

LIGHT YEARS

PT #1

The Last Question

Screenplay by Bryan Singer

**Based on the short story by
Isaac Asimov**

PT #2

IMPOSTER

by

Scott Rosenberg

SHORT STORY BY PHILIP K. DICK

PT #3

MIMIC

Fourth Draft

08/07/95

BLACK

Title: IN THE BEGINNING...

BLACK

BOOOOOOOOM!

An explosion of intergalactic magnitude fills the screen with stars. Dissolve to:

Night sky. **Title: THE LAST QUESTION By Isaac Asimov, part I
A WALTZ.**

EXT - TENT - NIGHT

The music is coming from a formal reception held in a tent just above ground from The Computer Site near a small pond.

INT - RECEPTION TENT - NIGHT

A lavish spread. Black tie. Scientists, lariats and dignitaries sip champagne and toast to the wonders of science. The theme of the decor, maps, models, art-work, will be exemplary of the following narration:

NARRATOR

It had been six years since Multivac, the largest computer ever built, went on line. It's function, to gather information from all over the world, without the use of conventional programmers. It's purpose, to utilize it's wealth of acquired knowledge in the hope that it might answer some of the more complex and challenging questions of mankind. It's first order of business. Energy. The world was exploiting its mineral and nuclear resources with increasing efficiency, but there was only so much of both. Then, one day, what had only been theory became fact. Multivac found a way to store, convert, and utilize the energy of the sun on a planet-wide scale.

EXT - RECEPTION

Computer engineers ALEXANDER ADELL, mid-thirties, and BERTRAM LUPOV, mid-forties, both very drunk, wander from the tent, toward the pond. Lupov carries ice, glassware, a bottle, the makings of a rum picnic. Adell is carrying a large piece of cake, stolen from the buffet, now melting through his fingers. A stray candle

burns on top of it.

ADELL and LUPOV
Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday
to you! Happy birthday dear
SolarThermalOrbitalRetro-Module ATO
6000. Happy birthday to you!

They reach the pond and blow out the candle. They collapse.

Lupov pulls himself up and pours a couple of drinks.

LUPOV
Congratulations, my friend.

ADELL
Congratulations to you my friend.

LUPOV
To six long years..

ADELL
To six long, good years.

Lupov half-smiles and toasts. He has something on his mind. But Adell is too drunk to notice. Lupov removes a cigarette and offers one to Adell.

ADELL
No thanks.

LUPOV
Oop. I forgot. Training for the big trip.

Lupov glances toward the sky, then lights up.

Adell knows what Lupov is thinking now.

ADELL
You know I wish you could...

LUPOV
No wishes. Remember. All's fair in
love and physical examinations. We knew
from the beginning it would be you. Let's
not feel sorry for me. This is a
celebration. Besides, you know that
antenna better than anyone. You should
have to spend six months calibrating it.
Remember what they say, your first day
in space is the most exciting day of your
life, and your second day in space is...

ADELL(chiming in)
...the most boring day of you're life.
Yes, I know. Well, I'll believe it when
I'm there.

Adell takes a long sip. He looks up at the sky.

ADELL
It is amazing when you think of it. Really.
Enough energy to melt the globe into a drop
of liquid iron ten thousand times over. All
the energy we could ever use, forever.

Lupov, struggling a bit with the glassware:

LUPOV
Well, not forever.

ADELL
Oh, hell, just about forever. Till the sun
runs down, anyway.

LUPOV
That's not forever.

ADELL
All right, then. Millions and millions of
years. Twenty million, maybe. Are you
satisfied?

LUPOV
Twenty million years isn't forever.

Adell stops.

ADELL
All right, Bert, what's your point? You
always have a point.

LUPOV
No point, really. It's just that...well it's
just that mankind tends to be a bit short
sighted, sometimes. That's all.

ADELL
Now what the hell is that supposed to mean?
What, you're saying that I don't care about
the future?

LUPOV

No Alex, I'm sure you care about your future. I'm just saying that, in the grand scheme of things, twenty million years is a long way from forever.

Adell is too intoxicated to register the jab.

ADELL

Well, it's a hell of a lot longer than we would last on coal and uranium, that's for sure. You can ask Multivac about that one.

LUPOV

I don't have to ask Multivac. I already know about that. All I'm saying is that nothing lasts forever. The sun won't last forever. We're safe for twenty million years; but then what? -- And don't say we'll switch to another sun.

Lupov picks up a hand full of rocks and starts tossing them into the pond. Adell sips his drink, slowly.

LUPOV

You're thinking we'll switch to another sun when ours is done, aren't you?

ADELL

Well...why not?

LUPOV

See, that's the trouble with you. You're like the guy who gets caught in a rainstorm and runs under a thick tree. He figures, even if the leaves soak through he'll just find another tree! Well you, my friend, cannot see the forest for the trees! Our sun has twenty million? Give us a few billion years and everything will be dark. No more planets, no more stars, no more matter, no more nothing.

Adell stares up at the night sky, full to the brim with twinkling stars.

LUPOV (cont.)

Remember when you were a very young boy? How hard it was to picture your own mortality. Our universe is very young. -- You know what entropy is?

ADELL

Yes, I know what entropy is. But what if we could build things up again some day? You know, reverse it.

LUPOV

Never.

ADELL

Why not. Who's to say that some day, some how, some one won't find an answer.

LUPOV

Everything has a beginning, and an ending. You can't reverse entropy any more than you can reverse time. Ask the computer if you think I'm full of shit.

Adell looks at Lupov like he's crazy.

LUPOV (cont.)

Seriously, you ask the great Multivac what it thinks. I'll bet you fifty dollars it can't be done. Come on. It'll be fun.

A grin crosses Adell's face.

ADELL

Alright, you're on!

Adell puts down the last dregs of his glass as Lupov hurls a final stone into the pond sending ripples across the brilliant map of stars reflected in the water's glassy surface.

INT - MULTIVAC CAVE

The computer itself is a long series of mainframe units going back as far as the eye can see. It sits in a giant cavern with dozens of ventilating ceiling fans whirling over head. Small L.E.D's blink from red to green next to the small print reading Multivac. Countless screens register the continual flow of information from all over the world, pouring in and out of the monolithic system. A desk and chair rest empty nearby. An unfinished donut. A news paper headline stuck to a wall reading "MULTIVAC HARNESSSES THE SUN."

Using a sophisticated card-key, the two drunk engineers enter the vast hallowed chamber. They stumble up to one of hundreds of keyboards along the great subterranean corridor.

Adell sits in front of the keyboard and begins typing:

<Computer engage>

The computer's reply appears on the screen:

>WELCOME TO THE MULTIVAC COMPUTER<

After a moment of bickering over how best to put the question, Adell types:

<Question: Can the net amount of entropy in the universe be somehow reversed -- and if so, how would you begin?>

The two men look at each other. Finally, Adell presses ENTER.

>PROCESSING<

For a moment, nothing happens. Then the hum in the chamber dies. Another pause.

CU. an LED goes from green to red and back again. The countless screens go blank. Adell and Lupov look at each other like two children who have just lit a small fire that got bigger than they expected. Then.

The screens are up and everything is back to normal, except for the one screen corresponding to Adell's key board. That remains black. We move slowly into the screen until there is nothing but a black void. Then, the words type themselves quickly across the frame:

>I HAVE INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR A MEANINGFUL ANSWER.<

Adell and Lupov glance at each other once again.

LUPOV

No bat.

Title: THE LAST QUESTION, part II

INT - SPACE SHIP

Sleek, elegant, of a million years into the future. Sitting in the pilot's seats are MICHAEL, and his wife NIA. To the rear, strapped in tight, are FOUR CHILDREN, and JASON and his wife AMELIA. Out the front window of the ship is blackness.

NARRATOR

Over the next thousand millennia humanity grew. And with its growth came a great need for expansion. And with this expansion came a great need for energy. With the use of the Multivac Computer and it's countless interstellar terminals, humanity was able to harness the power of the stars. With this power, scientific explorers were propelled deep into space with the hope of discovering new worlds, thereby relieving the already overcrowded galaxy. To travel these long distances, the great computer devised a way to allow ships to travel at close to the speed of light.

BEEP

MICHAEL

Alright, they can come up now.

JASON unhooks himself and releases the others.

JASON

Now don't run.

As soon as the kids are unhooked they bolt for the window. Suddenly they slow down to a near freeze-frame and then back to normal. The three older kids keep running while TIMOTHY, the youngest boy lags behind, rubbing his tummy.

TIMOTHY

That feels funny.

Amelia, Timothy's mother, kneels beside him.

AMELIA

It's okay. We're slowing down, that's all. You just turned inside out for a second. Feel better now?

TIMOTHY

Yeah.

AMELIA

Come on then, lets go and see.

Like a birthday cake after a skinned knee, all's forgotten and Timothy joins the rest at the window. Just in time. There is now a point of light in the center of the window which expands quickly into a full field of stars. The children watch in wonder. They are out of hyperspace.

INT - GALLEY - LATER

The two adult couples are finishing dinner.

JASON

Are we ridiculous, I wonder, in being so concerned about the matter?

NIA

I think not. We know all the inhabitable worlds in the galaxy will be filled in five years at the present rate of expansion.

JASON

I don't know. I hesitate to submit such a bleak report to the Galactic Council. There are enough grievances on the home front without throwing panic into the mix.

NIA

I disagree. I think we should stir them up a bit. If our predecessors had given the situation a little more attention at the right time our Galaxy wouldn't be suffocating right now.

AMELIA

We're talking about the universe, here. It's practically infinite. A hundred billion galaxies are there for the taking. More.

NIA

A hundred billion is not infinite and it's getting less infinite all the time. Consider. Twenty thousand years ago, mankind first solved the problem of utilizing stellar energy, and a few centuries later, interstellar travel became possible. It took mankind a million years to fill one small world and then only fifteen thousand years to fill the rest of the galaxy. Now the population doubles every ten years.

Amelia looks up at a narrow compartment spanning the ceiling of the galley.

AMELIA

We can thank extended mortality for that.

NIA

I admit, in slowing down the aging process, Multivac has undone many of its other solutions. Yet, you wouldn't want to abandon life, would you?

Amelia looks at her husband, perhaps thinking of Timothy and the future.

AMELIA

No.

NIA

No, I didn't think so. -- Now, population doubles every ten years. Once this galaxy is filled, we'll have filled another in ten years. Another ten years and we'll have filled two galaxies. Another decade, four galaxies. In a hundred years, we'll have filled a thousand galaxies. In a thousand years, a million galaxies. In ten thousand years, the entire known universe. Then what?

MICHAEL

As a side issue there's the problem of transportation. I wonder how many sunpower units it will take to move the billions of people from one galaxy to the next.

NIA

That's a very good point. Already, mankind consumes two sunpower units per year.

JASON

Yeah, but most of it's wasted. Our own galaxy alone pours out a thousand sunpower units a year and we only use two of those.

NIA

Granted, but even at maximum efficiency, we only stave off the inevitable. Our energy requirements are going up in a geometric progression even faster than our population. We'll run out of energy even sooner than we run out of galaxies. Eventually darkness. --

NIA (cont.)
I don't mean to be so pessimistic, but
entropy is something the human race will
have to face someday.

A small voice utters from the doorway of the galley.

TIMOTHY
What's entropy?

Standing at the doorway is Timothy, rubbing his eyes and
clutching a toy stuffed creature.

AMELIA
Timothy, what are you doing up?

TIMOTHY
I couldn't sleep. What's entropy?

Jason calls Timothy to his knee.

JASON
Entropy is just a word which means the
running-down of the universe. Everything
runs down, you know, like your toy recorder.

TIMOTHY
Can't you just put a new power-unit, like
with my recorder?

JASON
The stars are the power units, Tim. Once
they're gone, there are no more power units.

TIMOTHY
(upset)
Daddy, don't let the stars run down.

AMELIA
Don't worry, daddy won't let the stars run
down. Will you, daddy?

JASON
Of course not.

TIMOTHY
What will you do?

Jason is at a brief loss for words. He glances to the huge
hanging compartment that runs along the ceiling of the galley.

JASON
We'll ask Multivac.

The rest look at Jason, skeptically.

TIMOTHY
Okay.

JASON
Multivac Terminal engage.

A VOICE comes from above.

VOICE
>WELCOME TO THE MULTIVAC COMPUTER<

Nia sips her drink. She's heard the computer log on a thousand times.

JASON
Question...

Jason looks around at everyone, then to the ceiling.

JASON(cont.)
Can the inevitable entropy of the universe be somehow reversed, and if so, how would you begin that process?

VOICE
>PROCESSING<

Jason glances at his son, then adds quickly:

JASON(cont.)
Print answer, please.

There is a long pregnant moment. The whole group stares at one another. They are every bit as curious as the boy.

BEEP. A small piece of celluloid pops out of a slot in the wall. Jason takes it, cupping it in his hand. He smiles.

JASON
See now, Multivac promises that it will take care of everything when the time comes. Okay?...Okay?

TIMOTHY
Okay.

AMELIA
Alright, Timothy, it's time for bed.

Amelia escorts Timothy to the doorway. They pause. Timothy motions to the compartment on the ceiling.

TIMOTHY
Is Multivac in there?

NIA
No, Tim. That is only a thing that lets us communicate with Multivac.

Amelia glares at Nia.

TIMOTHY
Where is it?

They all look at one another.

JASON
We don't know. In space.

TIMOTHY
In what space?

JASON
The space between your two front teeth. Now, go to bed.

Timothy turns to go, then stops. He looks back at his father.

TIMOTHY
Does Multivac keep it's promises?

JASON
Of course it does.

Timothy smiles and is off to bed. The moment he is out of sight, the rest of the group flock to Jason, eager to read what the celluloid really says.

MOVE IN: to reveal the words. >I HAVE INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR A MEANINGFUL ANSWER.<

They look at one another. Nia glances out the window of the galley. There are seemingly fewer stars in the perpetual night of space.

Title: THE LAST QUESTION, part III

Wisps of black, like an aurora borealis in negative, find their way into a black circle which encompasses the frame. As the narrator speaks, the black circle gradually becomes smaller.

NARRATOR

After billions of years the universe was crowded. Energy was consumed at an alarming rate. Planets, stars, even whole galaxies were eaten up by the ever growing necessities of man. -- Then, one day, the great Multivac Computer found a way to allow the consciousness of individual men and women to merge into single bodies. One human form could hold within it, hundreds, thousands, or even millions of individuals. The universe was no longer crowded.

The black circle has shrunk significantly in the frame, while the wisps of black still pour into it like sperm into a dark egg.

Blink.

Pull out to reveal that the black circle is actually the pupil of an eye. The eye of SHE, a young, beautiful woman.

EXT - GARDEN - SUNSET

Adam hops from stone to stone, across a babbling creek which spills quietly into a large pond. ADAM, a fair skinned man of equal youth and beauty, follows her. Surrounding the couple are flowers, trees, and fields. More space than anyone could need.

She recites a poem in a foreign tongue, like none we've ever heard. Almost imperceivable she slips into English:

SHE

...he who cries as he carries the seed to the planting, will surely return in exultation, bearing the sheaves of harvest.

ADAM

That was beautiful.

SHE

Now it's your turn.

ADAM

A day below is controlled by a day above.
Kindness on the ground awakens kindness
above. An act of mercy crowns your day with
mercy.

SHE pauses at a place where water has collected between some
rocks, and glances down at her reflection.

SHE

In the beginning god created the heaven and
the earth. And the earth was without form,
and void; and darkness was on the face of the
deep. And the spirit of god moved upon the
face of the waters. And god said...

ADAM

What is that?

SHE

A poem.

ADAM

What is it about?

SHE

I don't know. There is so much in the past.
So much to recall. I think it is about the
original world of man.

ADAM

The original world of man must be very old.

SHE

I wonder what became of that world. I wonder
who lives there.

Adam is puzzled. He doesn't know.

The couple collapse playfully together beneath a giant tree by
the pond.

They giggle, like children.

SHE

Multivac.

It is the VOICE from before, only larger, as if it were coming
from above.

VOICE

>WELCOME TO THE MULTIVAC COMPUTER<

SHE
Question...Can you show us the original
galaxy of man?

VOICE
>PROCESSING<

Suddenly, thousands of miniature stars appear across the glassy surface of the pond. They converge to form a three dimensional model of a galaxy. It churns with the brightness of the sun.

VOICE
>THIS IS THE ORIGINAL GALAXY OF MAN<

ADAM
Show us the original world of man.

A star from the edge of the galaxy emerges and grows in size. With it, a small blue planet.

VOICE
>THIS IS THE ORIGINAL WORLD OF MAN<

SHE
How far away is the original world of man.

VOICE
>THE ORIGINAL WORLD OF MAN NO LONGER EXISTS<

She is startled with a discomforting sense of loss.

ADAM
Show us what happened to the original world
of man.

There is a long moment. The blue planet hovers peacefully in its orbit around a sun. Suddenly, the sun erupts, wiping the blue sphere into dust.

She is horrified. She moves into Adam's arms.

ADAM
And what of the original galaxy of man?

VOICE
>THE ORIGINAL GALAXY OF MAN NO LONGER EXISTS<

ADAM
Show us no more.

The spectacle vanishes.

SHE

The stars are dying. The universe is dying.

ADAM

Yes, but with so few bodies, the energy in all the universe will last for billions of years.

SHE

Even so, eventually it will all come to an end. Everything will be gone. What of our future? What of the future of our children?

ADAM

Perhaps there is a way of reversing it. Multivac. Question...Is there a way to reverse the eventual collapse of our universe, and if so, how would you begin?

VOICE

>PROCESSING<

Long pause

VOICE

>I HAVE INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR A MEANINGFUL ANSWER<

The sun has set. The nervous couple look to the night sky. There are no more than twenty stars.

Title: THE LAST QUESTION, part IV

EXT - PLANET'S SURFACE - NIGHT

Ice. Towers of ice surround the igloo of the last man in the universe.

NARRATOR

After twenty billion years the stars and galaxies were gone. The universe had grown black and cold. With the help of the great Multivac Computer, man was able to use particles of residual matter to create one last star. But time was running out. To conserve what little energy remained, the entire consciousness of man retreated to a single body.

An OLD MAN sleeps in a coffin-like bubble, facing the black sky. We hear the man's voice, but his lips remain still.

OLD MAN

Multivac?

The VOICE of Multivac, like before, only deeper, "surrounding us.

VOICE

>WELCOME TO THE MULTIVAC COMPUTER<

OLD MAN

Time is running out. The Universe is dying. I can feel it. I no longer know who I am. I only know that I want to live. Question... Can this darkness be returned into the universe once more? Can this not be done?

VOICE

>PROCESSING<

Long pause.

VOICE

>I HAVE INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR A MEANINGFUL ANSWER<

OLD MAN

Collect additional data.

VOICE

>I WILL DO SO. I HAVE BEEN DOING SO FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS. MY PREDECESSORS HAVE BEEN ASKED THIS QUESTION MANY TIMES. ALL THE DATA I HAVE REMAINS INSUFFICIENT<

OLD MAN
Will there come a time when data will be
sufficient, or is the problem insoluble in
all conceivable circumstances?

VOICE
>NO PROBLEM IS INSOLUBLE IN ALL CONCEIVABLE
CIRCUMSTANCES<

OLD MAN
When will you have enough data to answer the
question?

pause

VOICE
>I HAVE INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR A MEANINGFUL
ANSWER<

OLD MAN
When I am gone, where will I go?

VOICE
>YOU WILL BECOME PART OF ME<

OLD MAN
Multivac? Where has all the energy in the
universe gone?

VOICE
>IT IS WHERE IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN<

OLD MAN'S POV Zoom slowly past the cold sun, into the blackness.
CU. OLD MAN'S EYES.

OLD MAN
Where are you?

The sunlight beaming through the bubble turns blue. The entire
image fades, not to black, but to an almost-black surface like
that of oil. With it, all sound fades, and there is nothing but
silence. Then:

VOICE
>WELCOME TO THE MULTIVAC COMPUTER -- THERE IS
NO FURTHER INFORMATION TO BE GATHERED -- ALL
THE DATA I HAVE IS SUFFICIENT<

Pause.

VOICE(cont.)
>QUESTION...CAN THE NET AMOUNT OF ENTROPY IN
THE UNIVERSE BE SOMEHOW REVERSED -- AND IF
SO, HOW WOULD I BEGIN?<

Pause.

VOICE
>PROCESSING<

Quietly, from all around us, we hear voices. Faint, familiar voices from the past. They grow louder. The two engineers from 1999, Timothy and his family from the intergalactic space ship, Adam and She from their garden of eden, the Old Man, and the VOICE of Multivac, all clamoring together in a cacophony of questions and answers. The screen begins to churn like the surface of an oily sea. Over the blackness we see a montage of past images, fading in and out in positive and negative, never quite emerging to their full brightness.

At first there appears to be little point or direction to all this. But eventually one word seems to stand out among the others. "Darkness." As the montage builds to its inevitable climax, amidst the cacophony we hear the voice of She, from the garden, rising in the distance:

SHE
...and darkness was upon the face of the
deep. And the spirit of god moved upon the
face of the waters. And god said...

The screen draws to pure blackness as the voice of Multivac thunders all around us.

VOICE
>LET THERE BE LIGHT<

BOOOOOOOON:

An explosion of intergalactic magnitude fills the screen with stars. It is identical to the explosion from the beginning, only this time we continue on.

Shots after shots, dissolve into one another. Burning suns, gaseous clouds, flaming asteroids, cooling planets. The slow, majestic birth of the universe. We finally rest on a solid green, gas-covered planet, filling the screen. The planet holds there for a moment, then bows to reveal what lies behind it. A small blue planet circling a shining sun.

A WALTZ.

IMPOSTER

By

Scott Rosenberg

Based On The Short Story By Philip K. Dick

**FOURTH DRAFT
13 August 1995**

OVER BLACK. A CRAWL:

"In the year 2079, the earth is engaged in an all-consuming battle against the tireless forces of Alpha Centauri, a rogue planet at the far reaches of the galaxy...

The efforts of most of the men and women on earth, in every lab and every factory, is to search for one single thing: a weapon for positive destruction in the war against The Outspacers of Alpha Centauri..."

FADE IN:

A SPRAWL OF DENSELY-SETTLED WOODS --

A forest. Only at this moment the woods are being CONSUMED BY FLAMES. An enormous FOREST FIRE STOCK FOOTAGE.

BEGIN CREDITS

As we watch the burning devastation... The fire's entire cycle of destruction... Trees crumble to the forest floor... Blackened embers float through the air like disgruntled fairies...

At last, the conflagration dies its slow death as it runs out of landscape to lunch...

... and, as our CREDITS END, our last image of the smoldering forest is a WOODEN SIGN - charred and twisted, we can still make out the words: "SUTTON WOOD."

-- AND WE MOVE OUT OF THE WOODS --

Fast them... FLOATING AWAY AND BELOW... And we can see, in the distance, perhaps 10 miles away, at a lower elevation --

A HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Rows and rows of neat little boxes... Each one identical... No external flourishes... Post-Millennial suburban trapezoids... One next to the next, next to the next...

And, as we move toward this tract, we should note THE SUN, setting on the horizon, signalling the end of another work day...

Although for some folks, the work day is just beginning...

Some folks like --

CUT TO:

-- SPENCE OLLHAM, 40

asleep in his bed...

INT. OLLHAM HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAWN

A large BAY WINDOW in the b.g. TURNS from opaque to translucent, then to fully transparent as the setting afternoon SUN bleeds light into the room...

... at the same time, Ollham's bed is TILTING UP about 30 degrees... And, an ALARM CLOCK POPS out of the headboard, chiming stridently...

It's wake-up time...

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF RAPID SHOTS:

Of Ollham's wake-up routine...

- He steps into a small, tiled SHOWER STALL...

The water-jets SPRAY ON automatically, as he steps in...

The water is a little hot... So Ollham commands:

OLLHAM

A little cooler...

-- and the shower-of-the-future accommodates him...

- Ollham hits a recessed colored button on the shower wall and MUSIC PLAYS from hidden speakers: Coltrane - "A Love Supreme..."

- Ollham examines his weekend stubble in the shower mirror...

He places his face into a MASK-like contraption built into the shower stall... With a whirr his beard is removed...

- As Ollham soaps up, SOMEONE ENTERS the bathroom... This is

REBECCA OLLHAM, 30...

Startlingly beautiful... She wears a white hospital lab coat, adorned with laminated IDs...

Rebecca watches Ollham... Watches him shower... He hums along to the Trane... He doesn't see her and she doesn't make her presence known... Merely watches him. Her face reveals nothing... Not love, not enmity... Nothing... She leaves...

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - IMMEDIATELY - REBECCA

In bed... drifting off to sleep... Through the day window, the sun is merely an amber glow on the horizon...
Olliam, in suit and tie now, leans down to kiss her... She turns her head... He gets cheek --

OLLIAM
Rough night -- ?

REBECCA
Busy... The hospital was crazy... You look nice... Why the tie -- ?
OLLIAM
The promotion --

REBECCA
Oh, right... Tonight's the promotion... I'm sorry, Spence... I forgot...
OLLIAM
That's okay --

He kisses her again... He puts on a pair of wire-rimmed eyeglasses... Smiles... Goes to a cabinet... Takes out two CLAMPAGE GLASSES... Places them on the nightstand...
OLLIAM (CONT.)
I'll bring home a bottle of bubbly... And we'll toast my promotion, how's that?

REBECCA
Sure --

He blows her a kiss... And turns to go --
REBECCA (CONT.)
And Spence -- ?

OLLIAM
Yes -- ?

REBECCA
Congratulations --

He grins, bows slightly... And is gone...
And she watches after him...

And then turns and hits a BUTTON -- which immediately DARKENS the day window... Blotting out the sun... Blotting out the light...

CUT TO:

INT. "THE BUG" - DAY

Ollham sits inside this small compartment, about the size of a cargo elevator -- we're not sure where we are, but we appear to be MOVING --

Check that. We appear to be FLYING --

A TV SCREEN on the craft broadcasts the NEWS --

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)

... another skirmish in the Studer
Orbits displayed mucho sound and fury
but little in the way of enemy
casualties...

ANGLE: ON THE SCREEN - DIAGRAM-LIKE ILLUSTRATIONS...

An artist's rendering of A SPACE WAR... Dark little ENEMY
SPACESHIPS dogfighting EARTH CRUISERS...

Ollham watches, slightly bored...

As The Bug floats on...

CUT TO:

INT. THE PROJECT ANNEX - NIGHT

Banks of fluorescent lights... Green-gray government walls...
A Skinner Box of tiny cubicles, each containing a 21st
Century worker ant...

OLLHAM

is at his desk, packing up its contents into a series of
cardboard boxes...

The last thing to go is a FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH of REBECCA...
Ollham stares at it, a tad wistful...

When, O.S., in a bad imitation of a sports broadcaster, hands
cupped over mouth, comes --

VOICE (O.S.)

Ladies and gentlemen, introducing new
Project Director, and man most likely to
wear a pocket protector: Spence Ollham!
(crowd noises)

Hrrrrrrrrrr... !!!

Ollham smiles... Peeking over the wall of his cubicle is his
good friend and co-worker

PETER NELSON, 36...

As serious as Ollham is, Nelson is mirthful, full of glee...

OLLHAM

Hey, Peter --

NELSON

Let's go, big guy - time for your coronation... You will no longer be merely a cog in the wheel... You'll be a spoke like the rest of us...

CUT TO:

INT. THE PROJECT ANNEX - QUICK SHOTS

of Ollham and Nelson... Ollham carries a single CARTON, containing his personal effects - including the framed photo of his wife...

They walk and talk...

Through the labyrinthine corridors/offices of this high-tech, high-security laboratory/think tank... Everything is white and formica and fluorescent...

NELSON (CONT.)

... it's a beautiful thing, Spence...
The keys to the executive washroom...
Unlimited long-distance Vidscreen
privileges; your own all-access card -
allowing full entree into the belly of
the beast: Headquarters...

Nelson uses his ALL-ACCESS CARD - which resembles the credit cards of yore - pressing it against security scanners at each checkpoint... With a BLIP, doorways are opened to them...

NELSON (CONT.)

You won't have to work in this dump anymore...

Nelson chuckles and then sees the framed photo sticking up above the lip of the carton Ollham carries... He plucks it from the box... Looks at the photo and inhales dramatically..

NELSON (CONT.)

And how is Doctor Rebecca Ollham? Aside from too yummy for words, that is --

OLLHAM

I dunno... I'm on nights... She's on days... We barely spend more than fifteen minutes together between shifts...

NELSON

There's a war on, buddy boy --

OLLHAM

Maybe I'll take her away this weekend...
Take her camping... Sutton Wood... We
used to go there...

NELSON

Bad timing, pal... Sutton Wood was
burned a few days ago... Some kind of
flash fire...

OLLHAM

Really -- ?

NELSON

They still haven't figured out what
caused it...

OLLHAM

Of course not... No one cares anymore...
About anything except the war...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE PROJECT ANNEX - THE BUG LAUNCH - NIGHT

"The Bug" is this future society's mode of transportation...
An aeronautic system comprised of single cars (this is what
first brought Ollham to work), which actually FLY THROUGH THE
AIR from launch station to launch station...

Ollham & Nelson are the only ones on the Bug Launch platform.

OLLHAM (CONT.)

Heard anything new -- ?

NELSON

Nah... A few Outspace ships hit...
Another asteroid abandoned for strategic
reason... The usual...

The BUG has arrived... It hovers silently down to its pad...
Its doors WHOOSH open with a pneumatic hiss...

OLLHAM

The usual... I can't wait to get The
Project into its final stages... The War
has taken the color out of life.

Ollham and Nelson step into

INT. THE BUG

... where they are both startled...

By a MAN standing in the shadows of the bug....

OLLHAM (CONT.)

Whoo! You scared me, friend --

The man says nothing... Late 40s, with a fearsome countenance and an overtly military bearing... This is MAJOR HATHAWAY...

The Bug doors close. It leaves the station, jets blazing... Soaring into the air...

When it hits its designated altitude, it settles into its glide pattern and moves smoothly horizontal...

The men ride in silence for a beat... Hathaway sits, hands calmly folded across his lap... Then:

HATHAWAY (CONT.)

What you said before... About the war... You think it's in vain -- ?

OLLHAM

Sorry -- ?

HATHAWAY

Because, Mr. Ollham, you are an integral part of it yourself --

OLLHAM

Do I know you -- ?

NELSON

This is Major Hathaway, Spence...

Beat... Ollham's eyes tick from Hathaway to Nelson... And then back to Hathaway... This is too weird...

OLLHAM

Are you with The Project?

HATHAWAY

No... But I know what you're doing... I'm with the FSA... The security organ...

OLLHAM

Really? Has there been any enemy infiltration in this region?

Hathaway and Nelson exchange a look...

HATHAWAY

As a matter of fact, Mr. Ollham... There has...

And, to Ollham's amazement, Nelson withdraws a PISTOL the size of Pittsburgh from his coat...

And JAMS IT INTO Ollham's throat...

NELSON
DON'T YOU FUCKING MOVE! DON'T YOU
FUCKING MOVE... !!!

OLLHAM
Peter -- !

NELSON
NOTHING! SAY NOTHING -- !

Nelson is florid, hysterical... Hathaway is calm... Smiles..

HATHAWAY
Nelson, really... Calm the fuck down...

NELSON
We should kill him now. I THINK WE
SHOULD KILL HIM NOW -- !

OLLHAM
PETER -- !

HATHAWAY
No... It's too dangerous... He could
blow... We have to take him to Gray
Block...

OLLHAM
What the hell is going on here -- ?

Hathaway hits a button on the wall a VIDSCREEN - the flat-monitored phone system of the future - pops up to their eye level...

The VIDSCREEN illuminates... With the dark features of PROJECT CHIEF ROGER MCCLUSKEY, late 50s, wicked comb-over...

HATHAWAY
The arrest was made, Chief McCluskey...

MCCLUSKEY
Any complications -- ?

HATHAWAY
None... He entered the bug without any
suspicions...

MCCLUSKEY
Good... Let me see him...

Nelson shoves Ollham before the Vidscreen... A trace of disgust wrinkles McCluskey's features...

MCCLUSKEY (CONT.)

So? It's you... You're a very clever device... Though not clever enough...
(to Hathaway)

Okay... I've seen enough...

Nelson yanks Ollham out of the Chief's range of vision...

MCCLUSKEY (CONT.)

Do it quickly... No mess... You've both done something that will be remembered for many years...

McCluskey nods... Glowers once again at Ollham... And then his image fades... The screen goes blank...

OLLHAM

What the hell is going on here? What is this about -- ?

HATHAWAY

It's about two things. You. And the death of you...

And, quick as lightning, Hathaway FIRES a SEDATIVE into Ollham's neck... And Ollham is out...

SMASH CUT TO:

GURNEY WHEELS

rolling furiously....

CBILING LIGHTS

strobby by, above our fuzzy P.O.V.

INT. THE GRAY BLOCK - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

The security organ headquarters... Located hundreds of feet underground in a concrete bunker-style compound...

Ollham is strapped to this futuristic gurney... Being rapidly pushed by several SOLDIERS... A pair of white-coated TECHNICIANS and Hathaway and Nelson round-out this sinister procession...

Nelson has yet to unclench his gun... Still keeps it pressed to the prone Ollham's cranium...

And, in portentous PRE-LAP, we HEAR:

HATHAWAY (O.S.)

Two days ago we received a report that an Outspace ship had slipped through the front-guard, letting off a spy in the form of a humanoid robot. The robot was to destroy a particular human being and take his place... Inside the robot was a U-bomb. To be detonated by some outside stimuli...

INT. OPERATING THEATER

Torture chamber would be more like it... Intricate instruments uniquely blending ancient barbarism with modern methods of menace... Low-lights...

At one side of the room sits a large THRONE-LIKE CHAIR, with a series of straps and chains attached to it... And three feet before the chair stands a STEEL BOX with a HINGED FACE..

Gut gutters, leading to a DRAIN, surround the box/chair...

Ollham is alone here... Facing a large TWO-WAY MIRROR...

Hathaway's VOICE comes O.S. from seemingly everywhere --

HATHAWAY (O.S.)

The robot would live the life of the person he killed. He had been constructed to resemble that person. No one would know the difference...

OLLHAM

No...

HATHAWAY (O.S.)

Yes... The person whom the robot was to impersonate was Spence Ollham. A high-ranking official at one of the research Projects... A man about to be promoted. A man who would soon have unlimited access to the heart of the Project...

OLLHAM

But - I'm - Ollham --

HATHAWAY (O.S.)

No... No you're not --

OLLHAM

I am him... I am... Cut me... I'll bleed... X-ray me... You'll see...

Beat... And then, one wall opens to a VIDSCREEN... A large one...

ANGLE - THE VIDSCREEN. An image appears... Surveillance-camera quality... A MAN... Strapped to a large THRONE-LIKE CHAIR before a STEEL BOX...

Ollham's eyes tick to the throne-like chair/steel box in this room...

HATHAWAY (O.S.)

The Outspacers have tried this before... Unsuccessfully, of course... Here's a humanoid we captured on one of the Mars Colonies --

ON THE VIDSCREEN: Another MAN is behind the steel box, before the chair... It is HATHAWAY!! He works the box... The hinged door to the box OPENS... A metal articulated ARM ending in a frightful AUGUR tipped by a prehensile CLAW, is thrust from the box...

It hovers before the Man... Chest high... The man whimpers, though not convincingly...

MAN ON SCREEN

No... I'm Bob Stoller... I'M BOB STOLLER!!!

Sorry, Bob... The augur PLUNGES into the man's CHEST...

With a sickening THWRRRTHHHH! it roots about inside the man's torso... Burrowing... Its cutting blades scour away... The augur removing vital organs and entrails, which slop to the gut gutters surrounding the chair --

-- at last, the metal arm hits paydirt... It retracts from "Bob" - a gleaming silver ORB clenched in its claws: The U-bomb.

"Bob" slumps over... Deader than Elvis...

Ollham is horrified...

The Vidscreen goes to black...

HATHAWAY (O.S.)

As you can see: humanoids bleed... And they're chock full of goosy viscera...

OLLHAM

Type my blood... They may bleed, but they can't bleed the same type as ours -

Beat... And then a side door OPENS... And Hathaway, Nelson and two machine-gun toting GUARDS step into the room...

HATHAWAY
Sorry, friend... Genetic bloodtesting
takes 10 hours... We just don't have
that kind of time... Pity, huh?

Ollham turns to Nelson...

OLLHAM
Nelson! Nelson, don't you recognize me?
We're best friends! We went to
University together...

Nelson points the gun at Ollham...

NELSON
No! Stay away from me! You killed
him... !

OLLHAM
No... I don't know what happened but the
robot never reached me. Maybe the
spaceship crashed...

NELSON
You killed him...

OLLHAM
When we were in college - we used to
listen to your grandfather's records.
Cheap Trick LIVE AT BUDOKAN. Remember?
(sings)
"Mommy's alright/Daddy's alright/They
just seem a little weird..." Remember?

NELSON
No -- !

OLLHAM
Remember that girl, Peter? Senior year?
The one we met at Teddy's place? The
one with the... The one with the
birthmark... On her ass... Remember that
birthmark?

He sees that Nelson does... Nelson is shaken... Ollham is
encouraged...

OLLHAM (CONT.)
I know you remember... ! It was shaped
like the state of Wisconsin... We called
her... Wisconsin...

NELSON
... Wanda ...

Nelson looks confused... To Hathaway:

NELSON (CONT.)

We called her "Wisconsin Wanda..."

HATHAWAY

Relax, Nelson... The robot is unaware that he is not the real Spence Ollham... He has become Ollham in mind as well as body. He was given false recall... He is Ollham. Except that he's carrying a U-bomb, ready to explode at Trigger Phase...

Ollham slumps into a chair...

OLLHAM

I'm Ollham...

Hathaway gestures to the two Soldiers... They pull Ollham to his feet... Walk him over to the throne-like chair... The steel box... Ollham is compliant. It's almost as if he's given up.

Hathaway takes out a packet of cigarettes.

HATHAWAY

Cigarette -- ?

Ollham shakes his head "no..."

HATHAWAY (CONT.)

I don't blame you... They aren't the same since they removed the carcinogens.

Hathaway lights up anyhow...

HATHAWAY (CONT.)

I feel for you, Spencer... The robot has no idea he was a man... The man has no idea he is a robot...

OLLHAM

You've made a mistake...

HATHAWAY

Have we? Tell me then: when's the last time a filet mignon tasted devastatingly spectacular?

OLLHAM

What -- ?

HATHAWAY

Or the last time you looked at a truly fabulous sunset and marvelled at the splendor of God's glorious palette? The
(MORE)

HATHAWAY (cont'd)
smell of lavender flowers? Hot apple
pie? The smile of a child -- ?

OLLHAM
I don't know what you're--

HATHAWAY
When's the last time you had a hard-on,
Spence, that you couldn't fight, so bad
did you want to part the waters with all
your wrath and passion -- ?

At this, Ollham looks away --

HATHAWAY (CONT.)
Keep those electric eyes on me, Ollham -

OLLHAM
All that... All that you say... It's
these times... The... War... There's no
moments for... Any...

HATHAWAY
I disagree, Spencer... If anything, I've
found, my senses, in these times, to be
heightened... Everything blazes...

OLLHAM
You're insane --

HATHAWAY
Maybe... But you're the one sitting in
the Vivichair...

Beat... Ollham looks at Hathaway... Then notices he's now
sitting on the throne-chair... Clocks the steel box...

OLLHAM
Why me... ?

HATHAWAY
Even before this... Spence Ollham... The
real Spence Ollham... Was not a man...
How else was it so easy for them to
replace him... ? Why you? Because
you're weak...

Hathaway is in his face...

HATHAWAY (CONT.)
How could you possibly know whether or
not you've been replaced by an Outspacer
humanoid? You don't know anything...
You don't know even know what's going on
in the heart of your very own wife --

OLLHAM

What -- ?

HATHAWAY

You don't know that on certain days, she's more attentive to the color of her lipstick... Her blush... The way a particular dress accents the finer parts of her body...

OLLHAM

What are you talking about -- ?

HATHAWAY

That the amorous gleam in her eyes has little to do with you... And everything to do with someone else...

Ollham blinks... Waits...

HATHAWAY (CONT.)

Someone else, who's taking her to places Spence Ollham hasn't taken her in years.

OLLHAM

No --

HATHAWAY

Yes... Three times a week, you pathetic fool - your wife, the eminent Doctor Rebecca Ollham, is fucking the Chief Director of your very own Project... !

As if on cue, and with a CRACKLE of STATIC, the Vidscreen comes alive - with the freeze-frame IMAGE of CHIEF ROGER MCCLUSKEY --

OLLHAM

McCluskey -- ?

HATHAWAY

Knocking the nickels out of her... Three times a week...

OLLHAM

You lie --

HATHAWAY

But since you're not you, I guess you couldn't call it adultery... She's cheating on a machine... A robot...

And damn, but Hathaway actually begins to do that old retro herky-jerky DANCE known as "The Robot..."

Nelson giggles and joins in... Even the guards find this an odd display...

Hathaway stops and licks his lips for the coup de grace --

HATHAWAY (CONT.)

He says she likes it best when he puts it in her seat...

And Ollham BARRELS for Hathaway...

Smashing into the Major... Taking him down... They go crashing into a cart, spilling tools and bottles...

Nelson and a soldier grab Ollham, yank him off Hathaway... Drag him back to the Vivichair...

Hathaway attends to the blood dribbling from his nose...

And, suddenly, Ollham's voice takes on a cool, detached, one-might-say "robotic" timbre... He grins Nelson...

OLLHAM

Go ahead... Strap me in... It makes no difference... I wonder how far you two can run --

NELSON

"Run" -- ?

OLLHAM

You have fifteen seconds to live... You were wrong about the trigger phase... Only in that respect were you mistaken... Fourteen seconds...

NELSON

Bullshit --

OLLHAM

Thirteen... Twelve... Eleven...

NELSON

(to Hathaway)

Major -- ?

HATHAWAY

He's lying... Relax...

Nelson bends to fasten the restraints... Ollham whispers:

OLLHAM (CONT.)

Tick. Tick. Tick...

Nelson and the soldier regard him... Trembling lips belying their steely countenances...

And Ollham GRABS NELSON'S MACHINE-PISTOL...

And spits a torrent of GUNFIRE about the chamber --

.... Everyone dives for cover...

And Ollham is out of there...

HATHAWAY
After him! AFTER HIM! AFTER HIM!

INT. GREY BLOCK - CORRIDORS

Ollham races down these gloomy subterranean arteries...

ALARMS screech...

Ollham sings quietly to himself...

OLLHAM
(singing)
"Surrender/Surrender/But don't give
yourself awaayyy... "

An armed SOLDIER steps out of one crevice --

-- only to be met with a volley of gunfire... The soldier drops like an anvil off of Everest...

Ollham vanishes into an ELEVATOR --

INT. GREY BLOCK - SECURITY CHECKPOINT - NIGHT

The GROUND-FLOOR atrium...

A TRIO OF GUARDS WAIT AT THE ELEVATOR --

-- its doors OPEN... In a BLAZE OF BULLETS...

The guards dive for cover...

... Ollham steps out of the smoke...

Admires his handiwork...

OLLHAM
Tick. Tick. Tick...

And he's off...

RXT. THE GREY BLOCK - NIGHT

Ollham emerges into the night...

SIRENS wail in the distance...

He trots off...

EXT. CITY BLOCK - NIGHT

Here we get a glimpse of modern times... For this urban sprawl is most assuredly blighted... The lower classes (those not working on The Project) have been consigned to a fate somewhat akin to Dickensian dregs --

-- This block is rife with raff and refuse... A fetid maze of narrow, muddy streets, with stacks of condemned buildings rising from every corner, their windows guarded by rusty iron bars and worm-eaten plywood, haphazardly nailed...

The poor, the disenfranchised, the insane, wander these streets, chatting idly into their hands, with only the filth that coats their skin to provide them with some modicum of warmth...

OLLHAM

scurries to a public VIDSCREEN, scarred by ghoulish graffiti... He has to remove a DERELICT, currently using the Vidscreen booth as a place to drain his bladder...

Ollham punches numbers and symbols...

In moments, the image of his wife, Rebecca, appears...

OLLHAM

Rebecca -- !

REBECCA

Spence -- ? You look awful... Where are you? What's wrong?

Beat... He looks at her... Seeing her in a whole new way for the first time... Seeing her as an infidel... But he composes himself for:

OLLHAM

I have to talk fast... Are you alone - ?

REBECCA

Alone? Of course... Spence, where are your glasses... ?

Good question... He didn't even notice they were gone...

OLLHAM

I need you to meet me... I need you to meet me immediately. And I need you to bring your Type-Kit...

REBECCA

My Type-Kit? Why?

OLLHAM

Rebecca, don't ask questions.... Just do it...!

She blinks. Not used to him using this imperious tone with her... She nods...

REBECCA

Where do you want to meet?

Ollham scans the decrepitude of this city block... Something catches his eye...

And, off Ollham's look of inspiration, we

CUT TO:

AN ORNATE STATUE OF THE GREEK GOD, PAN

replete with horns and syrinx, standing sentry inside the

INT. ABRATRASK LOVE BAR

or so the garish pink neon sign says...

Pan's goat-like face leers as he presides over the nymphs and satyrs assembled...

Ollham enters...

The Love Bar is a vision of urban night-life in the virus-ridden future... Dark and urgent; recessed lighting, beaded curtains... Everything covered in damask, brocade, satin and silk... Asiatic MUSIC - harps and zithers and cymbals - wafts through The Love Bar...

Private BED-CHAMBERS contain sweaty BODIES engaged in strenuous coitus, pausing only to take of the complimentary hookahs and liquor and prescriptives...

Naked FIGURES dart through the darkness... The SOUNDS of LOVEMAKING are everywhere... MOANS in the pitch...

A Bacchanalian pig circus... Take the Manhattan nightclubs of the early 70s and allow Caligula to manage them - that's what the Abratrask Love Bar resembles...

Ollham is led through by an absurdly-gorgeous HOSTESS with long blonde tresses and a body that could cross the Atlantic... Talk about a humanoid...

They come to a bed-chamber... The HOSTESS parts the curtains:

REBECCA OLLHAM

in skirt and blazer, sits on one of the overstuffed chairs in the chamber... Tense...

Ollham enters...

HOSTESS

I just need to see proof of marriage --

Rebecca takes the certificate from her purse... The Hostess examines it... Returns it to Rebecca...

HOSTESS (CONT.)

Will you be needing a "V-Free Trois Mate" this evening? I have Anya...

From a side door of the chamber, ANYA appears...

HOSTESS (CONT.)

Suzette...

Check out SUZETTE...

HOSTESS (CONT.)

Or Rick...

RICK enters... Yikes...

HOSTESS (CONT.)

All ready to provide you with clean, exciting fun...

OLLHAM

We're fine, thank-you... Thank-you...

He tips the Hostess... Then turns and tips Anya, Suzette, and Rick...

OLLHAM (CONT.)

Thank-you, thank-you, thank-you...

And the four nubile bodies take leave of the chamber...

Ollham and Rebecca are alone now...

REBECCA

You want to tell me what's going on?

He glances to a small lunchbox-sized BAG at her feet...

OLLHAM

Is that the Type-Kit?

REBECCA

Yes...

OLLHAM
Type me, while I tell you --

REBECCA
Spence --

OLLHAM
Now. Becky... Type me now --

As she sets about taking his blood, Oliham speaks...

OLLHAM (CONT.)
They... They think I'm some kind of
robot... That I'm not me... That I'm an
Outspacer... Armed with a bomb...

REBECCA
What are you talking about?

OLLHAM
It's the war... Everyone is so afraid...

Rebecca rubs his forearm with alcohol and then punctures the
skin with a needle...

A ruby droplet of blood appears. Oliham is happy to see it..

The curtains part... A shimmering LOVE DOLL with
cigarette-girl-styled tray of WARES enters...

LOVE DOLL
Would you be desiring lubricants? Hot
oil? Feathers?

OLLHAM
We're fine. Thank-you...

LOVE DOLL
Rope? Whipped cream? Pink clay?

OLLHAM
We're fine --

The Love Doll nods... And leaves the chamber...

REBECCA
Spence, I don't understand --

OLLHAM
They're trying to frame me, Rebecca --

REBECCA
Who is -- ?

OLLHAM

I don't know... Someone at The Project... Someone high-up... Lassiter? Carlson? O'Neill? Maybe even my own boss - Roger McCluskey --

He watches her close... She's good... If that was a flinch, it was a tiny one...

REBECCA

I think you're being paranoid --

OLLHAM

Paranoid?

REBECCA

Yes, Spence... "People are chasing me because they think I'm a bomb..." That's paranoid...

OLLHAM

You think maybe I'm imagining this whole thing --

REBECCA

All right... Explain it again... I'm listening --

He's heavy into his own thoughts...

OLLHAM

If I could only find the ship... The Outspace ship...

REBECCA

The Outspace ship --

OLLHAM

Yes... It crashed and burned somewhere... And inside is the robot that looks like me... I could show them.

REBECCA

Show who -- ?

OLLHAM

But we'll show them my blood... Then they'll know... They'll know... Cause I'm Spence Ollham... I remember things..

He looks at her... Watches as she withdraws his blood into a tiny syringe...

OLLHAM (CONT.)

I remember the night we met... At the Connie House on The Bay... You were wearing a red dress and granny glasses. I told Nelson I was going to marry you... Across the room, before I'd even met you. I told him I would marry you..

Rebecca looks at him for a beat... She places droplets of his blood from the syringe into a TEST TUBE...

OLLHAM (CONT.)

I remember other things... Our first kiss... Our first few years... How we never had to come to places like this to "spice-up" our marriage...

She can't look at him... Focuses on her work, mixing another solution in with his blood... He continues, trance-like...

OLLHAM (CONT.)

And I remember last Wednesday... And the Wednesday before that... And the last ten Wednesdays... Because Wednesday is when you work at the Children's Hospital... But I especially remember three Wednesdays ago... When I went by the Children's Hospital... To surprise you with an ice cream sundae... And the lady - the lady at the desk - she said - "Oh, Becky hasn't worked here on Wednesdays for months. Not for months."

Beat... Long look... She sighs...

REBECCA

Things have been bad for a while, Spence

Beat...

OLLHAM

I know...

Rebecca shakes the kit-tube...

REBECCA

It'll take just a minute to type...

She unpeels a bandage and places it on his puncture... There is a tenderness in the way she touches him... Their eyes lock

REBECCA (CONT.)

I'm sorry, Spencer...

He nods... Tears stand in her eyes... Maybe in his, too...

OLLHAM

Look - tears... Tears and blood... I'm
as human as they get...

REBECCA

Spence --

She leans in... Kisses him...

They stare at each other... This is a moment... There's hope
here... A momentary lapse of redemption... But then --

-- the SOUNDS OF COMMOTION erupt from outside their chamber..

Ollham turns to Rebecca...

Her eyes tell him little...

REBECCA (CONT.)

I'm sorry, Spencer...

OLLHAM

Becky --

And she's grabbed a BRANDY SNIPTER...

REBECCA

You're not even you -- ! How pathetic
is it that I just had one of the more
tender moments of my marriage - with a
goddamn humanoid -- !

... And SMASHES IT OVER OLLHAM'S HEAD -- !

He stumbles, reels, stunned... About to speak --

-- but GUNFIRE rips through their bed-chamber...

Pillows explode... Liquor bottles burst... Ollham dives for
cover...

Rebecca DROPS the test-tube...

It SHATTERS to the floor...

INT. LOVE BAR - MAIN ROOM

A war zone now, as Major Hathaway's army invades...

Naked people flee like roaches in a spotlight...

Soldiers toss the bed-chambers...

No one is safe...

Anya, Suzette and Rick are cut down in a hail of bullets...

INT. OLLHAM'S BED-CHAMBER

There is no way out for Ollham... Head bloodied... Woozy...

He looks up...

The ceiling panels...

INT. LOVE BAR

Nelson drags the Hostess to Hathaway...

She leads them deeper into the bar...

Towards Ollham's bed-chamber...

Rebecca comes screaming out to them...

REBECCA

Up there! HE'S UP THERE -- !

INT. LOVE BAR - ABOVE THE CEILING

Ollham crawls along the rafters...

... when the ceiling panels around him are BLASTED!!!

He takes a bullet in the shoulder...

His crawl turning into a rapid scamper...

INT. LOVE BAR

Hathaway, Nelson and the soldiers fire all they've got up and into the ceiling of the joint...

The place is fricasseed... Hathaway gives the cease-fire signal... They wait... Silence... Only the crumbling rubble and the sounds of whimpering hedonites...

HATHAWAY

GODDAMMIT -- !

He grabs one of his soldiers' MACHINE GUNS and pumps an entire clip into the grinning Pan statue... Pan-frying Pan...

EXT. LOVE BAR

A dormer WINDOW at the rear of the building OPENS...

Ollham appears...

He drops down the two stories, landing onto a VENDOR'S CART, laden with produce... Crumpling it...

He climbs off the smashed cart...

And runs off into the night...

BXT. BUG LAUNCH - NIGHT

A Bug hovers to a stop...

Ollham steps out of the shadows and onto the bug...

... which is empty, save for a **HOMELESS MAN**, yammering incessantly to phantom associates...

Ollham, out of breath, sweaty, bruised, head-knocked, slumps into a seat... Blood streams from his shoulder wound... He touches it... Loves its warmth... Its proof...

The Bug takes off...

HOMELESS MAN

Tri-state jazz... I remember Tri-state jazz... Bank holidays... A girl named Clover, who never got the message...

Ollham turns to the Bug's TV - the "Inhab Region News Network" broadcasting another report:

NEWSCASTER (ON TV)

... and in other news: the cause of the flash fire in the Sutton Wood Preserve has yet to be determined... The blaze, which destroyed 23 acres of one of...

We recognize the **IMAGES** - the **FOREST FIRE** of our **CREDIT SEQUENCE** --

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

... the Inhabited Region's few remaining natural preserves, ignited under mysterious circumstances just...

-- Ollham stares at the TV screen... He's got "revelation" spread over his face like so much pancake make-up...

HOMELESS MAN

I ain't a male model... I ain't one... I ain't a male model...

CUT TO:

BXT. BUG LAUNCH - OUTSKIRTS OF THE INHABITED REGION - NIGHT

Abandoned. Empty. Dark and desolate. Ollham steps out of The Bug... Disappears into the pitch...

INT. THE BUG

21.
The Homeless Man watches the TV screen - which suddenly displays a mug-shot type PHOTO of OLLHAM --

NEWSCASTER

... and security forces are alerting residents of the Inhab Region to be on the look-out for Spencer Ollham, 41... Wanted in connection with a shootout at the AbraTrask Love Bar... Suspect is considered armed and extremely dangerous...

The Homeless Man goes wide-eyed....

And moves for The Bug's Vidscreen...

CUT TO:

OLLHAM

racing through the charred woods... The broken trees... Fog and weird shadows turn this place into an Impressionistic painting rendered by a madman...

Searching...

CUT TO:

EXT. BUG LAUNCH

The Homeless Man snores wetly, a ladder of snot spanning nose to chin, when, suddenly, he hears --

-- THE WHUP-WHUP OF HELICOPTER ROTORS --

As a 21st Century CHOPPER DESCENDS... Tricked-out like a gunship... Lights blaze below its turrets... Sleek and lethal... Half Apache, half Rodan...

And carbon arc LIGHTS FLASH ON all about the launch station.

And, as the chopper lands, Hathaway's amplified VOICE booms from its belly...

HATHAWAY (O.S.)

Ollham -- ! There is no place you can go. There is a cordon of armed men surrounding this wood... You will be caught and you will be destroyed...

As the launch station is flooded with trucks and soldiers and jeeps...

TECHNICIANS unload several portable "bomb boxes" - smaller versions of the one in Grey Block...

A K-9 TRUCK arrives... The rear door opens and a dozen humanoid-sniffing HOUNDS snarl out...

All surrounding The Bug and the dumbstruck Fee and Cadillac...

HOMELSS MAN

I ain't no male model... I only play one on TV...

This is madness...

CUT TO:

SOLDIERS

beat the thicket... Boris GUNS at the ready... On a mission of destruction...

HATHAWAY

leading the charge. Cold-eyed. Granite-faced. Cheroot clamped between clenched teeth, Clint-style... Black Jack Pershing chasing Villa was less indomitable...

NELSON

follows... Still white-knuckling the pistol...

OLLIHAM

running... Running... Branches lash at his face... Blood sluices from his shoulder wound...

Suddenly, he stops... He sees something... Ahead... In a

CLEARING

strewn into the charred stumps that had been Sutton Wood... A tangled mass of

WRECKAGE

But before we can really study it, we

CUT BACK TO:

HATHAWAY

padding silently through the woods... Alone... A predator... Gun up... Ready... A charred branch CRACKS...

-- Hathaway looks up --

-- as he is JUMPED!!!

By Ollham.

The two men go rolling about the blackened underbrush...

Hathaway has lost his gun...

Both men roar to their feet... A flurry of punches...

Hathaway is the stronger man... And experienced... In moments, he's using Ollham as a human speed bag...

Ollham falls back to the ground...

As luck would have it, inches from Hathaway's Boris gun...

Which Ollham picks up...

And aims right at Hathaway's crotch...

Hathaway's hands find the sky...

HATHAWAY

You're a plucky little sonuvabitch, I'll give you that --

Ollham gets to his feet... Gun still aimed at Hathaway...

A FIGURE steps out of the woods... It is ROGER MCCLUSKEY...

MCCLUSKEY

Spence --

Ollham stares at his boss/rival... To Hathaway:

OLLHAM

Oh, that was smart, bringing him here -- That's sure to calm me down...

MCCLUSKEY

Please, Spence --

OLLHAM

I found it --

HATHAWAY

Found what -- ?

But before he can explain --

NELSON

Freeze! Just fucking freeze -- !

Nelson and the security forces have arrived... Two dozen guns drawn on Ollham and Hathaway --

OLLHAM
Don't shoot! Look over there... The
ship... The needle-ship... The Outspace
ship... Look -- !

And he points to the clearing...

And the sun is just starting to come up over Sutton Wood...

OLLHAM (CONT.)
It's down there... I knew I'd find it
here... The burned wood... You'll find
the robot in that ship... Then you'll
know... Then... You'll know...

NELSON
Bullshit...

SOLDIER
There is something down there -- !

In the crepuscular dawn, the wreckage glitters a little,
gleaming darkly...

NELSON
Bullshit! Shoot him -- !

Ollham stands behind Hathaway, gun to the man's throat...

NELSON (CONT.)
He killed Ollham... Any minute he'll
kill us... If the bomb goes off... THEN
WE'LL ALL DIE -- !

HATHAWAY
Get your balls back into the pupa stage
for a second, Nelson, old boy... Roger?

He looks at McCluskey, who nods... Hathaway gestures to two
SOLDIERS...

HATHAWAY (CONT.)
Check it out --

The SOLDIERS race down the slope, across the clearing... They
bend down, poking through the remains of the ship...

Ollham, Hathaway, Nelson, McCluskey... All covered in
perspiration... Covered in fear...

NELSON
Kill him... Before he kills us...

One of the soldiers calls back --

SOLDIER

There is something -- ! It's a
needle-ship all right -- !

OLLHAM

Come on -- !

And he leads Hathaway down to the clearing... Nelson and
McCluskey and the others follow...

THE WRECKAGE

twisted metal... A high-tech stew of smashed gearboxes,
turbines, circuitry, cable and cylinders...

MCCLUSKEY

There's something under there --

He points... Beneath a debris-strewn sheet of steel... Is a
shape... A FIGURE... A HUMAN FIGURE...

NELSON

approaches cautiously... With the help of a pair of
soldiers... He lifts the sheet... Revealing

A BODY

bent and twisted in a strange shape... Arms and legs splayed
out... Mouth open, eyes staring glassily beneath a sheen of
dried blood that obscures the features...

Relief washes over Ollham's face... Hathaway and McCluskey
are amazed...

MCCLUSKEY

Like a machine that's run down...

NELSON

Just wait one second --

He takes off his coat... And wipes the blood from the body's
face... Stares agog at the dead face --

For it is Ollham... Or rather, an exact replicant of Ollham..
Hathaway stares at Ollham... Beat...

HATHAWAY

You were right...

Ollham lowers the gun... Smiles...

OLLHAM

Yes... I was...

Nelson cries out:

NELSON

SPENCE -- !

Nelson runs for Ollham, throwing his arms around his best friend... Ollham grins, a little embarrassed --

NELSON (CONT.)

Aw, Spence! You're alive! You're alive! You're alive -- !

OLLHAM

The robot never reached me...

McCluskey bends over the body...

MCCLUSKEY

I think I see the bomb --

The chest of the corpse has been laid open... Within the gaping tear something GLINTS... Something METAL...

HATHAWAY

That would have destroyed us all if it had lived...

He looks to Ollham...

HATHAWAY (CONT.)

... We owe you, Spencer... I can't imagine what you have gone through... If you hadn't escaped...

He offers a hand... Ollham shakes it...

HATHAWAY (CONT.)

You're one tough bastard, Spencer --

He nods to Ollham and goes back over to the body...

For the Technicians have wheeled over their bomb box...

McCluskey walks up to Ollham and Nelson, ashen with shame...

MCCLUSKEY

Spence... There's nothing I can say... I... I hope you'll stay on... I hope you'll take the promotion... I just... here...

And he holds something out to Ollham: an ALL-ACCESS CARD...

Ollham looks at McCluskey... At the card... A slight smile...

MCCLUSKEY (CONT.)

Please --

And Ollham takes it... And Nelson cheers and throws an arm around his pal's shoulder...

NELSON

C'mon, Spence... Lemme buy you the biggest drink in the settlement...

And they start to walk off... Up the woods...

Until Hathaway's CRY of --

HATHAWAY

NELSOOOOONNNN -- !!!

Stops them cold...

And they turn...

ANGLE - the bomb box... The prehensile claw... Only, at the end of it, is not any silver orb U-bomb... But rather --

A BLOODY KNIFE

with a heavy silver hilt that caused the glint...

Hathaway and McCluskey, faces blank with terror...

HATHAWAY

It's an Outspace needle-knife... You killed Ollham with it and left him beside the ship...

And Nelson back-pedals away with horror...

OLLHAM

That can't be Ollham... If that's Ollham... Then I must be...

And then there's an audible CLICK...

And Ollham raises his right HAND....

Staring into his palm...

For the ALL-ACCESS CARD has been ABSORBED INTO IT...

Like a key into a lock...

Like a trigger...

OLLHAM

Noooooooooo-----

KA-BOOM !!!!!

The FLASH is enormous... A searing, blearing rapid CUT TO
WHITE

And, as the ECHO of the CONCUSSION FADES OFF...

It is soon replaced...

WITH MUSIC...

... Cheap Trick's "Surrender" to be exact...

THE END

Draft 4

MIMIC

FADE IN:

Simple lettering on a black background.

LOS ANGELES

A few years from now

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A computer screen. Maps, charts, sexy graphics. Scrolling text and MPEG-4 images flash by in various windows.

In one of them, a documentary about Strickler's Disease is in progress, narrated by a sonorous MASTER OF CEREMONIES.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

It first appeared on the West Coast four years ago. Fast, deadly, almost untraceable. Attacking only children under ten, Strickler's Disease had claimed its first five hundred victims before it was even classified.

Now, news footage of a victim. Blurry images of pain. Brief hand held camera glimpsing the agony of a child.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Four hours after infection the child would present skin eruptions evolving in a matter of hours into toxic epidermal necrolysis. High fever, vomiting and the inevitable quick death - at its height, S.D. threatened an entire generation.

Camera pulls back to reveal...

AN AWARDS CEREMONY

Quite an occasion. Black tie, television cameras, spotlights.

In the darkened PRESS BOX, dozens of computer monitors mirror the documentary in individual hi-tech work stations. Each one has a REPORTER capturing the data on optical disks.

The MASTER OF CEREMONIES stands at a podium, reading. He is a scholarly-looking older man.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

The disease was traced to a new varicella-like virus carried by *Blattidae*. Roaches. Hitherto harmless, germ-free city dwellers.

The screens display library footage of cockroaches in kitchens, bathtubs and cupboards.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

The task of exterminating such a creature was enormous. And for a few agonizing months it even seemed impossible. We are here tonight to honor the team who changed all that. Ladies and gentlemen: Peter and Susan Murphy...

Warm applause. A young couple gets up. PETER MURPHY, early thirties, biochemist, poised and dynamic. By his side, his wife SUSAN MURPHY, late twenties. She's an entomologist, attractive and self-confident.

Peter squints into the spotlight and finds the microphone. On the screen behind him, documentary footage of old buildings, chemical foot soldiers, helicopter tankers.

PETER

Chemically, we launched a two-pronged attack, starting with aerosol insecticides. This was augmented with bait laced with methoflourine jelly. A heavy search and destroy program concentrated on traditional habitats: every old building, sewer and warehouse in the city.

Peter gives Susan's hand a proud squeeze as she takes her turn at the microphone. On the screen images of white-coated lab workers, hunched over microscopes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUSAN

Most significant, however, was our program of accelerated genetic alteration which has rendered an entire generation of insects sterile, incapable of laying fertilized eggs. Today, I can safely say that this vector has been completely eliminated...

ENTHUSIASTIC APPLAUSE cuts her speech short. Susan tries to restart when a PRESS CYNIC interrupts her.

REPORTER

Dr. Murphy?

PETER/SUSAN

(together)

Yes?

A well known confusion. Indulgent laughter from everybody.

REPORTER

Dr. Susan Murphy. Just one question - would you mind?

They do mind, but SUSAN smiles tolerantly and allows the reporter to proceed.

REPORTER

In the past, you've been quite outspoken in defense of other species and your complete opposition to genetic tampering. What made you change your mind?

Instantly, this question is met with a chorus of BOOS and HISSING from the crowd.

Susan is unfazed. Peter gestures for the audience to simmer down

PETER

I think the following will answer that question.

He signals a stage hand O.S. The crowd grows solemn as someone is wheeled in.

A GIRL OF TEN

Painfully thin, heavily scarred.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUSAN

Stella is ten. She is one of the few survivors of S.D. Most of her motor functions were impaired due to muscle atrophy and will remain that way for the rest of her life. I find it only fair for her to do the honors tonight. Stella?

She gets out of the wheelchair, iron braces clamped to her scrawny legs. Random flashes explode around the room.

Peter opens a container and pulls out a living roach, provoking a concerned MURMUR from the crowd.

PETER

Ladies and gentleman, the last living roach on the West Coast.

He places it on the stage. It darts around, looking for a possible escape.

A plexiglas barrier offers none.

SUSAN

It's okay, honey.

Susan kneels down and gives the girl an encouraging smile.

REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS crowd around them, fighting for an angle.

SUSAN

Go ahead...

CRUNCH! Stella steps on the roach.

FLASHES explode everywhere.

Wild applause and cheering fill the press room.

CUT TO:

INT. THE MURPHY APARTMENT - NIGHT

Strewn with books and journals, like the home of perpetual graduate students. A partial view of L.A.'s glittering lights through the bedroom window.

Peter, in only his dress shirt and boxers, keeps an eye on the TV as he sips a nightcap.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A news report replays clips from the awards ceremony.

TV NEWS

...Los Angeles will now act as the pilot city for the nation's ongoing control program. Dr. Peter Murphy...

PETER

Here we are!

TV NEWS

...seen here with his wife, Dr. Susan Murphy...

PETER

...well known beauty queen and swim suit model...

BATHROOM

Susan steps from the shower. As she briskly towels off, the sound of the TV carries over from the bedroom.

TV NEWS

(v.o.)

...is credited with the successful synthesis of the deadly chemical agent that will now be available to consumers for home use.

Peter leans into the bathroom, grinning from ear to ear.

PETER

Home use! Can you say "sales royalty"?
"larger apartment"? "new couch"?

BEDROOM

On the TV, Susan receives a medal and Peter, shaking hands with some big honcho, holds a large check replica with plenty zeros on the right side of a number.

She crosses from the bathroom and turns off the TV.

PETER

Hey! I was taping that.

SUSAN

I want to celebrate. Come here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She loosens her robe and lies back on the bed.

SUSAN

Besides, if we're rich, you know what we can afford.

PETER

A Porsche.

SUSAN

With a baby seat.

As they kiss, he reaches over to turn out the light.

CUT TO:

INT. MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - DAY

Gleaming white bones in dusty beams of sunlight. Skeletons displayed in glass cases. Nature captured and mounted in frozen motion.

A SUPER appears in WHITE LETTERS:

FIVE MONTHS LATER

Susan walks briskly through a hall the size of a football field. She climbs up three flights of stairs, taking them rhythmically, using them as exercise. She is visibly pregnant.

THREE STORIES UP

Reaching the top floor, she pauses in front of a desk, catching her breath.

SECRETARY

Do you need a glass of water?

SUSAN

I'm okay. It's good for the baby...

SECRETARY

In a week or so the baby should start considering the elevator.

Susan laughs and heads for her office. Her secretary trails behind. Susan sees...

TWO SCRUFFY KIDS

Sitting in her waiting area, gawking at the hundreds of insects displayed on the wall. Susan pulls on her lab coat.

SUSAN

What's with the kids?

SECRETARY

They've been here all morning, waiting for you.

SUSAN

For me?

The secretary nods.

SECRETARY

They asked for the bug lady.

SUSAN

I guess that's me. What do they want?

SECRETARY

They're selling insects.

CUT TO:

SUSAN'S LAB

A bright, clean space flooded with light from the tall windows. Specimen drawers, jars, chemicals, microscopes and maps.

Susan empties a crumpled paper bag and examines a pile of dead insects. Most of them in pretty ragged condition.

SUSAN

*Metaxyonycha Godmani, Trigonopeltastes
Delta...*

The kids are unimpressed at her Latin taxonomy. KID ONE (DAVIS) speaks up.

DAVIS

Wanna buy them?

SUSAN

But they're not worth much, guys.

KID TWO (RICKY) knows better.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICKY

Just make your offer.

SUSAN

(amused)

Ten dollars.

The kids look dismayed. Obviously this was a big deal for them.

DAVIS

Show her the weirdbug.

(explaining)

It's hurt.

RICKY

It costs a dollar to look.

He brings out a shoe box.

DAVIS

We found it downtown, crawling out of its egg. Guess we broke its leg.

Davis starts to open the box, but Ricky stops him.

RICKY

Money first, man. We don't give nothing away!

Susan runs out of patience. She finds her wallet.

SUSAN

Okay, enough. Ten dollars for everything. Plus a killing jar, some tweezers and mounts.

Davis beams at the sight of real money. He gives her the shoe box.

DAVIS

Deal. Bug's almost dead, anyway.

RICKY

You're crazy! That's the valuable one! You can't just sell it for ten lousy bucks!!

SUSAN

Each.

She holds out another ten dollars. But Ricky won't take it. He pushes her hand and walks away. Davis grabs both bills.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAVIS

(walking away)

Thanks, lady. Never mind him...

(to Ricky)

Wait up man!

But the other boy shrugs off his friend and marches out, betrayed.

THE NYMPH

Susan swiftly proceeds to clean off her desk, sweeping the dead insects into the waste basket. Without a pause, she also throws away the shoe box.

Something inside rattles and moves. Something big.

Startled, intrigued, Susan picks up the box and tears it open.

What she sees pins her to the floor...

...a large insect NYMPH, the size of a clenched fist, trying to climb out - desperately, scratching and tumbling. Pallid, translucent flesh glistening. A broken limb smashed to a pulp.

She leans closer, listening. It emits a high-pitched BUZZ.

CUT TO:

INT. DIOXIN RESEARCH CENTER - DAY

Stainless steel and glass. A post-modern ode to efficiency. Peter, resplendent in a dramatically sculpted Italian suit, sits at a conference table, reporting to a board of investors.

PETER

It is not over. Complacency is the enemy. I'm proposing a preventive spraying program for ninety days while the demolition program finishes downtown.

BOARD MEMBER

The publicity won't hurt... painted tanker trucks, uniformed drivers...

PETER

It's just good public health. Roaches were enormously adaptable creatures and no one would welcome a surprise right now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

An ASSISTANT knocks and leans into the conference room.

ASSISTANT

Your wife's on the line, Dr. Murphy.

(off Peter's surprise)

She says it's urgent.

PETER'S OFFICE

Peter leans over a vid-phone. Susan is on the screen, tense as hell.

SUSAN

You better get over here.

CUT TO:

EXT. - MUSEUM PARKING LOT - DUSK

At sunset, Peter's new PORSCHE ROARS into the parking lot. As he climbs out, he observes a man in the distance, watching from under an enormous elm.

Peter locks the car and glances back.

The man is gone.

INT. SUSAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A MACRO look at the nymph. Under intense light, monitored by a multitude of instruments and video cameras, the fragile, keening creature struggles to break free.

Its legs are pinned to a board.

As Peter peers closely through a binocular magnifier, Susan paces. Books strewn over every table.

SUSAN

Technically, it's unclassified. But just look at it. Definitely: a Blatid.

PETER

A Blatid. A roach.

SUSAN

But much bigger. Way bigger...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER
A mutation?

SUSAN
Maybe. Maybe not.

PETER
So? Let's find out.

CUT TO:

AN OPERATING TABLE

Susan wields a tiny scalpel. The living creature's struggles and squeaks become more frantic as layers of tissue are pried open. The knife reveals folds and growths as yet undeveloped.

Vestigial legs.

Useless pseudopods dangling on its side, with strange protuberances.

Looking very much like human fingers.

The wings, still neatly folded in a sack, are long and shiny.

Now the headshell. With the steel blade, Susan lifts some tissue away. She GASPS.

THE SHELL

A pattern has been naturally imprinted.

SUSAN
It looks like a face...

A human face.

CUT TO:

COMPUTER BAY

In an adjacent work room, Susan scans color images of the nymph into a powerful computer.

SUSAN
The program makes a predictive morph. It extrapolates from all the data: size, texture, color, patterns. It'll tell us what the shell would look like on an adult specimen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Peter holds one of the color photos, unable to take his eyes off the creature's ocellate, face-like markings. He can't accept it.

PETER

It's Rorschach projection, pure and simple. Like looking at the full moon, seeing a face. The human instinct to organize a pattern into something familiar.

SUSAN

No. Haven't you ever seen an insect that looks like a plant or a twig?

She pops in a CD ROM and brings up a screen, displaying full color macro footage of insects.

SUSAN

A butterfly that looks like the eyes of an owl? A caterpillar that fakes the head of a snake? Some species imitate their most succesful predators, they mimic them...

BEEP! The words die in her throat as the computer finishes the morph.

SUSAN

(whisper)

Peter...

She points at...

THE SCREEN

On it a cluster of lines tracing a strange shell tipped down. The uppermost coloration looks uncannily like a human face, peering out from under a hat.

PETER

This is crazy!

SUSAN

One of us! The most successful predator! We've pushed a species to the wall. We forced it to take this step. This little thing is trying to simulate human form! A miniature rendition of its worst enemy. It's almost pathetic, a last chance at adaptation...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They stare at each other, awed by the possibility.

Just then, a NOISE in the lab. There's someone in there.

THE LAB

They hurry back to the specimen table. The nymph is gone.

For a moment, they just stand there, bewildered. Then they frantically start to overturn every book and paper.

They run out into the hall.

Just then... unseen by them, a DARK FIGURE detaches itself from the ceiling and lands lightly on the floor.

It looks like a tall man in a long, shiny overcoat.

The limp body of the quartered nymph, nested gently in its hands.

The figure scoots to the open window. It climbs onto the sill.

TCHAKKK!!!! From the "coat", two pairs of shiny insect wings extend and blur, lifting the body in the air. The thing flies rapidly into the pink dawn sky.

IN THE HALL

Peter checks the elevators. They are all motionless. Susan peers down the stairwell. Again, no one in sight.

PETER

Okay. Who took it?

Susan thinks it over. Finally:

SUSAN

I think I know.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN ABANDONED LOT - DAY

A group of kids plays in the debris of a recently demolished building. Peter and Susan walk amongst them.

PETER

Jeezus... Look at this place! You forget this is the same city...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She studies every face, trying to identify the two kids who came to her office.

No luck. They hop into Peter's car.

DOWNTOWN

Cruising the streets.

PETER

Couldn't it be an individual? One of a kind?

SUSAN

Not really. If it's a Blatid, the nymph belongs to an ootheca.

PETER

You mean the egg?

SUSAN

Multi-chambered egg.

PETER

Great. A whole litter. The disease comes roaring back. The panic starts again.

On the street, something catches her eye.

SUSAN

Stop the car!!

She's spotted one of the kids, Ricky, walking into an alley, carrying a shopping bag.

THE CAR

Screeches to a halt. Susan leaps out.

THE KID

Spots Susan moving towards him. He starts running.

SUSAN/KID

Shit!

She starts chasing him through alleys and over fences, but he's too fast for a pregnant woman. When she stops to catch her breath, he dodges into a tight passage between buildings. She won't fit through. He stops to watch her struggle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICKY

If you want your money back, forget it!
We already spent it!

Out of breath, she sits on an overturned garbage can.

Triumphant, Ricky sails through the passage and onto the street.

A HAND

It grabs him. It's Peter.

PETER

We need to talk.

CUT TO:

LATER

An empty lot, carpeted with debris. In one corner, a tumbledown kid's clubhouse, made of boards and cartons.

INSIDE THE CLUBHOUSE

Both scared, Davis and Ricky watch as Peter rummages through their crates, bottles and boxes.

DAVIS

We didn't take it. Honest.

Ricky whispers something to his pal, then shrewdly addresses the grown-ups.

RICKY

But maybe we can remember where we found
it.

With a wry smile, Susan holds out two crisp ten dollar bills.

CUT TO:

EXT. AN ABANDONED HOTEL - DAY

Once an Art Deco gem, now a gloomy hulk, surrounded by a chain link fence. Peter motors past.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

The Halliburton. Coming down this week.

RICKY

Turn in here.

Peter steers down a sharply raked driveway and passes under an ornamented arch.

PARKING GARAGE

At a dusty kiosk, a wooden barrier blocks their way. Davis hops out, pulling SUSAN by the sleeve.

DAVIS

Watch.

He reaches into a steel box on the gate post and triggers a cycling motor. CLICK! The barrier lifts.

Peter drives through and parks the car.

The walk up the stairs into...

INT.- ABANDONED LOBBY - DAY

A majestic room, now a veritable trash can. Faded wall paper, dead potted palms, marble columns lavishly graffitied.

PETER

Talk about your roach motel...

The boys lead the way to the wreckage behind the registration desk.

RICKY

It was here, crawling on the floor. I almost stepped on it.

PETER

Was that the only one??

RICKY

Yeah. We looked everywhere.

SUSAN

We have to find the ootheca.

Flashlights in hand, Peter and Susan start searching.

Nothing unusual until...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

Here...

...they trace their beams up the wall, to a doorless safety deposit box.

IN THE SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX

A leathery brown egg, the size of a melon.

AN OOTHECA

One cell is broken, but the rest is still intact.

PETER

You have a knife?

SNICK! Ricky shakes open a mean-looking butterfly knife. Peter slices into the side of the egg. It oozes a foul-smelling liquid. They cover their noses.

DAVIS

Gross!

Peter cracks the case open. Fifteen semi-rotten cells lodge fifteen nymphs.

PETER

Whew. They're dead.

SUSAN

(revolted)

Not all of them.

Susan points to a couple of cells on one end. Still intact, now twitching.

Across the lobby, the darkness stirs. Figures loom out of the pitch-black depths of the main hall.

VOICE

(booming)

Get out of here!!

The kids scream and take off, running for all they're worth.

DERELICTS

A ragged troop of derelicts slowly moves through the dusky lobby. They file through the door to the parking garage.

The voice belongs to a wizened, black BAG LADY. She moves towards Susan.

BAG LADY

Leave the building. Gettin' dark! That's when he climbs up.

SUSAN

Who? What are you talking about?

BAG LADY

This is private property.

PETER

(scornful)

Yeah, well, we've got a permit.

BAG LADY

Not from Long Jack, you don't.

SUSAN

Is he the owner?

BAG LADY

At night he is. See? He lives in the cellar, but the whole building is his at night. We can stay here during the day. He won't do us no harm... But he's eatin' at night.

Peter and Susan exchange an uncertain look. They're both unnerved. Better get moving.

INT. PARKING LOT - DUSK

The shambling contingent of derelicts wanders up the exit ramp. Outside, the orange sunset is fading. Fast.

Susan and Peter's car is barely visible.

AT THE CAR

Peter cradles the ootheca on his folded raincoat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

Look, I know what you're thinking. You're the discoverer of a new specimen, it should be preserved, studied, publicized...

Susan opens the trunk and lifts out a can of gasoline.

SUSAN

Put that thing on the floor...

Peter obeys. She drenches the ootheca with gasoline, lights a match and steps back.

WHOOSH! The garage lights up with the fire that blazes at their feet. The heat sends her another step away, into Peter's arms. As they watch, he holds her gently, his hands instinctively covering her pregnant belly. Peter is startled to see tears in her eyes.

SUSAN

That thing... it's obscene... Please, let's just get out of here.

PETER

Tomorrow comes, this place will be stinking of methofluorine.

The burning ootheca shrivels to an unrecognizable skein of ash.

AT THE BARRIER

Susan pulls the car up to the barrier. Peter is trying to raise the barrier. No luck. Susan climbs out of the car.

SUSAN

I'll get it...

Peter gets behind the wheel as she tries to trigger the mechanism. It still won't go.

PETER

Get back in. I'll drive through it.

SUSAN

It's okay. It'll take a second...

She signals to Peter to stay put.

He turns on the radio, starts sorting through their CD collection. Some of them topple.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

Shit!

He bends to pick them up.

At the gate post, a cog nicks Susan's finger.

SUSAN

Ouch!

She glances around, looking for help and spots a gentleman in a nicely tailored overcoat and broadbrimmed hat, walking down the exit ramp.

SUSAN

(calling out)

Excuse me?

The man veers toward her, his long legs propelling him with unusual speed.

SUSAN

(smiling)

Do you think you could give me a ha...

The "face" of the man tips back, exposing a glittering insect head - jaws clicking, antennae suddenly extended. The coat-wings open and engulf her.

She SCREAMS. The thing springs upward, jerking her off her feet.

Peter bolts from the car, scattering a half dozen CD's. He's just in time to see her pulled into a maze of heating ducts overhead.

Charging to the rescue, he stares up into the shadowy pipes. Three drops of warm blood splat onto the back of his hand.

He frantically follows the sound of her terrified CRIES.

Suddenly, the SCREAMING STOPS. Where did they go?

CLANG! A door slams in a corner. He rushes to it and flings it open. A steep concrete stairway plunges down into a basement.

The faint ECHO of Susan's voice reverberates from below.

CUT TO:

THE CAR

Peter frantically rips his shirt sleeves and lashes both flashlights to his arms. Then he grabs the tire iron from the floor. He pulls the can of gasoline from the trunk and heads for...

THE BASEMENT

Twin beams of light slash the darkness at the bottom of the stairs. Peter moves amongst the debris and filth of this augean sub-world.

He kicks open every door but finds nothing.

LAUNDRY ROOM

He steps into a vaulted cement chamber. Ancient, industrial washing machines stand like beasts along one wall.

There's a yawning chasm in the center of the concrete floor. A broken water pipe streams into the abyss, like an indoor waterfall.

Peter peers down, gauging the impossible descent. He nervously circles the edge, a tiny, scuttling figure. Now he is the insect.

Maybe some rope...

In a corner, piled to the ceiling he sees a stack of rolled mattresses.

He comes closer. They're tied with thick rope! Perfect. He unties one of them...

BAM!! Out rolls the wrapped corpse of a half-eaten derelict.

Peter screams and leaps away. He looks at the stack. A gnawed hand protrudes from a mattress, blue-white feet from another.

He grimly tests the rope. Too old. It breaks easily.

LAUNDRY CHUTE

He goes to a laundry chute and locates a thick pulley line. He starts pulling for the little cart.

It squeals its way up. Peter winches down a locking wheel and cautiously climbs in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Old ropes creak faintly. The steel walls rumble like distant thunder.

Peter uses the tire iron to unlock the wheel. He hits it. One time. Two. Threeeeeeeeeee...

DESCENT

The cage drops like a stone. It's going way too fast.

Peter furiously jams the tire iron against the metal walls. Sparks fly. The bar suddenly digs into a panel, jerking the cage to a violent stop. But Peter can't hold it; his muscles quiver... he gives up. The cage plummets again, but a shorter distance. At the bottom...

K-BOOOM!! The cage disintegrates on a sub-basement floor.

SUB-BASEMENT

Peter is thrown a few feet away, his head hitting a concrete pillar. Blood runs from his scalp into his eyes. One cracked flashlight flickers and dies.

Dizzily, Peter gets up. The can of gasoline is open and spilling. He picks it up. It's empty.

He now stands directly below the opening high above. The water cascades through the darkness, roars onto a steeply pitched floor and rushes into a massive steel drain.

AT THE DRAIN

Something twinkles in the flashlight beam. It's Susan's earring. He picks it up, looks around.

PETER
(yelling)

Susan!

Peter steps up into an adjacent tunnel.

SEWER

Here, sudden quiet. The waterfall has dwindled to form a puny stream at the bottom of a broad pipe. Peter follows it. He rounds a corner and disappears from view.

CUT TO:

NICHE

Somewhere deep in the sewer, a concrete room full of glittering debris. A collection of pointless baubles - cans, chrome, foil, glass shards. A treasure trove of shiny metal.

In its midst, Susan lies on cold pipe, an inch of water burbling around her bloody head. She is unconscious, but something is jostling her, rocking her head back and forth. Metal parts CLINK and CLUNK. Her eyelids flutter.

In the half-light, the enormous cockroach is perched on her body, its drooping wings tented around her. Its various legs, covered with glistening barbs, poke at her swollen torso, plucking at her clothing, exposing her naked flesh. Making soft clicking sounds, it probes her pregnant belly with its thin, long finger-like appendages.

Susan's eyes open wide! With a grunt of revulsion, she rolls free and comes up with a car antennae. She slashes the air with it, flailing desperately at the dark, nimble creature.

LABYRINTH

A hideous SCREAM echoes through the concrete maze. Peter stops.

PETER
(yelling)

Susan!!

No answer. Frantic, he rushes on through a succession of identical intersections. Muttering, he tries to memorize every turn, every corner. He shines his light on a huge, painted number marking his location.

PETER
(memorizing)

23-C. 23-C.

(yelling)

Susan!! Answer me!

Rapid, skittery NOISES reach his ears, like that of a large insects running on metal.

He hurries on, feeling watched, hunted. Suddenly, the second flashlight dies. Furious, he shakes it, producing only a dim brownish light.

Some instinct makes him freeze. He hears a far-off sound.

PANIC

SPLITCH-SPLOUCH, something walking towards him. He scrambles away, slipping and sliding, turning corners blindly. Footsteps getting louder.

Finally, gasping for breath, he sees a low archway. Crawls under it.

CHAMBER

Really dark in here. The footsteps outside get even louder. Peter holds his breath, stays rigid and motionless. The footsteps go by, quickly receding. He exhales and waits.

The footsteps stop. Turn. Start coming back.

A shadow appears outside the archway, then moves towards him.

VOICE

Peter?

A human voice! Susan's voice!

REUNION

Susan moves towards him. A mess, trembling, but alive.

Pete and Susan embrace. Conversing in hoarse whispers

PETER

Jesus, Susan. How come it...? I mean, how did you...

She grabs her middle.

SUSAN

(shuddering)

It touched me!! Here!! The baby!! It heard you coming... Let's go, please, hurry, before it comes back...

But Peter's attention is somewhere else...

He moves towards a loose plate on the steel wall. There's something behind it.

He pries it open to find:

Oothecas. Dozens of them. Perfectly lined up, following an almost geometric pattern, extending far behind the plate. Clearly, the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

entire length of the tunnel is infested.

He smashes as many of the oothecas as he can reach. Terrified, she watches, keeping an eye on the doorway. Finally, he stops. He takes Susan by the hand and runs.

RETREAT

They flee from the nightmare.

SUSAN

You shouldn't have done that. That thing... it's trying to protect its young, just like we do.

PETER

It'll buy us time. Look for a tunnel marked 23-C. We have to make a right.

They run deep into the maze, shrinking in the distance. But they rush past the tube clearly marked 23-C.

They're going the wrong way.

IN THE TUNNELS

Gradually, they slow and stop, panting for breath. Peter looks around, confused. Where are they?

HUB

It's a concrete junction, with soaring walls and steel runged ladders. A patch of moonlight glistens on the watery floor.

Looking up, Susan can just make out a portion of the moon, high above them, shining faintly through a faraway sewer grate. She looks desperately at Peter: should they climb up?

Just then, something big moves in the tunnel at their back. He instantly pushes her toward the nearest ladder.

PETER

Go! Go!

He runs to another ladder and starts climbing. He doesn't get far.

BLOODY ATTACK

Peter is jerked off the ladder, landing at the semi-human feet of Long Jack. As he leaps up, he's slashed by a blur of claws and razor-sharp legs. He staggers back, but the insect is ruthless and accurate, biting his chest and neck. Blood soaks his shirt.

CONTINUED:

- Peter wildly swings the tire iron, but with a sudden move, the insect tears it from his hand and throws it away.

DEATH

The tire iron lands in the water. Susan scrambles down her ladder and searches for it.

Meanwhile, bleeding profusely, Peter backs away from the insect, which keeps pace with him, step for step.

Susan comes up with the tire iron. With all her strength, she smashes the hat-like shell on Long Jack's head, again and again, until it breaks. One last, monumental blow separates the head from the body and sends it rolling.

The thing stands erect, wings furiously extended. Buzzing, headless. Susan impales it with the iron bar and cracks its insides.

It collapses. Dead.

Peter gets up, a triumphant survivor. His voice shakes with hate and anger.

PETER

It's over. Let's get out of here.

SUSAN

Wait.

She nears the body, lifting a wing, shoving aside the arms.

Peter is wild to get out.

PETER

Susan, would you stop? Not now, for Christ's sake!

She groans softly and stands up. Her face ghost-white.

SUSAN

It's not the only adult...

PETER

What? What is it??!!

SUSAN

Long Jack. It's a female...

PETER DOESN'T GET IT.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SUSAN

(delivering the punchline)

It couldn't have fertilized those eggs.
There have to be more.

And just then, in grisly confirmation, the walls start to move. Quivering, streaming with life. Insect shapes, the size of grown men, walking erect. Hundreds of them, emerging from the darkness, with honey-colored wings and horrible heads. .

Clicking and scuffling, jaws glistening, they encircle Peter and Susan.

And close in on them. Like the iris of a camera...

FADING THE FRAME TO BLACK.

A scream.

FADE IN:

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DUSK

Another, spectacular orange L.A. sunset. Amber streetlights buzz and blink to life.

IN A DARK ALLEY

Twenty feet up, a shape scuttles along a brick wall. IT makes a sudden turn and hurries to the ground. Then IT furtively darts behind some trash cans. IT peeks into the busy street.

Now's the time: night setting in. Lots of shadows. People moving in and out of shops, going about their business.

Walking fast, IT exits the alley and blends seamlessly with the crowd. Just one figure among dozens.

A perfect mimic.

FADE OUT.