-away Cuticles. A dotted line charts the travelers' course from farthest south up to their current location in the middle of The Middle Fingers.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Middle Fingers of Trash Island wind and weave up-river, interstitched by zig-zagging pipe-lines and rusty viaducts.

MONTAGE:

Chief, Rex, King, Duke, and Boss follow Atari single-file down a high-rail track alongside mounds of black ore and piles of white gravel. They march up a skinny path through a canyon between rows of hulking, steel tower-silos. They circle around the rim of an exploded crater above the wreckage of a vast foundry dusted in ash.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The ruins of a failed utility-complex washed-out by tsunami. The rubble of an abandoned power-plant demolished by earthquake. The remains of a deserted industrial-estate destroyed by volcanic blast.

EXT. ACCESS-ROAD. DAY

A straight and narrow tarmac runs along the edge of a weedy, overgrown golf-course on a sand-bar between the river and the bay. The black asphalt is cracked and fissured.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Old Trash Island Athletic Club, member-less and long-forgotten.

Atari walks with extreme purpose, whistling the folk-tune. The five dogs trail a few meters behind him. King asks a general question:

KING

What's your favorite food?

REX

A double-portion of Doggy-Chop from the can mixed into a bowl of broken Puppy-Snaps with a vitamin crushed-up into it.

BOSS

King's the spokes-dog for that. He's the Doggy-Chop dog.

KING

Used to be.

DUKE

Was that your daily meal?

REX

Not always. My master was a school-teacher. We weren't rich. You?

KING

A center-cut Kobe rib-eye, seared, on the bone, with salt and pepper.

REX

Wow.

KING

It was my birthday supper. Every year.

BOSS

Mine's hot-sausage, yakitori-style. The snack vendor always saved me one on game-days.

KING

Duke?

DUKE

Green-tea ice cream. My master had a sweet-tooth. I probably inherited it from her.

(by-the-way:)

You heard the rumor, right? About Doggy-Chop.

Rex, King, and Boss mumble and mutter simultaneously again. ("Not really." "I don't think so." "What's the rumor?" Etc.) Duke says with an air of the inevitable:

DUKE

They folded.

This news hits King the hardest. He whimpers.

REX

How about you, Chief? What's your favorite food?

Chief, as usual, brings up the rear. He says vaguely:

CHIEF

Me? I don't care. Garbage, trash, scraps of rubbish. I'm used to left-overs.

The other four dogs nod and murmur, thoughtful, sympathetic. A

beat.

CHIEF

Of course, I wasn't always a stray.

Rex does a double-take. He hesitates.

REX

What'd you say?

CHIEF

I say, of course, I wasn't always --

The five dogs interrupt simultaneously, intrigued. ("Since when?" "What do you mean?" "You had a master?" Etc.) Atari sits on a concrete stump and massages a stitch out of his foot. (He wears socks with a separation for the big toe.) Boss flops down onto the asphalt. Rex stretches and cracks his neck. Duke leans-back with his legs crossed. They all stare at Chief, anticipating.

Chief begins, reluctantly, at the beginning:

CHIEF

I've been hunted by dog-catchers all my life. I'm not easy to trap. I've only got three captures on my record (where I actually got sent to the pound, I mean), and the first two times, I escaped within twenty-four hours --

(gravely)

-- but the third time, I got adopted before I could finish digging the break-out-tunnel. It was a big family. Five kids. Two other dogs, already. They stuck me in the back of a station-wagon and drove me out to the middle of the sticks. Grass, trees, a swimming pool. Cartoons on T.V. Anyway, one morning a week later, the youngest boy, his name was Toshiro, woke me up at six-fifteen, bright-eyed, wide-awake --

(quietly)

-- and tried to pet me. He didn't mean anything by it. He was just being friendly.

(pause)

Apparently, I bit him so hard I nearly chewed his hand off. Blood all over the kitchen floor. They rushed him to the emergency room, and I got padlocked out in the tool-shed with the lights out. It gave me some time to think.

(pained)

What happened? Why'd I do that? To this day, I have no

idea. I guess he scared me.

(simply)

I bite. That night, an old woman (she must've been the grandmother) brought me out a bowl of home-made *hibachi*-chili. I like to think she cooked it for me, personally -- but who knows? Maybe it was just more left-overs. (You've got a tick.)

Chief plucks a blood-sucking parasite off Rex's skin with his front teeth and spits it into a rusty peanut-can with a patink like a spittoon. The other dogs listen solemnly as Chief concludes:

CHIEF

Anyway, that's my favorite food I ever ate. The old woman made a great bowl of chili.

REX

(pause)

What happened after that?

CHIEF

(shrugs)

I dug my way out by morning, jumped on the back of a dump-truck, and hitched back into Megasaki. I was always a street-dog, let's face it.

A branch snaps in the nearby, over-grown putting-green. (A plastic flag on a pole reads: 7th Hole.) The five dogs turn sharply. Atari is several paces ahead with his back to them -- aiming his sling-shot at an unseen target. He says something in Japanese. Chief nods and grunts. He says, ominous:

CHIEF

Somebody's stalking us.

The tops of the tall grasses shiver: a little winding movement which starts and stops, moving slowly in their direction. They all wait, anxious, as: an enormous, grizzled, ancient, three-legged St. Bernard with a glass eye and the bearing of a Roman senator floats crookedly into view. He is Jupiter. A small, smug she-pug appears beside him. (Her I.D. tag reads: Oracle.) Jupiter's vocal cords have been brined, smoked, cured, charred, and tuned-down half an octave. He asks:

JUPITER

Who's the little pilot?

INT. SOUND-STAGE. NIGHT

The news-anchor reports from his desk, once again. (The interpreter in her booth is joined this time by an eight-year-old boy with freckles.)

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

Foreign-exchange-student Tracy Walker of the Megasaki Senior High Daily-Manifesto has obtained an illicit bootleg-copy of Atari Kobayashi's official black-box distress-signal recording:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL. DAY

A small assembly in a compact, inner-city, cement recesscourt. The Daily-Manifesto staff (including Editor-Hiroshi) all wear T-shirts silk-screened with the infra-green Atari drone image and carry picket-signs wood-block-printed with pictures of each of their dogs and its bold-faced name: Daisy, Bingo, Scrappy, Dixie, Smoky, Hugs, Roscoe, Atom, Bandit, and Zap. Tracy at the front of the group addresses the camera in English:

TRACY

We call upon dog-lovers everywhere to harken to this transmission:

Editor-Hiroshi presses play on a hand-held memo-recorder. Atari's voice cuts through the static and the noise of his stuttering engine.

JUVENILE INTERPRETER (V.O.)

May-day! May-day! Unscheduled Junior Turbo-Prop in severe distress over Sapporo River. Engine-failure, and --

(a loud crunch)

-- detachment of left wing.

MONTAGE:

Young viewers across the city of Megasaki listen to Atari: five brothers in their family den; five sisters in their family kitchen; ten boys and girls in their school library; a gang of teenagers at a neon-lit noodle-shop. (Each group is shot from behind the television-viewers' backs, with the same grainy infra-green Atari/sling-shot image on their screens and a caption in Japanese and English: Boot-leg S.O.S.)

JUVENILE INTERPRETER (V.O.)

Will attempt emergency-landing on Trash Island coast. Please, make note of the following: to my security-detail/bodyguard-dog, Spots Kobayashi, if still living, I leave all my worldly possessions. If Spots has preceded me into the next life, I ask that everything, including my own bones and Spots' carcass, be burned in a crematory furnace, with our ashes scattered to the four-winds. It will not amount to much pollution in this sad land. If I survive, ignore this message.

(grimly determined:)

I've gone to find my dog.

Editor-Hiroshi presses stop on his memo-recorder. Tracy has tears in her eyes. She shouts:

TRACY

Young masters of Megasaki: unite!

Tracy holds up her own defiant placard: Nutmeg.

EXT. SHORE-LINE. DAY

The carcass of a beached tug-boat, cracked, crumbling, rotten, and rusty, sits perched on the crest of a sludge-dune above a stagnant tidal-canal.

INT. BEACHED TUG-BOAT. DAY

A ship's galley, half-buried in slurry sand. Jupiter flicks the cork-stopper out of a wooden cask hanging around his neck and decants a generous dose of rich, amber liquid into a large dog-bowl with his name printed on it.

JUPITER

Turpentine brandy. It cools the head and warms the dog-bones.

Jupiter sits at the head of the assembled group. The visitors wait respectfully as Jupiter re-plugs the stopper with his tongue. They all drink together from the bowl. Oracle says sagely, aside:

ORACLE

It may snow tonight.

BOSS

(extremely interested)

Really? Thank you very much. Wow.

ORACLE
(shrugs)

To whom it may concern.

Oracle drinks another sip. Boss whispers to King, awed:

BOSS

She sees the future.

King scoffs and motions across the room. Boss looks.

CUT TO:

A small, partially disassembled television-set branded Visions Electronics Cathode 10" with a weather-report inprogress wired to a decrepit current-generator. The newsanchor points at a drifting cold-front.

KING

She understands T.V.

Boss frowns. Jupiter begins:

JUPITER

You seek a dog named Spots.

Rex nods. Atari produces the picture of Spots and shows it to Jupiter and Oracle. Oracle says quietly:

ORACLE

Dog-Zero.

JUPITER
(nodding)

Dog-Zero.

Chief and Rex exchange a puzzled look. Jupiter begins a brief lecture:

JUPITER

As you know, most of the animals on this island come from human homes with domesticated back-grounds. However, a small population of savage, aboriginal dogs have been scavenging the Metro-politan Dumping-Grounds for nearly a decade. The graffiti on this wall depicts the story.

Jupiter stands in front of a graffiti-mural (in spray-paint, magic-marker, and knife-scratch) on a cinder-block wall. A

sequence of images shows:

1. A map of Trash Island with an inset/blow-up of a dot at its farthest-northern tip: a tiny island off the shore of the main land-mass.
2. Numerous dogs with stitches and bandages on their heads and bodies, coded hospital-bands around their necks and ankles, and plastic tags on their ears, legs, and tails. Graffiti-text in Japanese and English reads: Kobayashi Animal-Testing (Canine Division).
3. An off-shore research-laboratory on stilts being hit by a tidal-wave as the earth cracks open and a volcano erupts in the back-ground. Desperate dogs drown and burn, but many scramble away from their panicking scientist-captors.

Jupiter continues in voice-over:

JUPITER (V.O.)

They were born into captivity on the ends of the fringes of the most distant reaches of the island. They endured great suffering and cruelty at the hands of their former masters. Finally, in the wake of an Act of God, they escaped -- to a harsh and desperate freedom.

Jupiter laps-up another shot of the strong drink.

JUPITER

Some say they died away over the subsequent years, starving and forgotten. Some say they swam to the mainland, but this seems unlikely. (Too far to dog-paddle.)

(mysteriously)

Some say they're still with us, in the Far-away Cuticles, beyond the Middle Fingers.

(dramatic pause)

We know the animal you seek.

The five dogs look surprised and intrigued. Jupiter explains:

JUPITER

He has appeared in Oracle's visions.

BRIEF FLASH-BACK:

A high-rise apartment over a city-park in the middle of the night. Jupiter and Oracle sit on a plush carpet in front of a large-screen television set branded Visions Electronics Vivid-

Color 26". They are watching the broadcast of Spots in his dog-cage on the podium at the Municipal Dome.

JUPITER (V.O.)

He was the first unfortunate pet to be exiled to Trash Island.

Jupiter finishes the bowl of turpentine brandy and licks his lips. He hypothesizes with quiet gravity:

JUPITER

A prophecy suggests itself: Spots (if he's alive) may very well be living, even at this moment, as a captive prisoner abducted into the company of these wild, savage dogs.

(sharply aside)

Oracle, what do you think?

Oracle has fallen asleep in front of the television set. (A contestant on a game-show plays Whac-a-Mole with a giant, puffy mallet. The audience screams, ecstatic.) Jupiter brushes this annoyance aside and concludes:

JUPITER

Continue your journey. Have faith in your cause. Luck and good fortune be unto you.

Jupiter turns and exits the room. Chief, Rex, King, Duke, and Boss absorb all this new information. Atari, listening acutely, nods and pretends to understand. Duke says discreetly, aside:

DUKE

You heard the rumor, right? About these aboriginal dogs.

Chief, Rex, King, and Boss mumble and mutter simultaneously again. ("Not really." "I don't think so." "Remind us again." Etc.) Duke says bluntly:

DUKE

They're cannibals.

The four dogs hesitate. Chief asks pointedly:

CHIEF

You're telling me they're going to want to eat us?

DUKE

(pause)

Well, they're cannibals.

INT. SUSHI BAR. DAY

A grey-haired sushi-chef with a brush-cut and a head-band chops and slices behind a lunch-counter. He butchers a flopping, pink river-fish, sears it, and dots each piece with crystal-salt. He assassinates a live, pink star-fish, dissects it, and tops each tendril with a tiny fish-eye. He euthanizes a wriggling, pink octopus-leg, slivers it, and paints each slice with glittery-green *wasabi* -- with the exception of one, single serving, which he finishes with a yellow *wasabi*. The sushi-chef packages the order neatly in a *bento*-box, slips the *bento*-box into a wax-paper sleeve, and drops the wax-paper-sleeved *bento*-box into a white sack labeled:

For Delivery:
Professor Watanabe
(Hotel-Guest Under House-Arrest)
Toho Mountain *Ryokan*

The sushi-chef ties the sack with tight twine and places it on the counter. He nods gravely to:

The *yakuza*-gangster in a delivery-boy uniform-disguise.

INT. TRADITIONAL INN. DAY

A hotel room with *tatami* flooring and paper-screen partitions. Professor Watanabe, unshaven and weary, dressed in a kimono with his hair wet and his sunglasses on, rapidly works his way morsel-by-morsel through the contents of the *bento*-box. He sips a beer. He eats a bit of ginger. He stares down at:

INSERT:

The last piece.

Professor Watanabe hesitates. He frowns, suspicious. He takes a miniscule taste of the yellow *wasabi* on the end of a chopstick. He swallows and waits. He picks up the piece of sushi and studies it at some length.

MONTAGE:

1. The crow's-nest of the Tug-boat on the Dune in a whistling snow-storm. A half-full trash-tram approaches on a low cable. Atari and the five dogs jump onboard like hobos hopping a freight-train. They look back at Jupiter and Oracle watching from

a broken window and disappear into the white-out.

2. The newsroom at Megasaki Senior High. Tracy, Editor-Hiroshi, and the Daily-Manifesto staff sit glued to their television set, watching in horror as live-feed footage shows Professor Watanabe's corpse being rolled on a gurney into the Megasaki City Morgue.

3. The front-page of the morning-edition of the Daily-Manifesto. Headline: Scientist Poisons Self! Boy-hunt Continues.

4. A trail of foot-prints in the crunchy frost over the abandoned golf-course. A team of dog-catchers follows five sniffing robot-dogs up the asphalt path and onto the fairway. Three rescue-drones circle above, humming.

5. Professor Watanabe's laboratory. Furniture and equipment all around the room: smashed, scattered, and demolished. Yellow-tape stretched across the area reads: Condemned Facility. Posted signs state: All Further Research Forbidden (by Order of the Mayoral Office). Yoko-ono sits on the floor with her arms wrapped around her body, rocking and muttering to herself as she stares into space.

INSERT:

The laboratory wall-safe. Ten serum-vials inside lie shattered in a thin puddle of the blue liquid.

EXT. TRASH-TRAM. DAY

Rex summarizes to Chief, King, Duke, Boss, and Atari as they glide through the air:

REX

We're approaching the end of Old Trash Island. To the east: the Sapporo River and Megasaki City. To the west: the open-sea. To the north: a long, rickety cause-way over a noxious sludge-marsh leading to a radio-active land-fill polluted by toxic chemical-garbage. That's our destination.

Atari listens but shows no sign of comprehension. Chief, staring down at the ground, appears to be ignoring the discussion altogether. King, Duke, and Boss, however, seem inexplicably gung-ho. They respond in unison:

KING

Got it.

DUKE

Perfect.

BOSS

Great.

The rear-section of the trash-tram detaches from the front with a silent jolt, then rises-up out of the frame in a new direction. Chief and Atari -- the occupants of that portion of the vehicle -- look at each other, startled, before they disappear from view.

The front-section of the trash-tram stays its course (along with the camera) as Rex, oblivious, continues his update:

REX

Get ready to jump. Atari, I'll drag you overboard with my teeth, since you can't understand the plan. After that, we're back on foot. The next stage --

Rex finally notices the absence of the absentees. He looks all around, puzzled and alarmed.

REX

Where'd they go?

The rear-section of the trash-tram now re-enters the frame on a parallel course in the deep back-ground a hundred feet away. Rex says to himself, highly agitated:

REX

What are they doing over there? How'd this happen? What's going on with this contraption?

King, Duke, and Boss mutter, flummoxed. Rex shouts to Chief:

REX

If we get separated (which we are): *rendez-vous* at the cause-way!

Pause. Chief, tiny in the distance, shouts back:

CHIEF

You're not our leader!

Rex looks stupefied. He hesitates. He yells:

REX

What?

A profusion of criss-crossing cable-lines, mechanized switchbacks, and automated traffic-regulators pass through the frame, swinging, churning, and clunking. Chief, barely audible, repeats:

CHIEF

You're not our leader! We all are! Let's take a vote!

Rex looks to the other dogs in disbelief. They shake their heads, sympathetic. Rex, wildly exasperated, struggles to keep his temper. He bellows:

REX

All in favor of my plan, which is to *rendez-vous* at the cause-way --

Rex and the other passengers of the front-section of the trash-tram disappear into a tunnel on the side of a massive, steel edifice labeled: Crushing, Compacting, and Incineration. (Smoke puffs from an exhaust, and the entire structure shudders and rattles like a behemoth jalopy.) Chief and Atari, two specks in the rear-section, deep in the back-ground, continue on their way.

EXT. AMUSEMENT PARK. DAY

The last vestiges of a deserted amusement-park: a wooden pier with a penny-arcade; a parachute-drop; a Ferris-wheel; a crumbling, once-brightly colored colossus of a *Shogun* war-lord below a dead-neon sign which reads: Kobayashi Park. Every surface is blanketed in bright-green (moss, mold, lichen) and encrusted with barnacles. Atari and Chief watch from their trash-tram as the attractions slide-by fifty feet below.

The trash-tram stops suddenly. Its underside hinges-open, and the two passengers (along with a load of grime, slime, and gunk) hurtle-out toward the earth.

The camera booms down a great distance to an enormous, abandoned, overflowing, steel dumpster. A wisp of dust emanates from the top of the rubbish. A hatch at the base of the dumpster smashes open, and Atari and Chief burst out, staggering. They brush themselves off. Atari looks to Chief, disoriented. Chief is stoic.

CHIEF

Let's go.

Chief begins to lead the way. Atari lingers, reluctant, and looks up at:

A *faux*-ancient tower with a spiraling, fiberglass chute circling around it. A sign painted on the structure reads: *Pagoda-Slide!* Next to the boarded-up entrance there is another *Shogun* war-lord (wooden, flat) holding up a sword labeled: You Must Be This Tall.

Atari studies the war-lord. He turns back to Chief, hopeful. Chief shakes his head.

CHIEF

We made an emergency plan, even if we didn't get to vote and agree to it yet: *rendez-vous* at the cause-way to the Far-away Cuticles, and go find your dog. Maybe everybody else just got crushed, compacted, and incinerated -- but we're going to be there. Let's go.

Atari hesitates. He goes over to the war-lord and measures himself. He is slightly too short. He looks up at the *Pagoda-Slide* again and gestures in a cork-screw motion as he softly describes his wishes.

CHIEF

No, you can't ride the *Pagoda-Slide*. You're below the safety-limit, anyway. Let's go.

Pause. Atari takes a small step toward the *Pagoda-Slide* entrance. Chief warns him:

CHIEF

Don't.

Atari takes a second step. Chief warns him again:

CHIEF

Repeat: don't. I'm not your pet. I never liked you. I don't care about you. I won't wait for you. I bite.

Atari karate-kicks the door open and clanks up the steps as he ascends the interior of the *Pagoda-Slide*. Silence.

CHIEF

Good luck.

Chief turns and walks away. Off-screen: Atari's yelling voice increases in volume until he zips spiralling back into view and tumbles off the end of the slide onto the ground. He stands up, laughing hysterically, even desperately. He takes a deep breath. He looks left. He looks right. He shouts for Chief in Japanese. Long pause.

Atari sits down on a filthy stump. He looks left and right again. He whistles the folk-tune. He begins to sing it quietly in Japanese. A tear rolls down his cheek.

CUT TO:

Chief mutters to himself angrily as he walks alone through the abandoned amusement park. He stops walking. He stares into space. He looks back behind him.

CUT TO:

Atari singing. He pauses. He sighs. He stares down at the ground. Off-screen, some distance away, a voice whistles faintly. Atari looks up quickly. The whistling continues.

Atari listens keenly. Chief walks back into the frame. Atari stands up, sniffing. He follows Chief past a wall of posted-bills (faded wood-block prints of an old *Kabuki* play called *The Boy-Samurai*), and they clack-out through a turnstile between permanently closed ticket-booths.

EXT. WASTE-LAND. DAY

Atari and Chief sing/whistle the last verse as they make their way across an open plain washed in contaminated waste. Atari stops, picks up a thin section of discarded stiff-plastic hose, and throws it like a stick. He looks to Chief. He smiles. Chief says blankly:

CHIEF

Don't ask me to fetch that stick.

Atari hesitates. He explains the concept in Japanese and chirps:

ATARI

Fetch-i!

Chief does not respond. Atari hesitates again. He repeats:

ATARI

Fetch-i!

CHIEF

(steely)

I'm telling you: I don't fetch.

Atari hesitates a third time. He re-explains in explicit detail with gestures and precise instructions. He says again, finally:

ATARI

Fetch-i!

CHIEF

(long pause)

I'm not doing this because you commanded me to. I'm doing it -- because I feel sorry for you. You're lonely, and you look terrible. You've probably got Dog-Flu.

In fact: both Atari and Chief look as sick, weary, and bedraggled as we have ever seen them. Chief walks calmly some distance over to the piece of plastic hose, picks it up with his teeth, returns to Atari, and drops it at his feet. Atari kneels down. He pets Chief's neck. He hugs him and says in English:

ATARI

Good-boy.

Chief melts. Atari continues to stroke his fur.

INSERT:

A slim, nylon case with the discreet monogram "S.K. (Bodyguard-Dog)". Atari's fingers unzip a flap and flip it open. The case contains a miniature bar of strong flea-soap, a small tail-comb, a little dog-brush, a set of tiny coat-clippers, and a one-ounce bottle labeled: Aromatic Fur Tonic.

CUT TO:

A soapy Chief soaking in a dissected Hokusai Lager beer-keg filled to the brim with foamy water while Atari (stripped-down to a metallic Speedo) lathers his coat and rinses his snout with a plastic ladle.

CUT TO:

Chief, silhouetted against the white sun, sitting on a crumpled Bulk-Ramen box with his front paws in the air as Atari dries him with a pristine rag, then grooms, trims, and scalp-massages him.

CUT TO:

Chief, clean. A radical transformation has taken place: a black dog polka-dotted in white is now a white dog polka-dotted in black. Chief looks down at his paws and haunches, impressed, slightly stunned, and extremely self-conscious. Atari eye-balls Chief with a long, hard stare. He digs into his pocket.

INSERT:

A broken shaving-mirror jammed into a trash-heap. Atari holds up his publicity wood-block-print of Spots in his dog-cage next to the reflection of Chief in the mirror. They both study the comparison at length. The two dogs look nearly identical. Finally, Chief asks, uneasy:

CHIEF

Where'd you get that dog? He looks like me (with a pink nose). I come from a nine-dog litter, but they drowned the sisters. We're not a rare breed: short-haired-Oceanic-speckle-ear/sport-hound-mix. I'm getting confused now. My belly feels funny.

Atari, intrigued, holds Chief's face in his hands and studies his eyes. Chief blinks. Atari opens a pouch on his trouser-leg and takes out a little paper sack hand-labeled: "For Spots". Inside, there is a single dog-treat. Atari breaks it in two and returns one half to the sack.

ATARI

Biscuit-o.

Atari attempts to feed the second half of the dog-treat to Chief. Chief hesitates.

CHIEF

I can't accept that. It's for your dog.

Atari insists. Chief's eyes mist over.

CHIEF

Don't make me start crying again. I've never been offered a Puppy-Snap in my life. I don't even know what they taste like. OK, I'll try it.

Chief carefully takes the half dog-treat in his teeth and crunches it up politely. He sighs.

CHIEF

Crunchy. Salty. Supposedly, it cleans your teeth.
(deeply moved)
This is my new favorite food.

Tears well-up in Chief's eyes. He says quietly:

CHIEF

Thank you.

Dusk. Atari struggles as he and Chief climb a winding path up a steep, craggy incline. Spindly, thorny, leaf-less trees bristle in the cold breeze. Chief checks the footing ahead, then circles back quickly and follows Atari, nudging and supporting him up to the next rise. Atari pauses and pulls on a folded paper-sheaf sticking out of a fallen garbage-sack.

INSERT:

The front page of a recent, late-edition Daily-Manifesto. Headline: Mayor's Ward Fights for Dogs (A Five-Part Article by Foreign-exchange-student Tracy Walker). Below the fold: the infra-green Atari/sling-shot image.

Atari and Chief stare at the newspaper.

EXT. HIGH PLATEAU. NIGHT

Atari sleeps flat on his back, exhausted, with his mouth open on top of a sheet of plywood. His pillow is a milk-carton. Chief, on look-out, stands over him. The black owl circles and lands nearby on top of a safety-lamp. It hoots. Chief nods.

CHIEF

Cold up here tonight.

The black owl's head rotates away. Chief looks down at the sleeping boy. He whispers:

CHIEF

We'll find him. Wherever he is (if he's alive): we'll find your dog.

Chief steps away a few paces and carefully surveys the perimeter.

INSERT:

The diode-light on Atari's earphone flickers green for an instant with a scratch of faint, crackly static -- then goes silent/red again. Atari startles, half-awake. He listens. He closes his eyes again and resumes his sleep.

INT. HOST-FAMILY RESIDENCE. NIGHT

A teenage-girl's bedroom in a high-rise apartment building. On one wall: posters of heart-throbs, rock-bands, and horses. On the other: a C.I.A./F.B.I.-type display of scraps, maps, snap-shots, and other bits of assorted evidence all linked and interconnected by criss-crossing strings and threads. Tracy stands with her arms

folded in front of her chest, studying the ephemera. She speaks directly to the suspects.

INSERT:

A wood-block-print of Mayor Kobayashi with the military-officer, the bespectacled-executive, the technology-tycooness, the *yakuza*-gangster, and Major-Domo. Notes read: corporate-spy, war-criminal, robotics-profiteer, health-code violator, paid-assassin.

TRACY

Mayor Kobayashi, elected leader of Megasaki City. For 150 years, you and your ancestors, known as the Kobayashi Dynasty, a procession of dog-hating thugs, stooges, felons, and their criminal underlings, have betrayed, deceived, and swindled the citizens of Uni Prefecture. You make me so mad!

INSERT:

A wood-block-print of Professor Watanabe. Clippings illustrate: his early discoveries, his appointment to the Ministry of Science, his "suicide".

TRACY

Professor Watanabe, Minister of Science, deceased. The *wasabi* in your blood showed poison-levels in excess of ten times the maximum dosage required to stop the heart of a whale. Why'd you do it?

INSERT:

Wood-block-prints of Atari: in his hospital bed, with Spots and the mayor, firing his sling-shot.

TRACY

Atari Kobayashi, adopted ward to the mayoral-household. You heroically hijacked a Junior Turbo-Prop XJ750 and -

-

There is a knock on the door. Tracy frowns and opens it. A bent-over old woman in a kimono appears with a cup of warm milk on a tray. She speaks to Tracy in raspy Japanese. Tracy takes the drink and answers, bowing, exceedingly cheery, chirpy, and deferential. The old woman gives her a few additional instructions and bits of advice, then says good-night, turns off the lights, and closes the door. Tracy returns to her collage

with a flash-light.

CUT TO:

Tracy in tight close-up. She stares with deep feeling at her Atari-shrine on the wall.

TRACY

Atari. You heroically, as I was saying, stole the little airplane, as you know, because of your dog, I mean --

(hesitates)

I lost my train of thought.

Tracy sighs. She clicks off the flash-light, then shouts:

TRACY

Dammit! I've got a crush on you.

EXT. CAUSE-WAY. DAY

A narrow, rickety, steel-frame foot-bridge a half-mile long over a vast, shallow marsh littered with refuse. Chief and Atari stand waiting in front of a chained-shut steel gate in between the bridge-entrance and the foot of a towering trash-cliff. (Heard but not yet seen: rushing water rumbles through a nearby channel.)

A sign above the bridge-entrance creaks as it swings slightly on rusted hooks. It reads:

Cause-Way

To the Far-away Cuticles

The camera booms down to an old, filthy, dented metallic door-frame which resembles an airport-security screening-unit and is labeled: Check-Point/Scanning. An electrical-wire at the base zaps periodically, short-circuiting.

INSERTS:

A sea-newt crawling on a piece of decomposing Styrofoam. A cluster of mosquitoes buzzing around a sludge-filled plastic baggie. A tiny, oily, black mud-frog which croaks and ribbits.

Atari whistles the folk-tune. Chief hums along. Atari absently scratches behind Chief's ears. Chief looks around uncertainly. Atari jams his hands into his pockets. Silence.

A faint clank echoes. Atari and Chief both turn suddenly to look

toward the trash-cliff above/behind them. A grinding hum reverberating out of a tunnel-exit near the top of the high ridge grows louder and louder. Chief and Atari stare intently. Finally: a rattling trash-tram bursts-out into view and passes steadily overhead. Rex, King, Duke, and Boss -- severely singed, partially shorn, slightly mangled, coats puffing with smoke and dust -- peer wearily and warily over the rim of the rattling vehicle.

Chief and Atari brighten. Chief yells:

CHIEF

Rex! King! Duke! Boss! You made it!

The battered tram-passengers look down at Chief and Atari. Chief and Atari walk apace below the moving trash-tram as they continue their conversation. Rex frowns. He barks:

REX

What happened to you?

CHIEF

(hesitates)

I took a bath.

REX

(pause)

He's got soap?

CHIEF

(sheepish)

A little.

Chief and Atari slip under and over the steel gate and cross onto the footbridge. Rex says, judgemental:

REX

You're too fluffy.

CHIEF

(guilty/proud)

We played fetch.

REX

(in disbelief)

And you brought it back to him?

Chief shrugs. He nods. Rex clarifies:

REX

With a stick?

CHIEF
(specifically)
With a hunk of rubber radiator-tubing.
(warmly)
He's a good boy.

REX
(frustrated)
Don't tell me that! I'm the one that tried to make you
be loyal to him, in the first place. You're
disobedient! You hate masters! You're a stray!

As Chief and Atari hurry, distracted, through the decrepit
screening-unit, it beeps.

INSERT:

A small control-board with a miniature monitor-display attached
to the side of the security door-frame. Text on a panel reads:
Advanced Tooth-and-Tail Recognition Software. It blinks on.
Images of Atari and Chief with accompanying descriptive data
flicker across the screen for a brief moment before the entire
system fritzes with a jolt and powers-off.

Chief and Atari continue below and parallel to the trash-tram as
it proceeds above the bridge. Up ahead, in the middle of the
foot-bridge, at the center of the expansive marsh, there is a
confusing aerial-junction where the tram-cable splits into
multiple directions. Chief yells:

CHIEF
Stop! This is the *rendez-vous*. Where's that trash-tram
taking you?

REX
(angry)
How should we know? You think we booked this ride
through a travel agent? We were fighting for our lives
in a high-velocity trash-processor while you were
getting scrubbed and brushed. We're traumatized!

Chief looks to Atari. Atari shouts up at the trash-tram sharply
in Japanese. Chief nods and translates:

CHIEF
Jump!

REX
(puzzled)
Where?

CHIEF
(forcefully)
Here!

REX
(anxious)
When?

CHIEF
(urgently)
Now!

REX
(baffled)
Why?

CHIEF
(utterly beside himself)
What?

REX
(furious)
Let's take a vote. All in favor --

The trash-tram slams to a halt at the junction with a powerful, echoing bang.

INSERTS:

The sea-newt wiggles away. The mosquitoes disappear. The frog hops off and sinks into the bubbling marsh.

Chief and Atari now stand at the edge of a wide gap before an open section of the center of the cause-way (retracted like a sliding draw-bridge). A cement drain-channel runs perpendicular across the marsh fifteen-feet below the gap. Violently churning rapids whoosh through it.

Chief and Atari, open-mouthed, gawk up at Rex, King, Duke, and Boss hanging over the chasm above the gap in the foot-bridge. The trash-tram squeaks, swaying on its cable. Rex squints. He says eerily:

REX
Who's that?

Chief and Atari turn around suddenly to look back behind them at the trash-cliff. Ten dog silhouettes are watching them, immobile, spread-out across the top of the high-ridge. Chief sniffs the air and says curiously:

CHIEF

I can't smell them.

CUT TO:

The security-device images of Atari and Chief now on a large screen at the M.T.F. Dog-Catchers Division control-tower. An alert blinks in red below the duo: Positive-Match. Technicians criss-cross excitedly around the room, chattering on radio-receivers and rapidly punching-in further instructions.

On the Plexiglas table-top map of Trash Island: surrounding sectors go dark, high-lighting the cause-way zone and pinpointing Atari and the Hero Pack's immediate location. A group of technicians slurp noodles quickly and messily. One of them yells in Japanese on a red telephone.

CUT TO:

Dusk, the cause-way. A roaring rescue-drone descends out of the sky toward Rex, King, Boss, and Duke, who cower in the stalled trash-tram. Atari and Chief look-up at them from the foot-bridge. In the marsh below, two amphibious, six-wheeled landing-craft approach from either side of the cause-way. Atari and Chief hear a loud crashing noise and whirl-around to see:

The metal gate at the Security/Check-Point collapsing flat as the platoon of robot-dogs advances in formation onto the bridge.

Atari and Chief glare, furious.

The trash-tram's bomb-bay doors begin to grind open -- then stop suddenly. The rotary mechanism repeats this unsuccessful action over and over like a broken record. Rex, King, Boss, and Duke, alarmed, restlessly squirm and wriggle. A warning lamp on the side of the trash-tram activates. It reads: Jam. There is a sudden bang and a large puff of black smoke. A small fire starts on the underside of the vehicle.

A rattling basket-seat lowers by chain from the hovering rescue-drone carrying a dog-catcher with an extra-long, radio-active cattle-prod. Atari's earphone crackles with static:

SPOTS (O.S.)

Master -- Master -- Atari!

Atari's eyes light-up. He chatters in Japanese, darting looks in every direction. The diode-light on his earphone flickers back from red to green to red. Atari shouts with his finger on his earphone:

ATARI

Spots-u? Spots-u? Spots-u?

CUT TO:

The far opposite end of the foot-bridge: two white dog-legs jolt into the foreground on top of a pile of rubble. Atari and Chief stare at the distant-dog in silhouette against a white mist, beyond the gap, a hundred meters away. Chief sniffs the air and says quietly:

CHIEF

That dog's real.

As the mist lifts and thins: another thirty dogs are faintly revealed behind the first one. Atari and Chief squint and blink, unsure of what they are seeing.

CUT TO:

A long-lens shot of the distant-dog (with the company at his flanks): he continues his approach at a full-speed sprint.

TITLE:

Part Three:
"The Secret Tooth"
(5 Months and 3 Weeks Earlier)

EXT. JUNK-YARD. DAY

Spots' battered dog-cage, exactly where it originally fell. Spots remains trapped inside. Several other dogs -- though themselves free to roam -- loiter, chatting with the imprisoned animal. (A number of other dog-cages, all empty, with open cage-doors, litter the area.)

OTHER DOG #1

What's that thing in your ear for? Are you hard of hearing?

SPOTS

You can't be. Bodyguard-dogs have to have 20/30-

Auditory just to be certified. No, the ear-piece is how I receive my commands and instructions and so on. Obviously, I'm privy to certain sensitive information due to my position in the mayoral-household at Brick Mansion.

OTHER DOG #1
(hesitates)

You mean, is somebody talking to you right now?

SPOTS
(hesitates)

Well, the range is only about 75 feet or so, I guess, so I haven't heard anything in some time. The battery's probably dead, anyway.

OTHER DOG #2
(smart-aleck)

Why you still keep it in your ear, then?

SPOTS
(shrugs)

I can't reach it.

OTHER DOG #3
(wise-acre)

How much money you think the mayor makes?

SPOTS

I can't tell you that. That's highly confidential. Anyway, I'm not the mayor's accountant's dog. That's Butterscotch, and she got crushed in a glass compactor the day before yesterday. No, my duties focus entirely on the protection of the mayor's ward, Atari. I'm not supposed to be his friend, but I love him very much, but that's a private matter. The only reason I even mention it is because we're all going to die out here, and I'll never get to see him again.

Spots bows his head, devastated, and tries to hold-in several loud sobs. The other dogs look at each other, depressed, sympathetic, slightly embarrassed.

OTHER DOG #1

That's a tough break. Well, good luck to you. Watch out for the cannibal-dogs.

The other dogs begin to wander away. Spots hesitates. He says

sharply:

SPOTS

Hm?

Other Dog #1 pauses and looks back to Spots. He repeats:

OTHER DOG #1

Hm?

Spots stares. He squints and leans forward.

SPOTS

What?

Other Dog #1 cocks his head. He echoes Spots':

OTHER DOG #1

What?

Spots frowns. He says slowly:

SPOTS

Watch out for the --

Other Dog #1 nods. He follows suit:

OTHER DOG #1

-- cannibal-dogs? Dogs that eat dogs.

SPOTS

Start over and repeat again.

OTHER DOG #1

(dismissive)

You know what? Don't even worry about that. I just heard there might be some wild, aboriginal cannibal-dogs in the area, you know -- but you're trapped in a cage with an extra-security lock on it. You're probably safer than anybody. Except from thirst and starvation.

Other Dog #1 lingers for a beat, then makes his exit. Spots sits, silent and perturbed.

CUT TO:

Midnight. Spots, sleeping curled on the floor of his dog-cage, snaps one eye open.

A huge, albeit half-starved, wolf-dog sits directly in front of

him, staring coolly. Half the wolf-dog's head has been shaved clean. He has stitches and scars all along the bald side. He has a hospital-band around his neck and a plastic clip on his ear. A stencilled tag on his collar reads: Gondo.

Spots slowly sits up.

Six more dogs descend from four different directions at once and join the wolf-dog. They are all covered with scars and stitches, patches and splints. They circle Spots' cage. Silence. Spots says quietly:

SPOTS

It's got an extra-security-lock on it. You'll never get it open.

INSERT:

The door-latching system. Embossed on the casing of the mechanism: Kobayashi Lock and Bolt/Japan. A red sticker below reads: Guaranteed Pick-Proof.

MONTAGE:

The seven strangers carry the caged-Spots in the moon-light across the landscape in the manner of either a slain-deer on a spit or, perhaps, a royal litter. They cross the Middle Fingers: the shell-pocked tide-pool, the high-rail track past the ore and gravel mounds, the skinny path past the tower-silos, the rim of the crater past the ash-dusted foundry, the abandoned golf-course.

EXT. TESTING FACILITY. DAY

The off-shore structure described earlier by Jupiter: Kobayashi Animal-Testing Laboratory (Canine Division).

INSIDE:

The subterranean remains of the shell of a former research-laboratory. Cement walls. Bathroom-tile floors. Glass-less window-frames. In the back-ground: a bank of corroded turbines spin, crooked and creaky, under an on-going deluge delivered by a battery of pipes straight from the open sea. Spots, still in his dog-cage, looks out at a community of thirty scarred, stitched, patched, splinted, hospital-banded, unfamiliar dogs of various breeds and shapes. The huge wolf-dog, Gondo, sits at the center of the watching group. Long pause.

SPOTS

Are you going to eat me now?

GONDO

(frowns)

What'd you say?

SPOTS

(icy)

Are you going to eat me now? I heard you were cannibal-dogs. Be notified: I'll be compelled to defend myself with all means at my disposal.

Spots grits his teeth. The camera pushes in toward his mouth.

INSERT:

One of Spots' teeth. On very close inspection, it appears to be strangely rifled with winding spiral grooves and labeled with tiny Japanese text.

Gondo laughs to himself, angry and deeply hurt. He shakes his head. His companions roll their eyes, grumbling. Gondo growls:

GONDO

Who told you that dirty lie? We resorted to cannibalism on one occasion, many months ago, as a desperate survival instinct. We ate one single dog. His name was Fuzzball, and he was our pack-leader, and he was already in a coma from starvation, so we put him out his misery and --

(his voice cracks)

-- consumed him. We would've dropped dead in a week or less without that nourishment. We were dying. Do you judge us for that? Shame on you! We only brought you here in the first place to help you. We've got a Master Pass-Key!

Gondo motions to a wall lined with empty, pick-proof dog-cages stacked six-high and thirty-wide. A wizened, old dog with a prosthetic-leg limps toward Spots with a small, orange locker-key in his teeth. He pulls a safety-catch before unlocking the bolt. The door pops ajar. The entire company of dogs, disgusted, then wanders away in different directions, returning to the chores and tasks of their survival.

Spots, alone, noses open the door and emerges from his dog-cage. He looks sheepish. An off-screen voice echoes:

PEPPERMINT (V.O.)

Fuzzball was his best friend.

Spots looks up to a landing at the top of a steep, metal staircase. A willowy, silver-haired racing-hound with toothpick legs stares down at him through beautiful, blood-shot eyes. She is Peppermint (as stated on her hospital-band collar). Spots clears his throat.

SPOTS

Oh, dear. I think I offended him. I had no idea.

Peppermint descends toward Spots. As she comes close to him and sits, Spots sees that her head and neck are implanted with tarnished electrodes and tattooed with faded surgical markings. The ends of a few copper-wires, still attached to her skin, fray from their tiny sockets. Spots studies her condition and asks gently:

SPOTS

What is this place? How long've you been here? I can see you've been mistreated.

Peppermint starts to answer but cannot quite find the words. Tears stream down her cheeks. Spots immediately licks them away.

SPOTS

My name is Spots. Spots Kobayashi. How can I be of service to you?

CUT TO:

A wide, wide, high-angle shot of Spots and Peppermint: two tiny, seated figures facing each other on the floor of the cavernous testing-facility.

RETURN TO:

The cause-way, present-minute, night. White-hot prison-lamps illuminate the foot-bridge, and spot-lights scan and circle from the rescue-drone above and the landing-craft below. Rex, King, Duke, and Boss spit and blow on the increasing fire up in the dangling trash-tram.

On the bridge: the robot-dogs surround Atari and Chief, preparing to pounce. Dog-catchers riding the mechanical ladders ascend into view, shining powerful flash-lights and wielding electronic billy-clubs. The dog-catcher in the basket-seat comes to a stop with a clanging jolt and blasts-down his own beam.

Chief and Atari balance on a little ledge, a square of crenelated cement jutting out over the gap in the foot-bridge over the rapid-flow cement-channel that cuts through the marsh below. Atari sling-shots a lug-nut at the dog-catcher in the basket-seat. His flash-light explodes.

CUT TO:

Another new angle: the camera is strapped to the back of the sprinting distant-dog as he approaches the gap. A diode-light on his earphone flickers green/red. (Obviously, he is Spots.) He shouts:

SPOTS

Can you hear me? Can you hear me? Can you hear me,
Master Atari?

INSERT:

Atari's diode-light: green.

CUT TO:

Atari's eyes. They light up. He shouts again:

ATARI

Spots-u?

The camera races at top-speed with the running Spots with his thirty followers (the aboriginal dogs) behind him. He yells as he approaches the gap:

SPOTS

You're not safe here! You shouldn't have come for me! I
can't protect you efficiently under these conditions!

CUT TO:

The front-and-center robot-dog: retracted bayonets emerge, normal canine-teeth switch to long blades, fighting-screens close over glowing eye-balls. It roars.

INT. CONTROL-TOWER. DAY

A pair of elevator doors slide open, and Mayor Kobayashi and Major-Domo stride into the mission-control room. Voices fall silent. The mayor and his aide watch the live-feed intently as it displays: the robot-dog's infra-green P.O.V. of Atari and Chief on the ledge of the foot-bridge. The mayor squints and leans

toward the screen. The image zooms-in on a second live-feed: of Spots rapidly approaching from the other direction. Major-Domo mutters, uncertain but surprised:

MAJOR-DOMO

Spots-u!

CUT TO:

Atari and Chief. Spots' voice, loud and clear, blasts from Atari's earphone:

SPOTS (O.S.)

Here I come.

Atari and Chief spin around to look behind them. Spots sails through the air spectacularly across the gap and into the camera. Atari and Chief watch, wide-eyed, as Spots flies cleanly between them and lands skidding at the center of the ambush.

Spots immediately digs his tongue around inside his mouth, straining the muscles of his jaw.

INSERT:

Spots extends a tooth out on the tip of his tongue, then spits it like a pellet-gun.

The tooth pegs into the front-and-center robot-dog and explodes with surprising force and violence (given its extreme littleness), instantly killing the foe. The dog-catchers on their shaking ladders shield their eyes and duck from flying shrapnel. One falls off into the marsh. Spots shouts furiously:

SPOTS

Sic-'em!

On cue: the thirty aboriginal dogs sail through the air over the gap and flood onto Chief and Atari's side of the bridge, immediately swirling around the remaining robot-dogs, snapping and growling, dodging and jumping, total chaos. Spots nods a curt hello to Chief, then shouts to Atari:

SPOTS

Follow me!

First: Atari sling-shots one of the remaining robot-dogs, popping out an eye-ball light-bulb. Next: Spots and Chief flank Atari on the edge of the ledge, and all three look down past the camera

into the gap. Atari steels himself and grabs hold of both dogs' collars. Third: Atari, Chief, and Spots leap together into the rushing water-channel. They are instantly whisked away downstream. Finally: the thirty aboriginal dogs dive-in after them, leaving the confused robot-dogs alone on the bridge. One of them (now blind in one eye) staggers to the edge of the gap.

The rescue-drone bobbles crookedly above in the sky, flashing its spot-light down on: Rex, King, Duke, and Boss, open-mouthed, huddled in the corner of the trash-tram, now almost entirely consumed in flames. Rex shouts:

REX

All in favor of kicking Chief out of the pack and never speaking to him again, say "Aye"!

The bomb-bay doors open suddenly, and the four dogs fall (with burning trash), screaming in terror, into the canal below.

EXT. CEMENT CONDUIT. NIGHT

As Atari, Chief, and Spots course down the rumbling man-made water-way, halogen spot-bulbs periodically shoot-by along the upper-lip of the water-channel and submarine flood-lamps strobe and glow, intermittent, below. Chief and Spots keep Atari afloat, splashing and paddling, as they shout their conversation:

CHIEF

How'd you do that?

SPOTS

Secret tooth! Military issue! Technically, I could do it thirty-seven more times, but I wouldn't be able to chew my meat!

CHIEF

I assume you're Spots! We've been looking for you.

Spots looks to Atari. Atari, highly emotional, speaks to his bodyguard-dog in Japanese. Spots responds with deep feeling as they zip along:

SPOTS

Master Atari-san, I swore an oath when I assumed the responsibilities of official bodyguard-dog to the mayoral-household! I could never be persuaded to break that vow for any reason whatsoever! I'll always be loyal to you as my only and unconditional master! But

circumstances have radically changed for me and all the
pets of Megasaki City! I have new obligations which I
never anticipated! I've become the leader of a tribe of
outcasts who depend on me for their survival -- and I'm
going to be a father! With deepest sadness and
humility: I must ask you to relieve me of the duties of
my position, effective immediately!

Atari frowns with tears in eyes. Chief growls:

CHIEF

You son of a bitch. If we don't drown, I'm going to
strangle you myself. I don't care how many exploding
teeth you try to spit-out at me. Do you have any idea
what the little pilot just went through to try to
rescue you? He's still got part of a broken propellor-
clutch sticking out of the side of his head! How dare
you?

SPOTS

(long pause)

You're a stray.

CHIEF

So what?

SPOTS

What's your name?

CHIEF

Who cares?

SPOTS

You're from Central Megasaki. I can tell by the accent.
You're a short-haired-Oceanic-speckle-ear/sport-hound-
mix. You were born in a storm-sewer on Bamboo-shoot
Holiday six years ago today. Do you know me?

Chief swallows, disconcerted. Spots says quietly:

SPOTS

I'm your older brother by five minutes. It's been a
long time, Chief.

CHIEF

(voice cracking)

Was I the runt?

SPOTS

(respectfully)

Not anymore.

The cement channel comes to a sudden end and launches the three of them over a low waterfall which cascades directly into a churning whirlpool. They are instantly sucked underwater, gasping and flailing, and disappear from view. A bleached and faded warning stenciled on the cinder-block wall above the water-line reads: Test-Lab Storm-Duct.

INT. SOUND-STAGE. NIGHT

Per usual, the reporter reports/the interpreter interprets:

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

Security-camera footage confirms initial reports of the deaths of mayoral-ward Atari Kobayashi and his five dog-abductors this afternoon in a sluice-channel at the threshold of the Far-away Cuticles. A statement from Major-Domo, live at Brick Mansion:

INSERT:

A television monitor in the studio. Major-Domo, in close-up on the steps of the mayoral residence, announces:

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

The life of a promising young orphan has been cut short before its prime. This is a distant-uncle's worst nightmare. Mayor Kobayashi asks for your prayers, your condolences -- and your support for the diligent men and women of the Municipal Task Force Dog-Catchers Division: we salute you for your bravery and your ongoing commitment to the continuing punishment of all bad-dogs.

INT. TESTING FACILITY. NIGHT

The off-shore research-laboratory. A little phalanx of aboriginal dogs follow Spots as he leads Atari and the Hero Pack (all still wet from the storm-duct) on a tour past: the wall of dog-cages; an operating room in disarray behind a broken window; and rows of plastic pillories dangling with crumbling rubber tubes. The other dogs rest in nooks and nests in the background.

SPOTS

Originally (before the volcano erupted and an earthquake triggered the tsunami which obliterated the

facility), there were over 250 incarcerated animals here on the premises being experimented on against their will. If you look closely, you may notice some of these dogs still bear scars and markings from the research and abuse. Actually, it's pretty obvious.

A dog staring out to sea through a door-less doorway turns to face them. Along with the typical scars and stitches, it has: an eye-patch, dentures, and a trumpet-like artificial left ear. Up on the mezzanine, Peppermint lifts her head, sleepy. Spots smiles at her, affectionate but worried.

SPOTS

This is my mate, Peppermint. She's pregnant with our first litter.

Spots whispers into Peppermint's ear. She smiles wanly and nods to the new-comers. Spots says, aside, as they continue toward the center of the facility:

SPOTS

She was due a week ago.

(resuming the tour)

Anyway, the survivors of the disaster learned to cultivate --

Spots stops short and gasps slightly. Atari has taken-out the remaining half of the "For Spots" dog-treat. The entire community of dogs stares at it, transfixed. He carefully breaks it into numerous tiny fragments. As he feeds the gathered animals, dog-by-dog, he recites, priest-like:

ATARI

Biscuit-o. Biscuit-o. Biscuit-o.

Spots' lip quivers. His voice cracks as he says to Chief:

SPOTS

Puppy-Snaps. I hear they don't even make them anymore.

Chief nods sadly. Large text painted across the wall reads: Kobayashi Animal-Testing Laboratory (Canine Division). Below it: A Subsidiary of Kobayashi Pharmaceutical. Duke says confidentially to Rex, King, and Boss:

DUKE

You heard the rumor, right? About Kobayashi Pharmaceutical.

Rex, King, and Boss mumble and mutter simultaneously again. ("What rumor?" "I never heard it." "Kobayashi Pharmaceutical?" Etc.) Duke says shockingly:

DUKE

They invented Dog-Flu.

Rex, King, and Boss, horrified at the possibility of such insidiousness, are briefly speechless. Finally, Boss asks:

BOSS

Where do you get all these rumors? I mean, who tells them to you?

DUKE

(shrugs)

Anybody. Dogs talk, and I listen. Always have. I love gossip.

A loud commotion across the building attracts everyone's attention. Gondo approaches quickly and announces:

GONDO

Spots! The black owl has a message.

CUT TO:

The black owl perched on the railing of a balcony above the entrance to the facility. It breathes heavily. Atari, Chief, Spots, Rex, King, Duke, Boss, and Gondo circle around it. They listen acutely as the bird hoots to the assembled dogs. Spots translates:

SPOTS

He's come from all the way across the island.

(to a nearby teenaged-dog)

Get him a cup of sewer-water, Chico.

The black owl hoots some more. Spots nods.

SPOTS

We understand.

(to the Hero Pack)

He has news from the Metropolitan Dumping-Grounds.

The other dogs murmur, worried and intrigued. Spots says sharply:

SPOTS

Quiet, please!

(back to the black owl)
We're listening, owl. Tell us your message.

FLASH-BACK:

Jupiter, now-incarcerated in the dog-prison-camp, speaks through a chain-link fence with Oracle, Nutmeg, and hundreds of other Trash Island dogs crowded behind him. Powerful prison-beams cast zig-zag shadows against the stormy night-sky. White-neon up-lights eyes and snouts. The black owl listens from an iron post.

JUPITER

He's going to poison us. Re-Election Night: at the moment Mayor Kobayashi is re-inaugurated, he'll give the order, and the extermination-process will begin. (Oracle saw the plan in her visions.)

FLASH-BACK WITHIN FLASH-BACK:

A portable, black-and-white television set branded Visions Electronics Closed-Circuit 14" sits on a folding table in the metal control-shed at the dog-camp. A crew of dog-catchers watch as, on-screen, Mayor Kobayashi campaigns:

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

If the voters choose me again, on Re-Election Night, I promise: a final and permanent end to the Canine Saturation-crisis.

Oracle, horrified, stares-in from the window of the shed. She looks behind her, around the dog-prison-camp, where more dog-catchers hammer and tinker as they install pipes and sprinkler-jets around the perimeter of the camp -- all connected to a similar but enormously large tank labeled: *wasabi-gas*.

JUPITER (V.O.)

Every pet in the Trash Island Camp will die. It may be too late, already; but, if the black owl reaches you with this message in time:

CUT TO:

Jupiter and the black owl at the wire-mesh fence. Jupiter concludes quietly:

JUPITER

Go to Megasaki City. Find our masters. Appeal to the people. Stop the mayor.

(pleading)

Save us.

RETURN TO:

The present. Dawn. The black owl leans down and drinks from a sardine-tin of murky water. Atari, Chief, and Spots look out across the river at Megasaki City. Atari speaks with fierce determination (in Japanese). Spots interprets, announcing to the group-at-large:

SPOTS

We'll cross the river tonight. Begin preparations immediately.

Dogs everywhere burst into sudden, anxious activity. Chief goes back to the black owl. He says, pained but defiant:

CHIEF

You'll meet a bitch named Nutmeg. Tell her Chief says:
I'll see you in Megasaki.

The black owl hoots, stretches its wings, and floats up into the air.

INSERT:

A wood-block-print of Atari wreathed in flower petals. Captions above and below read:

Megasaki Senior High Drama Club
Performance Tonight!
In Memory of Atari Kobayashi,
Deceased Ward to the Mayoral-Household,
R.I.P.

INT. MEGASAKI SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL. DAY

A theatre auditorium. On-stage: a student *Kabuki* troupe in elaborate make-up and costumes, a choir composed of three young *sumo* wrestler bass-singers and an old music-teacher tenor, the three shirtless barrel-drummers, and a junior-high boy-performer dressed as a medieval warrior. A wood-block-printed back-drop portrays a sea of angry stray-dogs. The actors dance and mime as the choir sings and whistles in Japanese.

MONTAGE:

Atari draws a highly complicated sea-vessel blue-print in the

sand with a chopstick. Spots and the Hero Pack then work with him roping, stitching, folding, and molding a construction out of discarded detergent bottles, patched-up inner-tubes, plastic recycling-crates, and scraps of cardboard, vinyl, and linoleum. The result: a reasonably well-formed, make-shift raft with a small, lean-to cabin on-deck. (Other dogs work on smaller rafts in the back-ground.)

CUT TO:

The stage, mid-performance. The junior-high warrior poses flamboyantly as he swings a samurai sword with precise, impossibly quick movements. As he assaults an actor playing an evil samurai, the evil samurai is revealed to be two actors (one wearing a black body-suit with his painted face exposed, one wearing a black hood over his face with his body in full-costume exposed) who separate with a flourish as the boy "beheads" him.

CUT TO:

A night-crossing on the newly built raft. Spots, on watch, rides at the prow of the ship like Washington Crossing the Delaware. Chief steers from the rear with a snow-shovel tiller. Rex, King, and Duke ride inside the lean-to cabin with Peppermint. Boss sleeps outside. On the roof of the cabin: Atari lies on his stomach writing briskly with a quill on a roll of paper-towels by the light of his torch-light. An armada of smaller rafts follows in the wake of the large one. Passengers: the rest of the community of aboriginal dogs.

GRAPHIC:

The wood-block-print sea-chart of the Sapporo River (seen earlier during Spots' deportation) which maps a course back from Trash Island across to Megasaki City. (A barrel-drum-solo interlude plays over this image.)

CUT TO:

The end of the performance. The cast and choir take their bows. In the audience: freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors watch and listen. Tracy sits with Editor-Hiroshi and the Daily-Manifesto staff. Her face is covered with bitter tears.

EXT. FLAG-SHIP RAFT. NIGHT

Atari has taken the tiller and stands at the stern of the vessel next to Chief. Spots emerges from inside. He says gravely to

Chief:

SPOTS

Peppermint's in labor.

Chief looks concerned. Spots sits-down in front of Atari. His posture is formal and erect. He says to Chief, reluctant but determined, with a lump in his throat:

SPOTS

Come sit beside me.

Chief hesitates. He looks to Atari. He sits down next to Spots. Tears well-up in Spots' eyes. Atari crouches in front of him and Chief. He puts one hand on each dog's head.

SPOTS

Master Atari, are you willing to accept my brother Chief as new bodyguard-dog in personal service to you, former ward to the mayoral-household?

Atari smiles sadly. He nods and says a few brief words in Japanese. Spots turns to Chief.

SPOTS

Chief, are you willing to accept Atari as your direct master, to serve and protect his safety and welfare with all courage, loyalty, and friendship?

Chief nods, as well. He says quietly:

CHIEF

I can do that.

Spots nods to Atari and lowers his head. Atari gently removes the earphone from Spots' ear and installs it into Chief's. Chief and Atari stand beside him as he takes the tiller again and begins to sing the folk-tune in Japanese. The dogs whistle the harmony.

CUT TO:

The interior of the lean-to cabin. Peppermint has given birth to six puppies. Spots nuzzles her neck. Rex, King, Duke, and Boss crowd around, mesmerized. Atari, on his knees, picks up one of the new-born dogs and looks into its eyes. The carefully folded paper-towel document sticks out from his breast pocket. Chief is now at the tiller, solitary, still whistling -- in unison with all the other dogs on every raft in their little armada. Up ahead, the lights of Megasaki sparkle in the misty darkness.

INT. SAKE-BAR. NIGHT

An intimate, ten-seat saloon decorated in the style of a scientific laboratory. White walls, glass counter, fluorescent lights, a sign which reads: Laboratory Bar. A bartender in a lab-kimono stands propped in the foreground flipping through a back-issue of a science journal with a picture of Neptune on its cover.

Yoko-ono (in her own, disheveled lab-kimono) sits slumped over the bar at the far end of the narrow room surrounded by fourteen empty miniature sake bottles. Her hair is a rat's nest. Her make-up is smudged and runny. Her eye-lids are half-shut. Her hand trembles as she throws-back the contents of a lotus-flower shot-glass and slaps it down on the bar. She grunts to the bartender. Without looking up from his magazine, he absently slides down a small tray containing another miniature sake-bottle and a bowl of rice crackers.

Yoko-ono flips-out the crackers over her shoulder and empties the bottle into her glass. The front door opens and closes, a shuttering of street-light. The bartender looks up.

Low-angle: Tracy, back-lit in the door-frame. She glares down the room at Yoko-ono. Yoko-ono drinks, oblivious. Tracy says coolly to the bartender:

TRACY

Chocolate milk, cold.

Tracy advances to the end of the bar and sits down next to Yoko-ono. She introduces herself:

TRACY

Tracy Walker, Megasaki Senior High Daily-Manifesto. Are you Professor Watanabe's former Assistant-Scientist, Yoko-ono-san?

Yoko-ono shrugs, oblivious. Tracy takes a note-book out of her satchel and opens it on the counter-top. A glass of chocolate milks slides over to her. She drinks it in one gulp and signals for another. She plants her note-book in front of Yoko-ono and asks:

TRACY

Do I have it?

Yoko-ono, irritated, scans the note-book. She flips a page. She

shakes her head and mutters in Japanese then English:

YOKO-ONO

Too late.

Yoko-ono shoves the note-book back to Tracy. A second glass of chocolate milk slides into place. Tracy only takes a small sip. She slides the note-book back to Yoko-ono and says more firmly:

TRACY

Do I have it?

Yoko-ono squints at the note-book again. She shakes her head. She repeats:

YOKO-ONO

Too late. Nobody cares.

As Yoko-ono begins to shove the note-book back to Tracy once again, Tracy throws the contents of her chocolate milk-glass into Yoko-ono's face, slings all the empty miniature sake-bottles off the counter (sending them shattering to the floor), and slaps Yoko-ono briskly twice, forehand and backhand, across the face. She shouts:

TRACY

Do I have it? Do I have the story? Yes or no? On the record! I'm sorry for your loss, but we both know: that was no suicide!

(furious)

I need to prove my conspiracy-theory!

Pause. Yoko-ono breaks-down into hysterical sobbing and wailing. Tracy grabs her shoulders and shakes her forcefully.

TRACY

Pull yourself together and act like a scientist!

YOKO-ONO

(stammering)

Ben is dead. No future on Trash Island. I am -- failure.

TRACY

(grimly)

Professor Watanabe never gave up.

Yoko-ono takes a deep breath. She wipes her eyes. She signals to the bartender. The bartender nods.

INSERT:

A small refrigerator behind the counter filled entirely with neat rows of miniature sake-bottles. The bartender reaches to the back and withdraws a small, corked, hidden, blue serum-vial.

The serum-vial slides down to Tracy and Yoko-ono. A label on it reads: Not for Human Consumption (Dogs Only). Tracy stares at the little glass bottle. She asks, on the edge of her seat:

TRACY

Is this the serum? The Dog-Flu cure? The Snout-Fever treatment? The end of the Canine Saturation-crisis?

YOKO-ONO
(whispers)

Last dose.

Tracy snatches up the serum-vial, grabs her satchel and notebook, and rushes toward the door. Yoko-ono shouts after her:

YOKO-ONO

Tracy: be careful!

But the girl is already out on the street.

TITLE:

Part Four:
"Atari's Lantern"

INSERT:

A wood-block-print propaganda portrait of Mayor Kobayashi papered to a brick wall. Its text reads:

Re-Election Night!
6pm
Municipal Dome

A pair of hands throws a card-board stencil over the poster, shakes a clackling spray-paint can, hisses red pigment, and whisks away the stencil to reveal:

ATARI LIVES!

CUT TO:

The entire length of the block plastered with the Re-Election

Night posted-bills five-high, half of them already defaced with the stencil. A student-protestor wearing a Pro-Dog headband and an Atari T-shirt stands at the top of a ladder continuing his methodical vandalism.

EXT. MUNICIPAL DOME. NIGHT

The steps of the massive, stone edifice swarm with student-protestors: Atari T-shirts, Pro-Dog headbands, picket-signs with dog-names/pictures. Tracy, on the top step with a megaphone, shouts to her comrades, call-and-response-style:

TRACY

Not-fair!

STUDENT-PROTESTORS

To-dog!

TRACY

Not-fair!

STUDENT-PROTESTORS

To-dog!

INT. MUNICIPAL DOME. NIGHT

The central rotunda, a full house. Mayor Kobayashi is on-stage, mid-speech, flanked by: the military-officer, the bespectacled-executive, the technology-tycooness, the *yakuza*-gangster, and Major-Domo. Their pet cats purr and preen behind them. The interpreter translates the mayor's address:

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

The time has come to put the violent, intimidating, unsanitary bad-dogs of Trash Island humanely to sleep. For their own good; and, also: ours.

(to the military-officer)

General Yamatachi? Bring out the replacement-pet.

The military-officer presses a button on a silver remote-control, and a robotic lap-dog emerges from back-stage. It strikes several poses as the audience oohs and aahs. The mayor points at it and shouts:

MAYOR KOBAYASHI

Sit-o!

The robotic lap-dog sits. Mayor Kobayashi looks to the crowd and raises his hands into the air, victorious. The room goes wild. In

her glass booth, the interpreter says excitedly:

INTERPRETER

The results are in! Stand by for the incoming Re-Election Night tally!

INSERT:

The viewing-screen above the dais. A computer-expert in front of a vast main-frame with spinning reels reads-out the numbers in Japanese while accompanying text tells us:

Kobayashi Dynasty: 98.6%

Other: 1.3% (approx.)

Deafening applause and jubilation. The mayor beams.

CUT TO:

The student-protestors on the steps outside. They watch as the re-election-results appear on a giant viewing-screen above a bus-stop. They are horrified. Tracy shouts into her mega-phone:

TRACY

That crook! He's stealing the reelection again! Let's go!

The student-protestors shove their way through the doors of the Municipal Dome.

CUT TO:

The podium. The mayor issues instructions to Major-Domo.

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

Mayor Kobayashi has directed Major-Domo to bring him the Red-Button.

Major-Domo places a small, electronic console (with a single button like a game-show buzzer) onto the lectern and plugs it into a communications-outlet.

MONTAGE:

Sprinkler-jets. Overhead pipes. Dog-catchers on guard. A hovering rescue-drone. The large *wasabi*-gas tank. A full company of robot-dogs encircling: all the imprisoned animals herded into a chain-link corral at the center of the dog-camp. Jupiter, Nutmeg, Oracle, et al. They look terrified and confused. Inside the metal

control-shed, another dog-catcher waits, gripping a lever, and watching an un-illuminated panel-light (labeled: Go!) on his own console next to the television set -- which displays a live-feed of the Re-Election Night event.

CUT TO:

The mayor and his cohorts, startled, as the student-protestors charge up the aisles and rush the stage. Tracy mounts the steps, along with Editor-Hiroshi and the rest of the Daily-Manifesto staff, while Mayor Kobayashi gently restrains the military-officer and the *yakuza*-gangster. She shouts into her mega-phone:

TRACY

This landslide re-election is a massive fraud, and we demand a re-count!

Bodyguards and *sumo* wrestlers enter from the wings. Major-Domo grabs the silver remote-control from the military officer and presses several buttons. With a beep, a crunch, and powerful whir: the robotic lap-dog transforms into its military robot-dog form.

The chaotic room goes still and silent. The mayor shouts for his colleagues to stand down. The bodyguards retreat slightly. The robot-dog idles. Major-Domo's fingers linger, paused, above the buttons of the silver remote-control. Tracy and Editor-Hiroshi exchange a frightened look. The interpreter announces, surprised:

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

The mayor is allowing the unauthorized Pro-Dog student-protestors a platform to voice their dissenting beliefs!

The mayor steps down from the podium and gestures for Tracy to speak her piece. She takes a deep breath. She strides over to the lectern. She steps up to the microphone and begins with a furious:

TRACY

Mayor Kobayashi has dog's-blood on his hands! You all do!

The crowd immediately boos, jeers, and hisses. As Tracy presses-on, we cut among the listeners (including the sushi chef):

TRACY

Atari was a hero. Professor Watanabe was murdered. The

serum works!

Tracy holds up the late-edition of the Daily-Manifesto over her head.

INSERT:

The front page. Headline: The Serum Works! There is an accompanying image of the last-dose serum-vial.

CUT TO:

The laboratory-bar. Yoko-ono and the bartender watch the proceedings on a wall-mounted television set. Yoko-ono looks hopeful but anxious. She is drinking chocolate milk.

CUT TO:

Tracy as she reaches the climax of her speech, which is:

TRACY

The mayor is a crook, and I hate him. Thank you.

Tracy steps down from the lectern. The audience grumbles and mutters. Mayor Kobayashi stares at Tracy evenly. He steps back up to the podium and responds in Japanese to Tracy's accusations. The interpreter translates from her glass booth:

INTERPRETER

This small minority of dog-lovers has been sent by overseas special-interest groups to agitate disorder and incite anarchy.

CUT TO:

Major-Domo on-stage as he demands several items directly from Tracy's pockets.

INSERT:

Tracy's immigration-permit, her student I.D., and her Megasaki Senior High class-pin as they are confiscated by the mayor's hatchet-man. In return, he provides her with a one-way, non-stop, economy-class airline ticket on Megasaki International.

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

I hereby cancel and nullify Foreign-exchange-student-walker's senior high school study-visa. She will be expelled from class, stripped of her course-credits,

and formally deported on the next direct-flight back to Cincinnati, Ohio.

Applause. Tracy begins to cry.

A tremendous dog-sneeze blasts echoing through the great hall. All eyes in the room turn at once to the center-entrance at the back of the auditorium where:

Atari stands with Chief, Spots, Rex, King, Duke, Boss, Peppermint, and the litter of infant pups. As they advance into the chamber, Gondo and all the rest of the aboriginal dogs flood up the aisle behind them.

Audience-members gasp. The mayor's mouth falls open. Major-Domo glares, stunned. Tracy looks wildly delighted, her eyes still filled with tears. The robot-dog continues idling and whirring. Atari slowly hobbles to the front of the room followed by his company of dogs. He now walks with a cane (in fact, a discarded yard-stick). Chief and Spots assist him as he climbs the steps to the stage. The cats hiss and cower.

Atari bows to the mayor. Mayor Kobayashi, dazed, bows back to him. Atari turns to Tracy and motions to Chief. Tracy hesitates, uncertain -- then gets the idea: she reaches into one pocket and withdraws a hypodermic needle. She reaches into another pocket and withdraws the blue serum-vial. She jabs the needle through the serum-vial's rubber-cap and shoots the last-dose into Chief's flank. Chief yelps briefly. (A microphone on a very low stand has been placed in front of the dog.)

The room remains silent and transfixed as: Chief squirms slightly. He stretches his neck and shoulders. He swallows. He straightens suddenly. His eyes widen and brighten. The tension in his body wanes, all at once. In a snap, the sheen returns to his coat. He starts to sneeze -- then stops-short and blurts into the microphone:

CHIEF

Holy smokes! My lungs feel clear. My equilibrium feels balanced. My vision is sharp as a tack for the first time in months. Wow, that's a great serum!

Audience-members all around the room frown and murmur, confused and uneasy. Atari addresses the mayor formally and briefly in Japanese. The mayor nods. The interpreter continues her commentary in the glass booth:

INTERPRETER

Master Atari, whose death, I think we can say, appears to have been inaccurately reported, has asked to read a statement to the General Assembly. He will then withdraw from the debate and respond to no further questions.

Atari raises the dog-level microphone. He takes the paper-towel document out of his pocket and begins to read. Tracy, discreetly, translates Atari's speech into English, reading at a whisper into a hand-held memo-recorder:

TRACY

Dear Editor-Hiroshi of the Megasaki Senior High Daily-Manifesto: your publication has a reputation for truth, integrity, and excellent writing. In a series of first-rate articles by an attractive --

Tracy hesitates as Atari continues his speech. She blushes but reads-on:

TRACY

-- cub-reporter on your staff, you shine a spot-light on the great injustice that has occurred under the Kobayashi Administration (with the blessing of its constituency). I have spent much of my time in recent weeks traveling in the company of the very kind of animals our mayor refers to as "bad-dogs". They are the finest living-beings I have ever come to know in all my dozen years on this earth. To your readers, the good-people of Megasaki, I say: the cycle of life always hangs in a delicate balance. Who are we, and who do we want to be?

Atari holds up a finger. He repeats curtly into the microphone in English:

ATARI

Who are we?

Tracy nods. She continues her recording:

TRACY

I wrote a *haiku* to try to express my feelings about the suffering dogs of Trash Island. It is also about nature, love, friendship, eternity, and a black owl. I call it: "Atari's Lantern".

CUT TO:

Viewers across the city of Megasaki: the audience at the Municipal Dome; pedestrians on the street below the bus-stop viewing-screen; two parents with five brothers in their family den; two parents and two grandparents with five sisters in their family kitchen; a librarian and ten janitorial staff-members in the school library; a crowd at a neon-lit noodle-shop; the grandmother from Tracy's residence. They all lean-in toward their television sets, spellbound.

FANTASY-SHOT:

Framed by a round-iris matte-shot: Atari stands in an exquisite park among a hundred cherry-trees in full-bloom. Chief is seated on his left. Spots is seated on his right. As Atari recites in Japanese, the words of his *haiku* appear onscreen in both languages:

What-ever-happen?
To-man's-best-friend.
Falling-spring-blossom.

On-cue, the blossoms all around cascade from their branches until the trees are bare -- and the ground is blanketed in petals.

CUT TO:

The same viewers across the city: now in tears. Chief and Spots, on-stage, watch over Atari with defiant pride. Tracy snuffles. She continues to translate as Atari finishes the paper-towel speech:

TRACY

I dedicate this poem to my distant-uncle, Mayor Kobayashi, who took me in when I myself was a stray-dog with nowhere else to turn. Editor-Hiroshi, please, extend my subscription for an additional year. I enclose a check in the amount of one thousand yen. Signed, Atari Kobayashi, former ward to the mayoral-household.

Atari holds up an endorsed check. The interpreter, beside herself, overcome with emotion, struggles with her own translation:

INTERPRETER

He said a *haiku*.

(unable to continue)

I'll tell you later.

Mayor Kobayashi has turned his back to the audience. His arms are crossed. Everyone watches him: Tracy and the student-protestors; Major-Domo and the mayor's stooges; the living-dogs and the robot-dog; the stalls of the crowded auditorium.

CLOSE-UP:

The mayor turns around. His face is bright-scarlet. His ears are vibrating. His eyes are pinched into a tight, furious squint. Two wisps of smoke come out of his nostrils like a bull about to steam-roll a matador. Suddenly, tears stream down his face and his voice shatters as he stammers into his microphone. The interpreter translates sentence-by-sentence:

INTERPRETER

Not-fair-to-boy. Not-fair-to-dog. I-have-no-honor.

The mayor slams his fist down onto the podium. He turns to the wings and shouts in English:

MAYOR KOBAYASHI

Bring-me-Trash-Island-legislation!

Major-Domo frowns. He looks to the military-officer, the bespectacled-executive, the technology-tycooness, and the *yakuza*-gangster. They are confused. An aide places the familiar document onto the lectern. Its projected image appears on the viewing-screen above. With a sudden flourish, the mayor produces his stamp-hammer and thumps the document at the podium again, this time instantly and completely erasing the seal of his office -- formally de-activating the Trash Island Decree. The crowd gasps again.

INTERPRETER

Holy Moses! The mayor has just officially repealed the Trash Island Decree! No kidding!

CLOSE-UPS:

Atari, Tracy, Chief, Spots, Editor-Hiroshi, Rex, King, Duke, Boss: all flummoxed. Major-Domo narrows his eyes and grits his slightly pointy teeth. He presses a button on the silver remote-control.

The robot-dog springs to life, leaping in front of the podium in its full-on attack posture. Its retracted bayonets emerge. Its

canine-teeth switch to blades. Its electronic roar booms at the mayor. The mayor freezes. Dead silence.

Major-Domo shouts at the mayor and points to: the Red-Button. The mayor shakes his head and refuses. Major-Domo screams at the mayor, pointing again. The robot-dog advances three paces toward the podium. The fighting-screens slide over its eyes.

INSERT:

The Red-Button console.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP:

Mayor Kobayashi sweats.

REVERSE:

Major-Domo, backed by his four cohorts. He hesitates with his finger still poised over the silver remote-control.

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

Major-Domo is accusing the mayor of breaking his campaign promise! He's steaming mad! It's going to be a fight!

INSERT:

The silver remote-control. A skeletal finger presses a button.

The robot-dog lunges at the mayor, smashing-through the wooden podium and blasting it to smithereens. The Red-Button console clickity-clacks onto the floor, still wired to its communications-outlet. The mayor retreats, dashing behind the theatre-curtain. The robot-dog roars after him. The stage breaks into a chaotic riot: politicians, protestors, students, bodyguards, cats, dogs.

Spots looks to Chief with a strange, grim expression. Chief shouts, desperate:

CHIEF

Spit him with a tooth!

SPOTS

(resigned)

I can't get a clean shot. Too many innocent protestors. I'll be right back.

Spots looks briefly to Peppermint and the six pups. He smiles faintly. He dashes-in after the robot-dog and disappears behind the theatre-curtain. Atari, Chief, Tracy, and the others watch as the theatre-curtain billows and swings and darts and jolts amid screams and roars and bangs and booms. Finally, there is calm.

The robot-dog re-emerges from behind the theatre-curtain. It pauses at center-stage. It sways slightly, leans over sideways, and collapses. Spots re-emerges from behind the theatre-curtain. He pauses at center-stage. He sways slightly, leans over sideways, and collapses. Mayor Kobayashi re-emerges from behind the theatre-curtain. He pauses at center-stage. He looks to Atari.

Atari sways slightly, leans over sideways, and collapses.

As Tracy, Chief, and the mayor rush to assist the fallen Atari -- Major-Domo dives across the stage to the Red-Button, still plugged-in on the floor. He slams his palm down onto it with a whack. The camera whip-pans to the communications-outlet.

MONTAGE:

1. The panel-light in the control-shed at the dog-camp illuminates: Go!
2. Chief leaps at Major-Domo and clamps his jaws like a bear-trap onto the hatchet-man's hand. Major-Domo screams.
3. The waiting dog-catcher in the control-shed pulls his lever.
4. Rex, King, Duke, and Boss assault the military-officer, the bespectacled-executive, the technology-tycooness, and the *yakuza*-gangster.
5. The *wasabi*-gas tank rumbles and pumps. The over-head pipes clank and squeal. The sprinkler-jets hum and vibrate.
6. The Hero Pack chases Major-Domo and his cronies behind the curtain, which begins to billow and swing and dart and jolt again.

CUT TO:

The rescue-drone blasting its spot-light down at the dog-camp. The company of dog-catchers puts on their gas-masks. The trapped dogs cower. The surrounding robot-dogs close-ranks. The dog-catcher in the control-shed looks-out from his window.

On the roof of the control-shed: the rookie-dog-catcher lies on his stomach, watching with binoculars. His helmet has been replaced with a Pro-Dog headband. There is a computer at his side with wires running down the side of the shed. He lowers his binoculars.

One of the dog-catchers in the yard looks puzzled. He taps the side of his gas-mask. He looks to another dog-catcher. Both of their gas-masks begin to fill with puffs of yellow smoke. They look to the other dog-catchers. All their gas-masks are now filling-up with the yellow *wasabi*-gas. They clutch and pull at straps and hoses. In the shed: the dog-catcher frowns and looks around, frantic. The shed is rapidly filling with *wasabi*-gas, as well.

The trapped dogs look at each other, confused but hopeful. The rookie-dog-catcher types more commands on his computer. All at once: every robot-dog in the dog-camp transforms into a robotic lap-dog. Jupiter hesitates. He bellows:

JUPITER

Escape!

The trapped dogs explode into a frenzy. Jupiter, Oracle, and Nutmeg lead the charge as the dog-mob forces open the gates of the chain-link corral. They over-run the circle of robotic lap-dogs (who cheerfully jump and play among them). They charge past the coughing, mask-less dog-catchers, including the one who bursts hacking and choking from the shed. They slam their way out of the dog-camp and run away in every direction. The rookie dog-catcher on the roof of the shed looks up at the sky. He types in a final command.

The rescue-drone teeters, sputters, falls-flat with a thundering impact, and (as before) explodes with a miniature nuclear blast.

INT. AMBULANCE. NIGHT

Tracy, Chief, and the mayor sit at Atari's side while he lies in a gurney with tubes in his arms and nose, unconscious. In the rear-corner of the vehicle, Spots is also unconscious, lying on his side in a plastic-bin.

INT. MEGASAKI GENERAL. NIGHT

A hospital waiting-room. Tracy and Chief wait side-by-side in plastic chairs. Peppermint nurses the six pups on the floor next to a drinking-water dispenser. Rex, King, Duke, and Boss sleep

under a magazine-rack. Mayor Kobayashi, in hand-cuffs, paces, regretful and anxious.

A doctor wearing a surgical-mask bursts into the room. He carries the remaining hunk of the broken propeller-clutch in his slightly bloody, latex-gloved hands. He takes one last, cursory look at the thing, then tosses it into a waste-basket and says to Tracy in English:

SURGEON

The brain surgery was a complete success, but his left kidney failed due to the stress of the operation.

TRACY

(hesitates)

What about the right one?

SURGEON

(unfortunately)

He lost it in a train-crash two years ago.

Without hesitation, the mayor (still hand-cuffed) stands-up, approaches the surgeon, bows deeply, and issues a command at an urgent whisper:

MAYOR KOBAYASHI

Take my left kidney. Give to Atari-san.

OVERHEAD ANGLE:

Atari and Mayor Kobayashi lie unconscious on two side-by-side operating-tables. Both patients are covered by white sheets and wear anesthetic-masks over their faces. The mayor is still in hand-cuffs. The surgeon operates, briskly removing the mayor's left kidney and installing it into Atari's abdomen. He stitches-up the two incisions neatly. Chief watches the procedure through a window with his own surgical-mask over his snout. He goes to another window and looks-in at:

Spots on his own operating table, intubated. A pulse-monitor beside him displays only the faintest blip.

INSERT:

A publicity wood-block-print of Atari and Spots wreathed in flower petals. Captions above and below read:

Pray for Atari and Spots
Beloved Ward and Bodyguard-Dog

To the Mayoral-Household

INT. MUNICIPAL DOME. NIGHT

The Re-Election Night event has become a candle-light vigil. Editor-Hiroshi, at the podium, holds-up a book entitled: Election Law (Revised) and speaks to the audience in Japanese. The interpreter explains:

INTERPRETER (V.O.)

According to a long-standing statute unique to Uni Prefecture, in the event of the death, disappearance, or felony-prosecution of the chosen candidate on, while, during, or concurrent with the Re-Election Night ceremony, all powers and authorities vested in his or her designated office transfer forthwith to his or her next-of-kin and/or appointed heir. In other words, Atari Kobayashi is the new mayor of Megasaki City!

Atari appears on the viewing-screen in his hospital-bed. He smiles to the audience, drugged. The surgeon at his side gives a thumbs-up. The audience cheers, cries, hugs, and shouts. The interpreter in her glass booth shares a final, dazzled moment:

INTERPRETER

You heard me right: Atari Kobayashi is the new mayor of Megasaki City! (Let's hope that new kidney works.) Boy, what a night!

The audience begins to sing The Boy Samurai. The *taiko* barrel-drummers from the opening titles join them, pounding away on-stage.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Rex (with a fresh hair-cut) lies half-asleep, curled-up on a lamb's-wool bean-bag next to an electric space-heater. His elderly school-teacher master sits nearby in a recliner studying a math textbook.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Life in Uni Prefecture returned to a comfortable tranquility.

EXT. BASEBALL DIAMOND. DAY

Boss (in a clean, new jersey) watches with mixed-feelings from a dug-out as another strike-out returns from home-plate and joins his seated team-mates. Boss licks the player's hand encouragingly

as he passes-by.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Megasaki Dragons ended their winning streak with a staggering loss to the Honda Goblins.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO. DAY

King (immaculately brushed) sits calmly with tissues tucked-around his collar next to his rotund, white-aproned master while a make-up artist touches-up both of them and a cameraman takes a light-reading. A hundred stacked cans labeled Doggy-Chop surround them.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Doggy-Chop re-opened all eleven of its domestic factories --

INT/EXT. SCREENED-PORCH. DAY

Duke (fully groomed) sips from a flowery, ceramic dog-bowl while his middle-aged-matron master and her two very similar friends sit circled around him, stirring matching tea-cups, cooing admiringly, and petting him. Duke's master feeds him a dog-biscuit.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

-- and Puppy-Snaps resumed production with an improved product.

INSERT:

A chalk-board menu. Today's items: bologna *sashimi*, shrimp-flavored patty, frozen fish-sticks hand-roll, tap-water. The camera tilts-down as a *bento*-box slides into frame and is briskly filled with the rations listed above.

INT. PREFECTURE PRISON. DAY

The lunch-room of a minimum-security penitentiary. The sushi-chef (in a prison-striped head-band and kimono) serves the inmates as they glide-by down a cafeteria-line: Major-Domo, the military-officer, the bespectacled-executive, the technology-tycooness, the yakuza-gangster, and Mayor Kobayashi himself (all in their own prison-striped kimonos). The mayor rolls an I.V. drip at his side.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Graft and political corruption were reduced to

sustainable, acceptable levels.

Outside, leashed together like a chain-gang: the mayor and his cronies' five cats slink, sullen, across the prison-yard.

EXT. VETERINARY-TENT. DAY

A refugee-camp mobile-clinic. Yoko-ono inoculates a beagle at the head of a procession of waiting dogs. Seconds after the dose, the dog perks-up, powerfully rejuvenated.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Dog-Flu serum cured every breathing-animal in the region.

INSERT:

The front-page of the Daily-Manifesto. Headline: Megasaki City Salutes Former Bodyguard-Dog. There is a wood-block-print of a newly-erected bronze-and-stone statue of Spots in his dog-cage.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

A remorseful society embraced its once-forsaken pets.

EXT. JUNK-YARD. DAY

Trash Island, dog-less -- with the exception of one animal seated in the foreground in silhouette with its back to the camera looking out over the sea of refuse.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Some say a few lost-dogs continue to roam and scavenge on Trash Island --

The dog turns to the camera with a metallic creak. Its eyes glow yellow. It "sneezes". (Actually, an electronic hiccup.)

NARRATOR (V.O.)

-- however, these rumors remain unconfirmed.

INT. MAYORAL RESIDENCE. NIGHT

The boardroom, redecorated. Atari, in a formal mayoral kimono, sits at the head of the lacquered table with Chief at his side. He confers with a new group while the stenographer taps away and the Simul-Translate machine translates:

SIMUL-TRANSLATE (V.O.)

Mayor Atari, we all agree it should be a crime to

abuse, beat, murder, or yell at any dog in Megasaki City.

The camera pans from Atari to Editor-Hiroshi (who has been speaking off-screen in Japanese) with Scrap at his side.

SIMUL-TRANSLATE (V.O.)

That is not the question. The question is: what is the appropriate punishment?

The camera pans from Editor-Hiroshi to Tracy with Nutmeg at her side as Atari responds (off-screen in Japanese):

SIMUL-TRANSLATE (V.O.)

Exactly. And the answer is: Death Penalty.

The camera pans from Tracy to the rookie dog-catcher with Gondo at his side as Editor-Hiroshi continues to debate the issue:

SIMUL-TRANSLATE (V.O.)

That seems excessive to us.

The camera pans back to Atari, who continues to stand his ground as the meeting concludes:

SIMUL-TRANSLATE (V.O.)

Possibly. Anyway, we should make it at least 60 days community-service and a fine of no less than 750,000 yen. Meeting adjourned.

CUT TO:

A pair of escort-trams manned by *sumo*-guards and followed by Atari and Tracy in an armored mayoral-tram. Atari feeds the runt from Peppermint's litter with a baby-bottle. He puts his arm around Tracy's shoulder. He speaks briefly into his earphone (in Japanese). The camera dollies one tram back to the caboose of the tram-cade where we find Chief in his capacity as security-detail. He answers soberly, scanning the route ahead:

CHIEF (O.S.)

I'm standing-by, Master Atari.

A familiar voice comes from off-screen at the rear of the tram:

NUTMEG

How's it feel to be a former stray?

Nutmeg sidles up next to Chief. She now wears her own secret-

service-type earphone. Chief answers, bittersweet:

CHIEF

I take it one day at a time. Last week, I nearly be-
handed an industrial-lobbyist from West Suzuki. They
had to give him a blood transfusion.

NUTMEG

(gently)

He probably had it coming.

CHIEF

Maybe.

CHIEF

(pause)

Learned any new tricks?

NUTMEG

(a little reluctant)

Actually, yes. Just one.

CHIEF

(suddenly eager)

Can I see it?

Nutmeg takes a deep breath. She springs-down onto her forelegs,
jolts-up a notch onto the index-claw of one paw (balancing with
the other), and cycles her hind-legs in a piston-motion.

NUTMEG

I'm supposed to be juggling ten bowling-pins engulfed
in flames over my tail at this point, but you just have
to imagine that part.

CHIEF

(instantly)

I can picture it.

Nutmeg ends the trick. Chief asks softly, a bit more than just-
curious:

CHIEF

You still against bringing puppies into this world?

Nutmeg starts to answer -- but hesitates. She says gently,
almost-ready:

NUTMEG

I'll tell you when I get to know you better.

CHIEF
(pause)

Fair enough.

The tram-cade crosses above a blooming Megasaki Park. Seed-pods float into the air like feathers. Sunbeams break through the soft clouds.

CHIEF
My friends think I like to fight, but it's just not true. Sometimes I lose my temper and blow off a little steam -- but I've never enjoyed it. I'm not a violent dog. I don't know why I bite.

NUTMEG
(simply)
I'm not attracted to tame animals.

Nutmeg licks a seed-pod off Chief's snout. Chief looks slightly bashful, but mostly amused and grateful.

CHIEF
Thank you.

Chief begins to whistle the ancient folk-tune as the two dogs continue their afternoon security-cruise. Up ahead: Atari kisses Tracy. They hold hands as the tram-cade buzzes along.

EXT. *SHINTO* TEMPLE. EVENING

A bright-red, wooden shrine floating at the center of a man-made reflecting-pool. The statue of Spots stands at the center of the entrance. A bilingual plaque reads:

Dedicated to Spots Kobayashi
(Former Bodyguard-Dog to the Mayoral-Household)
For Distinguished Service
With Gratitude
From the People and Dogs of Megasaki City

The camera booms-down to reveal a lacquered dog-hovel with *tatami* floors and silk cushions at the edge of the reflecting-pool. Reclining inside are: Peppermint, the five pups, and Spots (with a splint on his leg and a bandage on his head). A priest in a tall black hat and white kimono serves a tray of two large and six extremely small dog-bowls labeled Doggy-Chop. The black owl sits perched on top of the roof of the shrine. It hoots.

The *taiko* barrel-drummers resume their relentless beat as the bird stretches its wings, floats-up into the air, and flies away over the dusk-lit city.



SQ2 MAYOR KOBAYASHI CAMPAIGN POSTER

Michael Gaskell

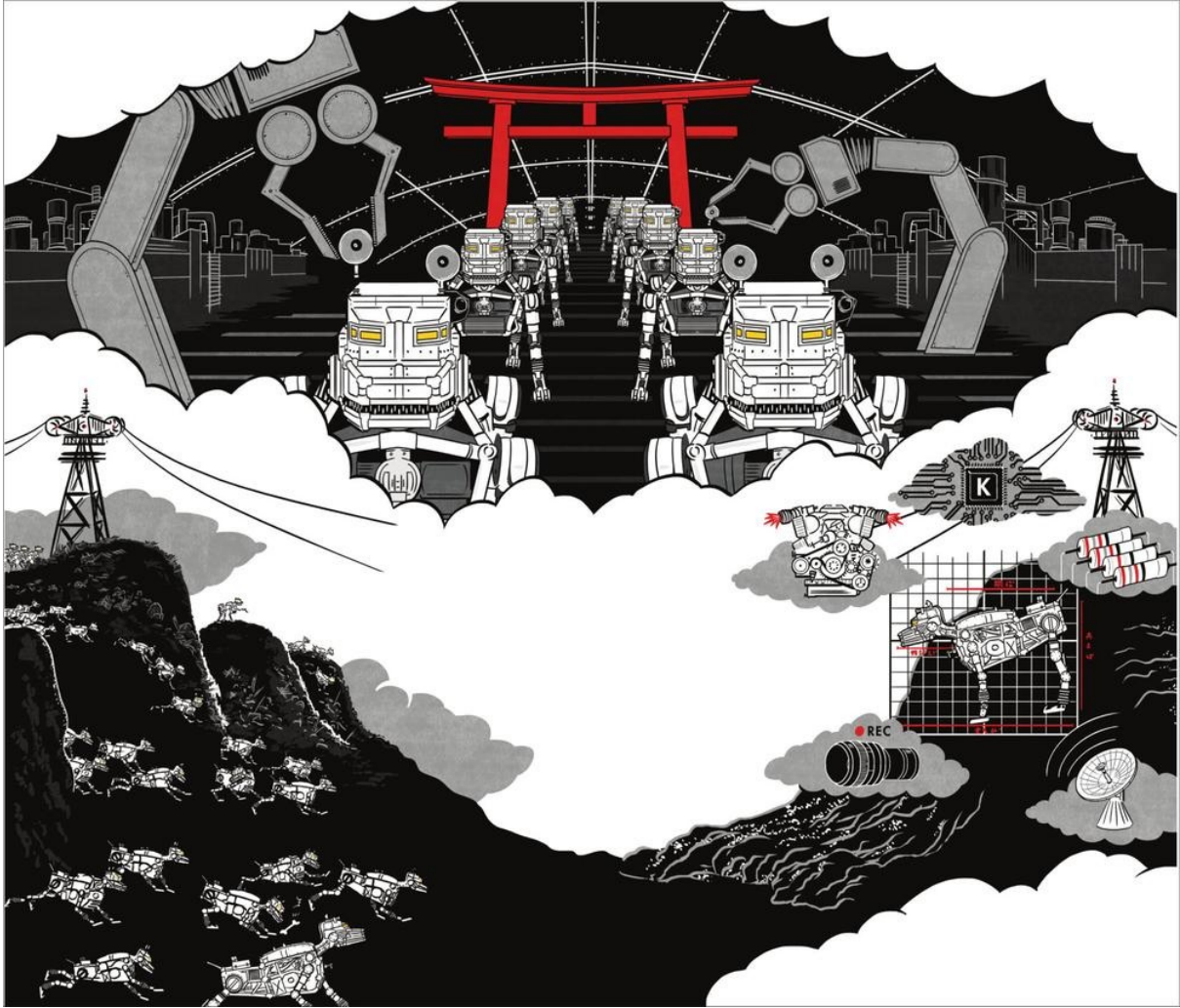


SQ55 MAYOR ATARI OFFICIAL SCREEN

Camille Moulin-Dupré

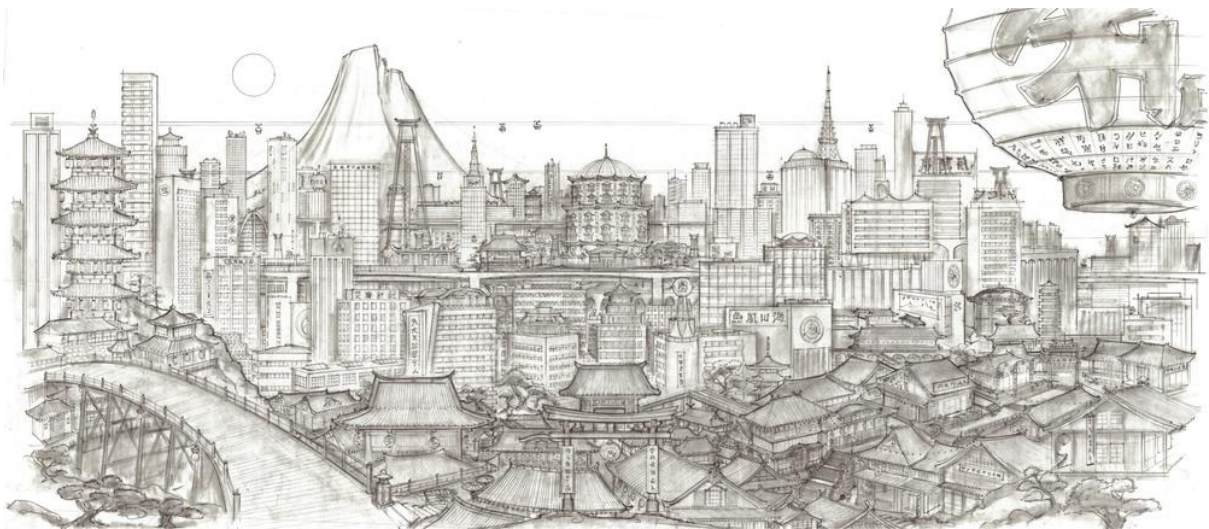


SQ22 MAYOR KOBAYASHI OFFICIAL SCREEN
Camille Moulin-Dupré



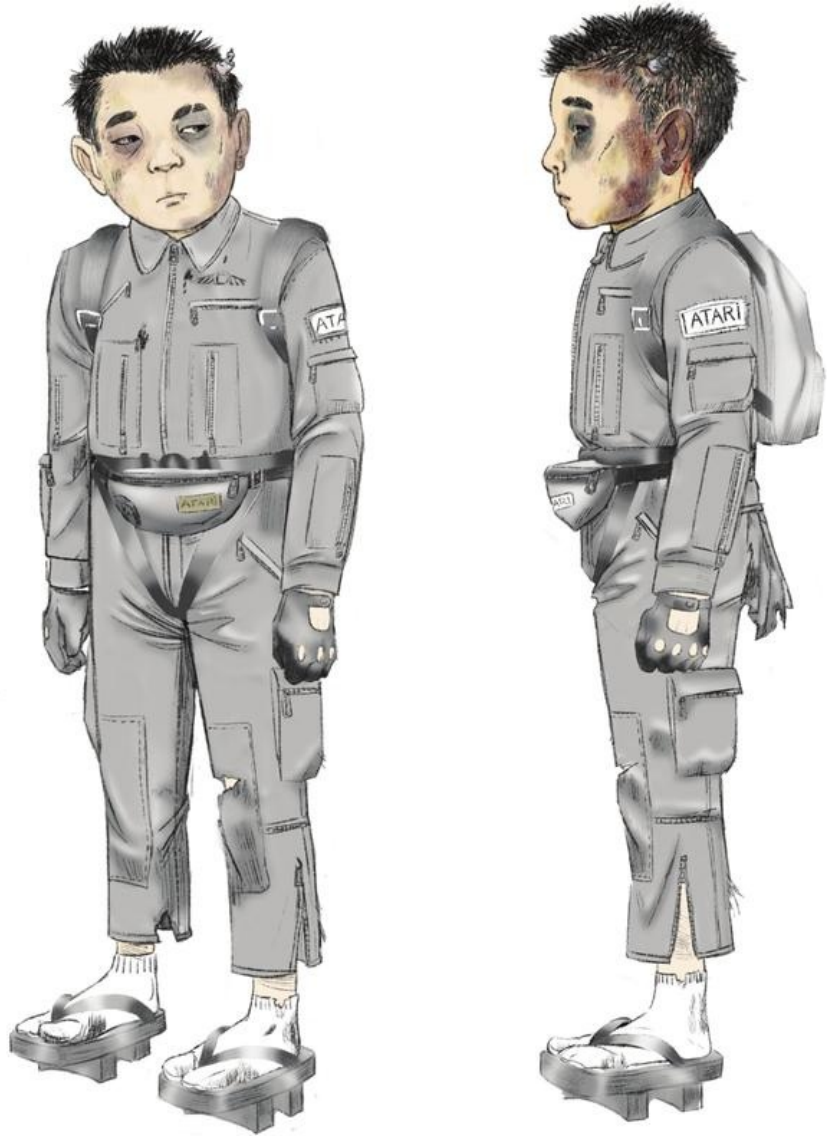
SQ22 SUPERVISOR KITANO OFFICIAL SCREEN

Camille Moulin-Dupré



SQ2 MEGASAKI CITY

Carl Sprague



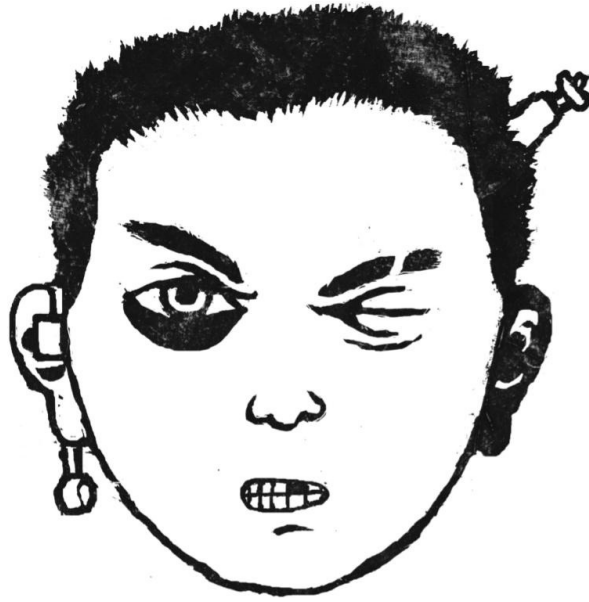
SQ8 ATARI KOBAYASHI

Félicie Haymoz

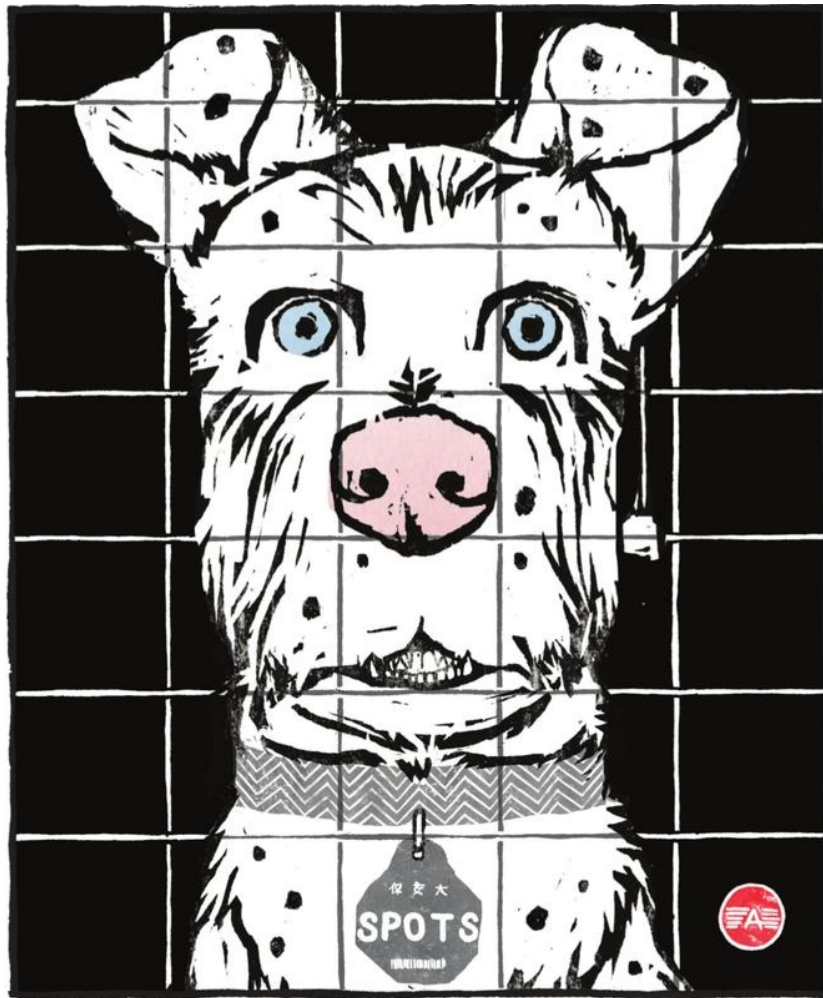


SQ2/25 FOREIGN-EXCHANGE STUDENT
TRACY WALKER

Félicie Haymoz



SQ48 ATARI SILK-
SCREEN/STENCIL
Molly Rosenblatt



SQ5 SPOTS WOOD-BLOCK PRINT

Molly Rosenblatt



SQ2 ASSISTANT HATCHET-MAN
MAJOR-DOMO

Félicie Haymoz



SQ0.5 SHINTO SHRINE

Kevin J. J. Hill



SQ47 SAKE BAR

Kevin J. J. Hill



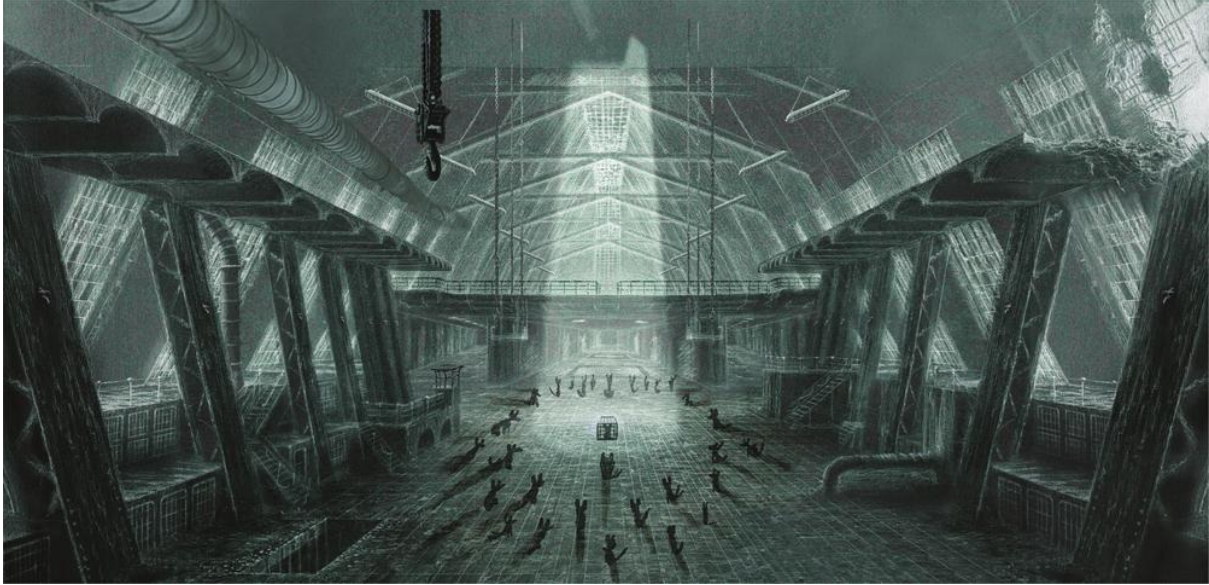
SQ45 MEGASAKI SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT THEATRE

Turlo Griffin



SQ36 THE FAR-AWAY CUTICLES

Turlo Griffin



SQ44 KOBAYASHI ANIMAL-TESTING PLANT

Turlo Griffin



SQ4 SPASMODIC NASAL EXPIRATION

Turlo Griffin



SQ4 INSOMNIA

Turlo Griffin



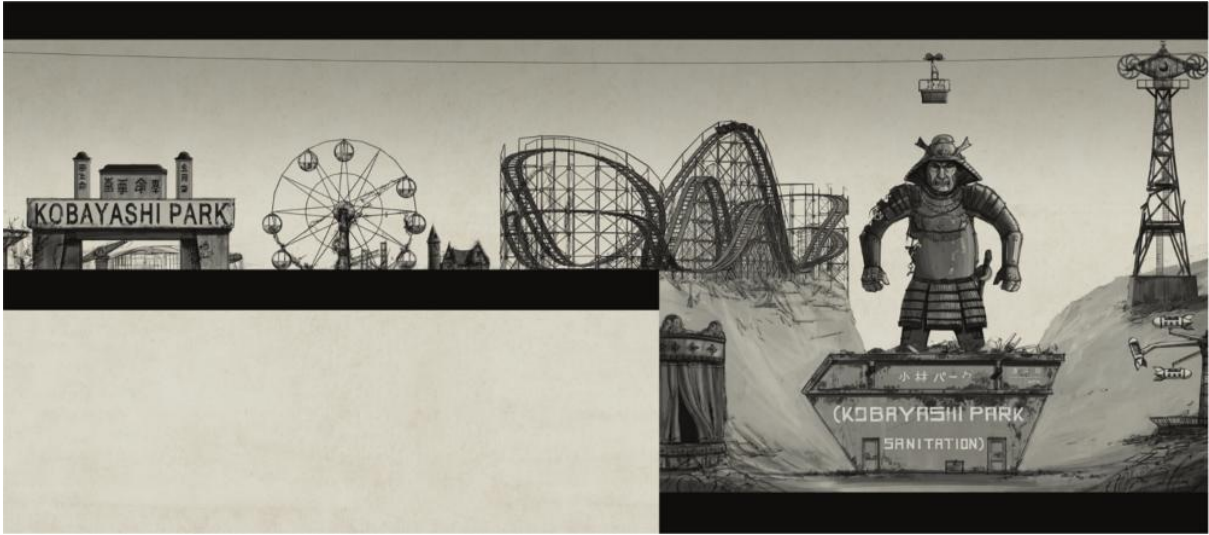
SQ24 22 VIEWS OF TRASH ISLAND

Victor Georgiev



SQ30 CRUSHER/COMPACTOR/INCINERATOR EXTERIOR

Victor Georgiev



SQ31 KOBAYASHI PARK

Victor Georgiev

About the Author

Wes Anderson is the writer/director of *Bottle Rocket*, *Rushmore*, *The Royal Tenenbaums*, *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*, *Darjeeling Limited*, *Fantastic Mr Fox* and *Moonrise Kingdom*.

Also by the Author

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RUSHMORE
THE ROYAL TENENBAUMS
MOONRISE KINGDOM
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