

SIX BILLION DOLLAR MAN

Written by Damián Szifron

ON BLACK

As the logos of the production companies appear, we hear the intensifying roar of airplane turbines whirling.

CUT TO:

- EXT. AIRPLANE - IN FLIGHT. DAY.

The camera is attached to the tail of an American Airlines Boeing 767, facing forward.

We see the plane and everything in its path. We are flying over a major city.

We cross a river.

We recognize Manhattan. Our course changes.

We are now moving in towards the Twin Towers.

The 767 speeds up, aiming straight for the North Tower. We see people working inside. Right at the point of impact, WE CUT TO:

- INT. AGRICULTURAL PLANE - IN FLIGHT. DAWN.

A YOUNGER STEVE AUSTIN (age 25) pilots a Piper Pawnee that is spraying a small farm

in the heartland of America.

He listens to country music on an old radio while sipping coffee in a metallic cup. It's cold outside.

STEVE

(speaking to the closest airport)
Cherokee Creek, November, One, Seven,
Six, Seven, Echo. Gonna be spraying the
north quadrant on the west side of Neosho
River.

CONTROL TOWER OPERATOR (O.S.)

*Roger, go ahead. Let us know if
you're going above 1,500 feet.*

STEVE

Roger that.

Steve goes diligently about his task, but his eyes reveal a certain sadness.

A LONG SHOT shows the Piper Pawnee flying over the river right before it begins to spray the farm.

Suddenly, a message from the control tower.

CONTROL TOWER OPERATOR (O.S.)

*To all U.S. aircrafts, no matter
your location, proceed to land
at the nearest airstrip
immediately. This is an order
from the Federal Aviation
Administration. We repeat--*

CUT TO:

- EXT. AUSTIN FAMILY FARM. DAWN.

The Piper Pawnee sets down on the grass landing strip.

Steve gets out of the plane and notices that SEVERAL FARM EMPLOYEES are gathered around a TV in the storage shed.

MATUNAAGA (Native American, veterinarian) leaves a horse under anesthesia on the operating table and walks over to see what's going on.

STEVE

(arriving at the same time)
What's going on, Mat?

CLAIRE (Matunaaga's wife) answers.

CLAIRE

A 767 just smashed into one of the Twin

Towers... There are other planes that have lost radio contact.

On the TV, the North Tower is in flames. Matunaaga hugs Claire, who is pregnant.

Suddenly, the second plane smashes into the South Tower. Everyone is in shock. Steve can't believe his own eyes.

CUT TO:

• INT. AUSTIN FAMILY FARM - MAIN HOUSE - KITCHEN. NIGHT.

BERNARD AUSTIN, Steve's father (overweight, 60), puts some papers down on the table and takes his insulin out of the fridge. He's a diabetic.

BERNARD AUSTIN

Talked to the bank today. They were about to give us the go ahead on the new mortgage, but with everything going on--who the hell knows...?

Steve is cooking. He looks over the bank forms. The bank's logo is a house with roots.

BERNARD AUSTIN

The manager says we gotta lower our spending. Maybe they should be lowering our taxes instead. Or what are we supposed to fire Claire and Matunaaga now that she's expecting?

(shakes his head as he injects the insulin)

The bank would've owned us for the next fifteen years anyway... I had a feeling that this deal was the nail in our coffin.

The house looks shabby and rundown.

STEVE

(takes a sip of beer)

I stayed here, dad. I didn't make anything out of myself.

BERNARD AUSTIN

(stares at him)

What are you talkin' about? You're a good man. You've got a heart of gold. What else can you ask for?

STEVE

Yeah, I don't know... I'd like to do something to help other people.

(beat)

The army's recruiting.

BERNARD AUSTIN

(disapprovingly)

I've heard that before, Steve. How you're feeling right now is why a whole generation around here

signed up for Vietnam. War gives the average Joe, the backwater hillbilly who feels like a nobody a chance to be a hero. But when you get to be my age, you start appreciating the simple things in life; and

believe me, there isn't much more than this right here.

He points at the fireplace, the sound of the trees rustling in the wind...

STEVE

More than what? The armpit of America? At my age, that's not enough.

BERNARD AUSTIN

It's the land. The only thing that's real. That's why the bank wants to take it away.

STEVE

You know, I'm not like you. Maybe I'm not that attracted to the simple things. Maybe I'm looking for something special.

(takes another sip of beer)

I want to be proud of myself, dad. Take a risk for once in my life.

BERNARD AUSTIN

Then go all in, do it. Apply to NASA!

STEVE

Not with my grades. I'll never get in.

(beat)

Four planes in one day, dad. On our soil. This isn't Vietnam. We're not running off to fight someone else's war. Who knows how many more terrorists are out there? What are they planning next?

Bernard Austin lifts the papers from the bank.

BERNARD AUSTIN

Well, our soil is being invaded too and I could use some help to defend it.

CUT TO:

- INT. AUSTIN FAMILY FARM - MAIN HOUSE - STEVE'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Steve's room still looks like a teenager's.

A picture of Neil Armstrong landing on the moon hangs over his bed.

Steve is watching CNN.

Bernard knocks on the door and comes in.

BERNARD AUSTIN

Your Mom isn't here to stop you anymore. But
when I hear you, I can't help thinking of that old
Cat Stevens song...

(sings)

"Find a girl, settle down..."

Steve smiles and shakes his head. Bernard gives him a hug.

BERNARD AUSTIN

You're the most important thing in my life, Steve.
I don't need you to be a hero, break some stupid
record, get rich, or walk on the moon. All I want
is to spend as much time as possible with you...
You've got to fly low, son. That's the secret.

Steve's eyes shift to the TV screen.

The news ticker reads: "AL-QAEDA TAKES RESPONSABILITY FOR THE ATTACKS."

JOURNALIST (V.O.)

*Al-Qaeda is a terrorist organization with
connections throughout the Middle East...*

CUT TO:

- INT. ARMY RECRUITMENT CENTER – MAIN HALL. DAY. Steve waits his turn in a long line. Most are POOR YOUNG MEN from different parts of the country. Some still have pudgy faces and teenage acne.

CUT TO:

- INT. ARMY RECRUITMENT CENTER – SMALL CUBICLE. DAY. An ARMY OFFICER interviews Steve.

ARMY OFFICER

Any special skills?

STEVE

I'm a pilot. A thousand hours in a Piper Pawnee. I'm licensed to fly helicopters too.

ARMY OFFICER

(impressed)

Wow. Complete the back side of this form and we're good to go.

CUT TO:

- INT. ARMY RECRUITMENT CENTER – MAIN HALL. DAY.

WIDE SHOT. Steve (in focus, amongst hundreds of blurry young men) fills the form.

We read:

"IF DECEASED, DO YOU ACCEPT TO BECOME AN ORGAN DONOR?"

Steve checks the "YES" column. And then,

"IF SEVERELY IMPAIRED, DO YOU AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE TERA PROGRAM?"

STEVE

(to an OFFICER passing by)

Hey--what's the Tera Program?

YOUNG OFFICER

Turn the page over, sir.

A long text in fine print. An excerpt reads:

STEVE

(whispering)
*"The Tera Program is a joint
venture between the U.S.
Government and the Axon
Corporation. Its explicit goal
is to develop increasingly more
sophisticated methods to extend
life..."*

Around Steve, everyone is checking the "YES" box.

Steve checks the box as well.

CUT TO:

- EXT. ARMY TRAINING CAMP. DAY.

Steve performs push-ups along with his FELLOW RECRUITS. We notice a BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN TATTOO on his right arm.

SERGEANT
(pacing back and forth alongside the recruits)
Some of you are here because you thought it was the right thing to do. Others are here because seeing a gun gives you a hard-on. Well then, let me give you some words of advice: WAR IS LIKE SEX. You don't enjoy it, you won't get it up. You don't get it up, you can't perform properly. Make sense?

RECRUITS
Sir, yes, sir!

There are SEVERAL WOMEN among the recruits.

CUT TO:

- EXT. OPEN SEA. DAY.

A stormy day out in the ocean. It's raining and the water's choppy.

Steve and his fellow recruits swim against the tide.

CUT TO:

- EXT. SHOOTING RANGE. DUSK.

Hundreds of bull's eyes are lined in rows along a shooting range.

At the SHOOTING INSTRUCTOR's command, all the recruits fire their rifles.

SHOOTING INSTRUCTOR
(looking through his binoculars)
Bull's eye, Austin--only you hit your partner's target!

The fellow recruits laugh.

SHOOTING INSTRUCTOR
Reload, again!

CUT TO:

- INT. AIR FORCE UNIT. NIGHT.

Steve boards an Apache helicopter flight simulator.

CUT TO:

- EXT - INT. U.S. MILITARY BASE IN IRAQ. DAY. The base is surrounded by an extremely poor area.

Helicopters touch down with CORPSES and WOUNDED SOLDIERS, while others with FRESH CREWS take off on new missions.

THE CAMERA PULLS BACK and we're inside the base. CORONEL LANG outlines a mission to a team consisting of Steve and two snipers: JACK FERGUSON (30, tall and husky) and BILLY KLINE (28, slight).

CORONEL LANG
(pointing to the map) Austin, you'll depart from the Franklin Destroyer at 1900 hours and fly over Public Hospital Number 17 located on the 32nd city block, east side of Baghdad. There have been several missiles launched from this area in the past few weeks. The hospital has been abandoned and the Air Force presented them with an ultimatum. So any civilian in the area is a suspect. Officers Ferguson and Kline: if it moves, shoot it down.

Jack Ferguson nods.

CUT TO:

- EXT. FRANKLIN DESTROYER IN THE PERSIAN GULF - LANDING STRIP.
DUSK.

Steve, Jack and Billy walk towards an Apache helicopter.

BILLY

Do you really think we're going to find the guys who brought the towers down here? In this shithole? C'mon, the CIA should be chasing thirty--or maybe fifty guys tops. And that includes the ones on our side who helped them pull this thing off. There's NO WAY you can plan

an attack like that without any help from the inside.

Jack turns around and punches Billy in the face, knocking him out.

JACK

You think I got time for your shit right now?

Steve, unsure of which side to take, tries to make peace.

STEVE

Hey man, chill out, let's keep it together.

JACK

We're at fuckin' war, alright? It's us versus them. You're either with us or against us.

(looking at Steve, threatening)

We straight?

Steve stares for a few seconds. Then offers Billy his hand.

STEVE

He's right, Billy.

BILLY

(wiping the blood off his face)

Well, if you were that goddamned worried about this mission, you sure as fuck wouldn't have punched a sniper in the eye.

CUT TO:

- INT. APACHE HELICOPTER, FLYING OVER THE ABANDONED HOSPITAL. NIGHT.

WAR ZONE.

Jack and Billy look through the scopes on their weapons. Steve flies the helicopter. ARMED INSURGENTS are shooting at them from the rooftop of the hospital.

Steve moves the helicopter into position. Jack and Billy return fire and kill them all.
On the other side of the air extractors, another GROUP OF INSURGENTS appear.

Jacks signals to Steve.

Steve repositions the helicopter, but suddenly notices TWO CHILDREN among the insurgents.

STEVE

Wait a sec, there are two--

The rifles erupt in fire--it's too late: Jack has wiped out the whole group.

Steve sighs. He's in distress, but there is no time for feeling sorry:

A THIRD GROUP comes up a stairwell onto the roof.

Steve maneuvers the helicopter towards the new target but just then, from another building, a missile is fired.

Seconds after the flash, the missile hits the Apache helicopter.

The glass windshield shatters and Steve's body is struck by thousands of glass shards and shrapnel.

STEVE

(seriously injured, bleeding all over)

Mayday, mayday, mayday! We've been hit!

Back at the base, Coronel Lang gives orders to another assault team: the Navy Seals.

CORONEL LANG (O.S.)

*Seal Command, did you see that?
The missile was fired from block
34, not the hospital: That's
their launching base. Get ready
to move in!*

While Steve desperately tries to keep the Apache stable, he can see...

THE NAVY SEALS getting out of an Assault truck and approaching the building in block 34.

It looks like the real objective of their mission was to reveal the true location of the enemy launch base.

Steve is badly injured: he spits out some teeth and we see bones protruding out of his injuries. Even so, he manages to keep the helicopter in the air.

But another missile is fired, destroying the tail rotor. They are also under machine gun fire.

Billy Kline is blown into pieces. His remains are scattered inside the aircraft.

JACK

(yelling, furiously) Fly, Austin! Get us
the fuck outta here!

The Apache starts to spin and shake as ARMED INSURGENTS shoot at them from all directions.

Steve is shot in the chest, the stomach, the jaw.

He tries hard to stabilize the aircraft but--immersed in a cloud of black smoke and fuel--THE APACHE NOSEDIVES TOWARDS THE GROUND.

CUT TO
BLACK.

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY IN DENVER, COLORADO -
REHABILITATION ROOM. DAY.

Steve, slowly, opens up his right eye.

From his blurry perspective, we make out the inside of a high-tech recovery room.

Snow is falling.

When Steve opens his left eye, the light in the room becomes so intense it blinds him.

Little by little, his pupil adapts. An unknown voice
thunders in his ear.

DOCTOR KILLIAN

*Good morning, Steve. I'm Doctor
Killian.*

Steve grimaces. The sound of Doctor Killian's voice is deafening.

DOCTOR KILLIAN

You don't know me, but I've been here with you
for some time now. Doctor Manners is also part
of our team.

DOCTOR MANNERS (50, blond, blue-eyed, woman) is standing next to DOCTOR
KILLIAN (60).

Steve can see his own reflection in Doctor Killian's glasses: his body appears to be intact.

DOCTOR MANNERS

What is the last thing you remember, Steve?

Doctor Manners' voice is also thundering loud, and as soon as she speaks, Steve's left eye captures an incredibly close and overwhelming image.

We see her enormous eyes, her recently waxed eyebrows, the pores on her skin--the image is so sharp that it is almost unbearable.

STEVE

(with difficulty, whimpers)
Where am I...?

DOCTOR MANNERS

Steve, the first thing we want you to know is that you've survived a very serious accident, and that's a very good thing. You're alive, and you're fine.

A series of very loud beeps annoy Steve. Upset, he closes his eyes.

STEVE

What's that noise...?

DOCTOR KILLIAN

You've received a number of... enhancements. Your body is going to need some time to adapt in order to process a broader spectrum of information.

The volume of the beeping slowly fades and we realize that it was nothing more than one of the quiet monitors in the room.

When Steve opens his eyes again, the proportions in the room gradually return to normal.

Steve breathes deeply and now he looks down at his body, which is covered by a sheet.

He tries to move his legs but he can't.

STEVE

Can I walk...?

DOCTOR KILLIAN

(smiles, pleasantly) Walk? Believe me, I'll lose my job if you can't do much more than that.

Steve realizes that his arms are strapped in to the armrests of the bed.

STEVE

Why am I tied down...? Where am I...?

Steve's heart starts to beat faster; through his bionic ear we hear the pounding: boom-boom, boom-boom.

DOCTOR KILLIAN

Calm down, Steve... You're in good hands. We're your friends--

Steve yanks his right arm so strongly that he breaks off the armrest.

His gown sleeve is also ripped open and Steve is left staring at his bare arm: his Bruce Springsteen tattoo is gone.

Doctor Killian looks through the two-way glass and gestures for help.

Seconds later, a NURSE enters the room and increases the dose in his IV.

STEVE

What happened to my arm...? This is not my arm...

DOCTOR KILLIAN

This is your new arm, Steve. And its unique features make it far better than the one you had.

Steve, disturbed, realizes that he can move his fingers.

STEVE

What did you do to me...? How long have I been here...?

Doctor Killian looks nervous. He clearly doesn't know how Steve is going to react to what they are about to tell him.

DOCTOR MANNERS

After the accident, you were immediately brought to this facility, where--

STEVE

(interrupts) When was that?

DOCTOR MANNERS

(sighs) Fifteen years ago.

STEVE

(in shock)
My father... Where is he...?

Doctors Killian and Manners exchange a brief glance.

DOCTOR MANNERS

Mr. Austin passed away in 2013, Steve. His diabetes finally caught up with him.

Steve's eyes fill up with tears.

DOCTOR KILLIAN

We are so sorry. During your treatment, we got to know him pretty well... He was a simple but special man and--

Steve gestures. He's heard enough. He can't take any more. Doctor Killian nods. Steve can't hold back the tears. He's shattered.

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - STEVE'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Steve--still devastated over his father's passing--is awake but his eyes are closed, not ready to

engage with the outside world.

Next to him, a tray with food that he hasn't touched.

Doctor Killian, now out of his lab coat, looking more casual, is talking to him.

DOCTOR KILLIAN

The bank repossessed the farm and the plane as well. But you've got nothing to worry about. The Tera Program is going to cover your expenses for the rest of your life.

STEVE

What happened with the war?

DOCTOR KILLIAN

(smiles) We won.

STEVE

What about Saddam?

DOCTOR KILLIAN

Hung to death.

STEVE

And Bin Laden?

DOCTOR KILLIAN

Killed by the Navy Seals in a covert operation.

STEVE

Why was I in a coma for so long?

DOCTOR KILLIAN

Your injuries were extremely severe. It's a miracle that we're here talking at all. You lost your right arm and both legs. Glass shards and shrapnel destroyed one of your eyes. The membrane around your heart and your left lung were wrecked. Several ribs, broken. Your intestines, left ear, part of your windpipe, all of your teeth, the thyroid gland. And so on and so forth. But among all these minuses, however, there are some pluses. To be honest, you weren't exactly in a coma for all these years, Steve. The Tera Program not only saved your life. It also made you the most evolved human being on the planet.

Steve is silent for a few moments; then he opens his eyes.

STEVE

(watching the snow falling)
What did you mean by "pluses"?

THE ORIGINAL SCORE--IN THE VEIN OF "ALPHA" BY VANGELIS OR
"OXYGEN PT. 1" BY JEAN MICHEL JARRE--STRUCTURES THE
FOLLOWING SEQUENCE.

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - NUCLEAR OPTICS
CENTER. DAY.

Steve is sitting in front of the eye chart. The letters decrease in size.

STEVE
(reads the last line effortlessly)
F - L - 9 - S - S - K - Q
- W

A TECHNICIAN replaces the chart with a new one.

The first line is outrageously small. Steve laughs.

DOCTOR KILLIAN
Trust us, Steve. If your brain demands it,
your eye will respond.

Steve, skeptical, focuses his sight on the chart.

When he fixes his gaze, the tiny letters become drastically amplified. He sees each letter with
incredibly high resolution.

STEVE
(reading)
H - M - 4 - L - A - 7 - 3 - F

DOCTOR KILLIAN
You're gonna have to go above and beyond
your known limitations. Way beyond.

The lights in the room go out.

But the pupil in Steve's left eye opens wider.

DOCTOR KILLIAN
Your new eye is sensitive to darkness. More
than seventy micro-filament devices
automatically open the muscle and strengthen
the signal that travels through the optic nerve.

Steve can't believe it.

As if that weren't enough, when he looks towards the two- way glass, he detects two
silhouettes (they look reddish) on the other side.

A TALL THIN MAN talks with a MAN IN A WHEELCHAIR.

DOCTOR KILLIAN
What you are experiencing now is called
thermonuclear vision.

Steve is amazed by his power, but somewhat uncomfortable. He feels like he's being watched.

DOCTOR KILLIAN

And if our calculations are correct, your
underwater vision has improved exponentially.

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - HEATED POOL. DAY.

Steve's body--sitting in a special chair--is submerged underwater.

At first, everything is blurry, but after a few seconds, he begins to see with an incredibly high level of detail.

Outside the pool, the computer shows how the enhancement works: Steve has a double cornea with a micro-air chamber in between.

His perception of sound is also superior: we hear the bubbles around him with extreme clarity.

SOUND ENGINEER

(pre-lap)

*Your left ear has been fully
reconstructed. At first, you may
experience some annoyance--
that's the price of having an
instrument capable of detecting
sounds out of human range. But
you'll get used to it.*

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - SOUND BOOTH. DAY.

Steve, wearing a pair of headphones, receives instructions from the SOUND ENGINEER.

SOUND ENGINEER

Now I'm going to generate some pulses.
Press the green button every time you hear
one.

Steve nods.

Seconds later, a subsonic sound roars in Steve's ear.

Steve presses the green button with his index finger, but due to the strength in his right arm, he perforates the button and short circuits the system.

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - GYM. DAY.

Steve is sitting in front of a machine specifically designed to measure his arm strength.

Steel bars varying in size are welded to a metallic bar, which is connected to a computer.

Doctor Killian and his TEAM help Steve get into position.

An ASSISTANT documents everything with an HD video camera.

DOCTOR KILLIAN

Your right arm isn't just any prosthetic. It's light years ahead of any other limb that has ever been created. It's covered with your own skin, which we cultivated from your cells. The neurovascular bundle is connected to an atomic-hydraulic system that governs its movements, and this very circuit interacts with your central nervous system. Theoretically, we know the force it is capable of. But we will find out when the rubber hits the road.

Steve nods; he then takes hold of the slimmest metal bar, which is an inch thick, and applies pressure.

He easily bends the bar.

The computer measures Steve's strength through a series of graphics and data.

Steve also bends the second bar, which is two inches thick, and with a little more effort, the third one.

The fourth bar--which measures 3 and half inches--requires more concentration.

Steve sweats, but he successfully bends it as well.

The fifth bar, which is four inches thick, barely moves. But it moves.

We can hear applause from the back of the room.

OSCAR GOLDMAN (50), the tall thin silhouette that Steve had spotted through the two-way glass, approaches along with AGENT FARRIS (40, rough).

DOCTOR KILLIAN

Steve, Oscar Goldman is the head of the Office of Strategic Operations. Along with the Axon Corporation, they're responsible for financing your treatment.

Agent Farris is the first to shake Steve's hand.

DOCTOR KILLIAN

And his right-hand man, Agent Farris.

AGENT FARRIS

(smiling)

I studied everything about you, Mr. Austin, it's a--

Without meaning to, Steve breaks his hand.

AGENT FARRIS

Jesus fuck, man!!

OSCAR GOLDMAN

(pats Doctor Killian on the back)

I guess we won't be able to call Farris my right-hand man any more...

Don't worry about it Steve, he's got another one.

STEVE

Sorry, I didn't mean to-- I'm really sorry.

Doctor Killian examines Farris' hand.

DOCTOR KILLIAN

It's broken.

Agent Farris is escorted to the infirmary.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

You owe me a hundred dollars, Doctor Killian.

(to Steve)

I bet him you'd bend all the bars first time out.

STEVE

Again, I'm so sorry. And I really appreciate what you've done for me. I imagine all this costs a fortune.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Six billion dollars, to be exact. And so far I'd say it's worth every penny.

STEVE

(speechless)

Six billion dollars...? To give a soldier back his limbs? Isn't that a lot? I mean, a bullet to my head will still kill me, right?

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - IMAGING ROOM. DAY. Steve slides into an MRI machine.

On various monitors, we see the sophisticated technological devices that have been implanted alongside his organs, bones and muscles.

DOCTOR KILLIAN

Kevlar and titanium plates cover every single one of your vital organs: brain, heart, lungs, liver, kidneys. Your whole immune system is revolutionary. It self-medicates. Sensors periodically check your levels and release any medication your body requires. In case of severe injury, your blood coagulates faster to avoid hemorrhage. If a foreign object enters your system, it is instantly covered by a lump of connective tissue that isolates it until it can be extracted.

STEVE

(astounded, as he views the inside

of his own body)
Couldn't you have spent a few extra bucks to
protect my reproductive organ too? You don't
need a lot of kevlar there, huh?

Oscar Goldman and Agent Farris (whose hand is now wrapped in a cast), laugh.

OSCAR GOLDMAN
Speaking of which, let me make a suggestion: if you're planning to
masturbate, I strongly recommend you use your other hand.

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - AUDITORIUM. DAY. Steve goes through a series of psychological tests. Doctor Manners displays words in large font on the screen.

Steve, connected to electrodes that measure his brain voltage, has to say the first thing that pops into his head.

Sign #1: MOTHER

Young. Sign #2: FREEDOM

Fight.

Sign #2: DEATH

Why? Sign #3: LIFE

Tree. Sign #4: AMERICA

Home. Sign #5: FATHER

Sorry.

STEVE

STEVE

STEVE

STEVE

STEVE

STEVE

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - INDOOR GARDEN. DAY.

Doctor Manners supervises an INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM who fill Steve in on the most important events from the past fifteen years.

There are newspapers, pictures and other printed materials on the table.

TEAM MEMBER #1

On August 29th 2005, a category
5 hurricane named Katrina struck Louisiana and became one of the five
deadliest hurricanes in
U.S. history. At least 1,245 people died in the flooding that followed...

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - RECREATION AREA. DAY. Steve learns to manage his new strength.

When he first tries to write, he breaks the pen in pieces or sends it straight through the paper.

As he progresses, we hear the voices of the team members that continue coaching him.

TEAM MEMBER #2 (V.O.)

*Hidden behind dubious lofty
arguments of anarchism and free
press, Julian Assange published
in his online platform
Wikileaks documents stolen
from different intelligence
agencies across the world...*

Steve practices playing pool, assembling Lego sets and handling delicate porcelain objects.

He tries to serve tea but crushes the porcelain cup.

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - STEVE'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Steve, alone in his room, manages to successfully cut a piece of steak without breaking the fork or plate and places it into his mouth.

But as he starts to chew, he grimaces and starts vomiting. Over a loud speaker, we hear Doctor Killian's voice.

DOCTOR KILLIAN (O.S.)

*Steve, your tongue is also
implanted with micro-sensors.
If it comes into contact with
any poison known to man, your*

*organism automatically induces
nausea so that the threat can
be eliminated. In this case,
the steak had been injected
with Amatoxin and would have
wrecked your heart and liver
in hours.
Sorry about that, but we had
to test the system.*

Steve can't believe it.

Through a series of brief images, we go through the
rehabilitation process alongside Steve--a process that takes
months--as he regains the use of his legs.

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - HALLWAY. DAY.

Steve cracks his neck, grabs the handles on the walker, breathes deeply and takes his first step.

CUT TO:

- EXT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - GARDENS. DAY.

Steve, now on crutches, takes another step.

CUT TO:

- EXT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - OUTDOOR TRACK. DAY.

Steve jogs.

Eventually the jog turns into a flat out run.

DOCTOR KILLIAN (V.O.)

*You will be able to run faster. Your legs have
been enhanced with bionic propulsion in your
knees and plantar plates. And you will be able
to run for long periods without rest. In fact,
your body knows no bounds. The heart--actually
your whole circulatory system--used to have to
work hard to pump blood into two arms and two
legs. Now, there's no stress on your organism
at all.*

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - CYCLING TRACK. DAY. Steve rides a race bike.

Doctor Killian and Oscar Goldman watch him, astonished.

AGENT FARRIS
(checking the chronometer)
He just broke the Olympic record.

Steve keeps pedaling, as sparks fly when the tire meets the ground.

CUT TO:

- INT - EXT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - DOCTOR KILLIAN'S OFFICE. DAY.

Doctor Killian opens the windows; his office is located on the third floor, about 40 feet above ground.

DOCTOR KILLIAN
Your ankles, knees and hips comprise a
progressive shock system inspired by the
Airbus
380. After all the effort we put into it,
everyone is very curious to see whether or
not it works.

Back on the ground, the whole TECH TEAM is standing by the cul-de-sac in front of the building.

Steve takes a deep breath, climbs onto the windowsill and jumps.

WE ENTER SLOW-MOTION. Steve lands on the ground below. His ankles first, and then his knees and hips absorb the shock seamlessly.

He feels no pain at all.

DOCTOR KILLIAN
(from the window) Now come
back up here.

Steve takes a few steps towards the door, but Doctor Killian stops him.

DOCTOR KILLIAN
I didn't mean the elevator, Steve.

Steve looks at him, incredulous. Does the doctor really expect him to jump back into his office?

Steve takes another deep breath, squats down and jumps up.

For the first time, we hear the classic sound FX from the series: Dun-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh

THE SCORE INTENSIFIES AS STEVE EVOLVES IN A RAPID SUCCESSION
OF IMAGES.

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - SOUND BOOTH. DAY.

Steve detects increasingly lower frequencies.

CUT TO:

- EXT. OLD-GROWTH FOREST. DAY.

Steve jumps from tree to tree scaling progressively higher trees.

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - RECREATION AREA. DAY.

Steve improves his fine motor skills, calibrates his strength at the pool table and builds larger Lego installations.

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - CYCLING TRACK. DAY.

Steve pedals faster and faster. The movement and the intense physical activity bring back an onslaught of memories.

CUT TO:

- EXT. AUSTIN FAMILY FARM. DAWN.

FIVE YEAR OLD STEVE learns to ride a bike.

Bernard Austin, his father, runs behind him, steadying the bike.

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - OUTDOOR TRACK. DAY. Steve runs without stopping at an amazingly high speed.

CUT TO:

- EXT. SNOW. DAY.

FROM THE EXACT POSITION IN THE PREVIOUS FRAME, Steve runs through the snow.

CUT TO:

- EXT. SWAMP. DAY. Steve runs through the mud.
He dodges obstacles left and right, but suddenly he is swallowed in a pit of quicksand.

Desperate, he flaps his arms around, but he can't get out. He goes under.
Moments pass and there is no sign of Steve.

Until he hurls himself out of the pit with intense force and lands on dry land.

Doctor Killian, Oscar Goldman and Agent Farris all smile from the Jeep that has been following him around.

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - CYCLING TRACK. DAY.

Steve continues to pedal. The bike reaches such an intense speed that both of the tires burst into pieces.

Steve and what's left of the bike are hurled at high speed and crash against the ground.

Steve looks at his scratches and scrapes and watches as the blood quickly coagulates.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

(coming over)

Hope you're not too sore there, buddy. Because
we've left the best for last.

Steve is exhausted, but intrigued.

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - MAIN BUILDING. DUSK.

An even larger group of TECHNICIANS and SCIENTISTS form a circle around Steve.

DOCTOR KILLIAN

The bones on your left hand, and the bone prosthetics inside all your nuclear limbs are electromagnetic, and can be activated by the electrical pulses in your brain. Basically, upon the sheer desire of sticking to a metallic surface, your brain releases an electrical signal that changes the magnets' polarity and turns them on.

STEVE

I'm not sure I follow you here.

DOCTOR KILLIAN

If you convince your mind that it is possible for you to climb metallic walls and surfaces... Then it becomes possible.

Steve places his hand on the iron column on the building and discovers that it strongly adheres to the wall.

Then he lifts one leg, and after the other. Suddenly he's up and off. Just like Spider-Man.

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - HEATED POOL. NIGHT. Steve's body goes underwater.

We follow him as he releases all the air in his lungs and sinks to the bottom.

DOCTOR KILLIAN (V.O.)

Not only can you see under water. You can breathe.

When Steve runs out of air, instead of swimming up to the surface, he inhales instead.

DOCTOR KILLIAN (V.O.)

When you dive into the water, the sensors detect the change in pressure. Then your artificial lung releases stored oxygen right into your blood, securing a 30 minute breathing supply.

Steve breathes in and out, fascinated.

DOCTOR KILLIAN (V.O.)

As soon as you resurface, the chamber automatically refills and you're ready to go under again.

CUT TO:

- INT. RIVER IN THE JUNGLE. DAWN.

Steve dives in head first into the river and begins to swim underwater towards the other side.

Steve enjoys this new power more than any other.

But the water is muddy, the early morning fog doesn't allow him to see very well, and about halfway through, he senses a threatening presence.

When he turns around to look, he notices an enormous CROCODILE following him.

Panicked, Steve starts to swim as fast as he can.

He looks around again and seems to have outswam the monster.

But when he resumes his swim, the crocodile lunges out of the darkness and attacks.

Steve has no option but to fight the crocodile, who opens its mouth and bites him on the back.

Steve grimaces with pain while protecting his head with his bionic arm.

He twists his arm left and right, yanking out several of the crocodile's teeth.

But the beast only grows more aggressive.

In a sudden and powerful move, Steve manages to get on top of the crocodile's back, embracing its body with his bionic legs.

Steve finally grabs the crocodile by its upper jaw with his bionic arm and opens it so ferociously wide that he breaks it.

The crocodile sinks to the bottom of the river.

Steve, adrenaline rushing and bleeding, comes back up to the surface.

Oscar Goldman, Doctor Killian and the rest of the team applaud enthusiastically by the river bank.

Steve flips them off.

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - REHABILITATION ROOM. DAY.

Doctor Killian, Doctor Manners and other members of the Tera Program give Steve a checkup.

He is connected to machines and computers that detect any malfunction in his bionic implants.

Doctor Killian also removes a foreign body from his back. He squints his eyebrows trying to figure out what it is.

DOCTOR KILLIAN

Want a souvenir?

It's a crocodile tooth.

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - INDOOR GARDEN. NIGHT.

Steve--his hair still damp from a shower and dressed impeccably--finishes jotting down a note.

He then pours hot water into a porcelain teapot, sets out several cups, fills them with tea, and takes them over to the table.

The assistant who has been filming Steve's progress focuses on Doctor Killian.

DOCTOR KILLIAN

Steve, I think you're ready.

Steve, euphoric, punches the wall making a big dent.

THE MUSIC SCORE MARKS THE END OF THE SEQUENCE.

- EXT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - OUTDOOR CAFE. DAY.

Steve and Oscar Goldman are the only two people sitting outside the cafe.

Before them, the magnificent Rocky Mountains.

When they finish breakfast, Oscar Goldman places a gun in Steve's hand.

OSCAR

GOLDMAN

With your nuclear vision and the perfect stability of your bionic arm, you should be able to hit any target, Steve.

Oscar Goldman points to a strategically placed human target sheet about three hundred feet away.

The wind is harsh.

Steve extends his right arm--holding it perfectly still-- focuses, and shoots.

The bullet hits the target right in the middle of the head. Steve shoots again and punches a hole through the heart.

Oscar Goldman watches through binoculars.

OSCAR
GOLDMAN

And this leads us to our next topic: your future. We're

frankly over the moon with your progress.

STEVE

Glad to hear it, thank you, sir.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

We are. And you should know by now you're not just a perfect shot. You're also the perfect soldier. And the perfect agent.

Steve nods.

He knew this conversation would come up sooner or later.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Especially for certain jobs where the use of ships, planes, multiplicity of personnel would be inappropriate, and where the use of a so called normal agent would be ineffective.

STEVE

(honestly)

Do I have to accept? Can I say no?

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Of course you can. You're a free man.

(smiles)

As a matter of fact, you're bound to us according to the contract you signed--the fine print made that perfectly clear. But legally our position is weak, and I'm sure any lawyer would be thrilled to defend you. So in practice, well... We can't and we won't force you to do anything against your will. But with the atrocities that happen every day in this world, it would truly be a crime not to use all this potential you have to combat them.

STEVE

Mr. Goldman, I'm very aware of all that you've invested in me, and I don't want to sound ungrateful. But what were fifteen years for all of you was just

the blink of an eye for me. The last thing I remember is being at war, and I'm not dying to jump into another one. You

all can keep running your tests, all the tests you want... But right now, I really need a break.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

All right, then, fair enough. You do understand that all of our activities--and all of your enhancements--must be kept in the strictest confidence.

STEVE

Of course.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

But I get it. Go visit a few friends, listen to the greatest hits of the last decade and see how you feel...

Oscar Goldman hands Steve a card.

But it's not a business card--it's a credit card with Steve's name on it.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

You'll have thirty thousand dollars credited to your account every month. The idea is for you to relax. Doctor Killian and Mrs. Manners will be in touch regularly but please don't hesitate to call me if you need anything.

Steve looks at the card.

He is surprised by Goldman's response and feels kind of guilty.

CUT TO:

- EXT. CEMETERY. DAY.

Steve puts a flower on his mother's grave, which reads "CLAUDIA ELIZABETH AUSTIN".

Now his father is buried next to her.

Steve gathers his strength, crouches down and places the open palm of his hand against Bernard Austin's tombstone.

His eyes fill with up with tears.

When he stands up again, he gazes at his own shadow projecting onto his father's grave.

CUT TO:

- INT. SELF-STORAGE UNIT. DAY.

The STORAGE MANAGER lifts up the metallic curtain covering one of an endless stretches of individual storage units.

Daylight shines in as Steve recognizes his old belongings and those of his father: a few machines, work tools, clothes, furniture.

The framed picture of Armstrong on the moon, his records, an out of date PC, pictures from his childhood...

STORAGE MANAGER

And there's an old tractor in back. I was wondering if you had any plans with that. Takin' offers?

Done deal.

STEVE

CUT TO:

- EXT. SELF-STORAGE CENTER - MAIN WAREHOUSE. DAY.

Steve opens up the trunk of an old Chevrolet Silverado while FOUR EMPLOYEES, all tall and husky, stack the boxes from the storage unit.

STORAGE MANAGER

Your company has already paid for everything. The guys will help you load the boxes with the fork--Whoa!

Steve is lifting the heaviest box with his right hand, and using his left to guide it. He drops it effortlessly into the back of the truck.

The storage manager is astounded. So are the employees.

STORAGE MANAGER

(to the employees)

See that you bums? All that time at the gym but those are the real cojones!

CUT TO:

- EXT. FARM (FORMER PROPERTY OF THE AUSTIN FAMILY) - MAIN HOUSE - DAY.

From the truck, Steve looks at his old house.

It's painted a different color and there's a windmill. Clearly its new owners have put some money into it.

THREE KIDS are running through the garden, giggling as they get sprayed by the sprinklers.

The NEW OWNER OF THE FARM, young and enterprising, comes out of the house and looks a bit worried when he notices Steve.

Man in an old beat-up truck, stacked with boxes, staring at his kids... He looks suspicious.

NEW OWNER OF THE FARM
Afternoon. Can I help you with anything?

STEVE
I used to live here. I was in town and just wanted to come by to see the place.

NEW OWNER OF THE FARM
(smiling) Okay...

The new owner, who has no idea who Steve is, still looks worried.

STEVE
There was a couple living in the house around back. He was a veterinarian, a Native American guy. Claire and Matunaaga, they worked on the farm.

NEW OWNER OF THE FARM
Sorry, when we moved in, no one was here. Did you try Facebook?

STEVE
(never heard of it) Facebook?

NEW OWNER OF THE FARM
Sorry, I'm going to have to ask you to leave. Otherwise I may have to call the police.

STEVE
Are you being serious?

NEW OWNER OF THE FARM
This is private property, Sir.

Steve, absorbed in his own thoughts, nods and drives off.

CUT TO:

- INT. BAR "POOR DEER", NEXT TO THE ROAD. DUSK.

Steve pulls up in front of a bar in the middle of nowhere.

The place is decorated with deer heads. A few PATRONS are drinking.

Steve walks up to the bar.

Towards the back, MOE (50, the owner), drunk and loud, is playing pool with SOME FRIENDS.

When he leans over to shoot, his sleeve pulled back reveals a swastika tattoo.

Sir?

WAITRESS

Steve turns to the WAITRESS (45), who is stacking a tray with beverages and food.

STEVE

Beer on tap. Whatever you got.

WAITRESS

Sure.

The waitress pours Steve a beer. He nods at her.

Steve notices that the woman has a bruise on her neck and another one on her arm; she grabs the tray and takes it back to the pool table.

Steve decides to concentrate on the baseball game on TV.

But because of his bionic ear, he can't help but hear the conversation in the back.

MOE

*I gotta wait in line at my own
goddamn bar? We ordered first so
why we gettin' our stuff last?*

WAITRESS

*Don't start up with me tonight,
Moe.*

MOE

*(grabbing her by the arm)
Don't you talk back to me in
front of my friends.*

The waitress breaks free and heads back to the bar.

Steve notices she's upset.

There's a cork board hanging on the wall displaying pictures of the patrons. Moe and the waitress are always together, they're clearly a couple.

STEVE

You should report him, you know?

WAITRESS

Shhh, keep it down. Don't be talkin' to me unless you're looking for trouble.

And she's right.

MOE

(yelling)

Hey! You like my girl so much, you should take her home. You can listen to her babbling all day and then eat the crap she cooks at night. And then sleep next to her smelly cunt.

Steve controls himself to stay calm on the barstool.

STEVE

(without looking at Moe, sipping his beer)

If you're not happy, divorce is always an option.

MOE

First I'm gonna divorce your head from the rest of your body and then I'll decide what to do about my love life.

Moe's friends chuckle.

STEVE

(to the waitress)

Well, I better get going. How much do I owe you?

WAITRESS

Don't worry about it, it's on the house.

MOE

What do you mean it's "on the house"? Are you payin' the bills now woman?

(coming over)

Real easy to treat with someone else's money.

(to Steve)

Pay what you owe before I kick the livin' shit out of you.

STEV

E

(grabbing his things) Good night.

MOE

I said pay up...

Moe kicks Steve hard from behind.

MOE

Or I'll kick your ass! Moe's friends hoot with laughter.

Steve tolerates the aggression and takes another step towards the door but he gets kicked in the butt a second time: boom!

And that's it, he's lost his patience; Steve turns around and punches Moe in the face.

Steve pulls back, crouching down as if Moe were going to punch back, but suddenly he realizes what he's done.

Moe is laying on the floor--his head split down the middle. Blood is spurting out of him in all directions and his legs and arms are twitching.

From Steve's POV, we only hear his breathing and his heartbeat. He is going through some kind of post-traumatic stress.

Moe's friends rush over to Steve. One of them points a rifle at him.

The sobbing waitress is calling 911, while other patrons are dialing on their cellphones for help.

Steve can't manage to make sense of what just happened. From afar, we hear the police sirens.

Steve, in shock, lifts his arms up and lets THE POLICE arrest him.

CUT TO:

- INT. LOCAL POLICE STATION - ENTRY, MAIN HALL, STAIRWAY AND BASEMENT CELLS. NIGHT.

The station is filled with POLICEMEN who are all talking about what happened.

The waitress and several of the patrons are giving their version of the story.

Oscar Goldman and Agent Farris follow the POLICE CHIEF, who makes his way through the crowd and leads them down the stairs to the cells.

Steve's hands and legs are cuffed and he is being watched by SEVERAL OFFICERS as if he were Hannibal Lecter.

The police chief opens the door to the cell and lets Goldman in.

Agent Farris stands outside.

AGENT FARRIS

(to the police officers) Could you all leave us alone for a minute?

The police chief nods. The officers leave the basement.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Good evening, Steve. I didn't expect to see you so soon. An incident like this could get you a life sentence in this state.

We could make a few calls, of course, and with your new talents, no prison could hold you for very long. But you can't run forever. The Office of Strategic Operations can protect you. We can make the case file disappear. But you need to accept what you are because it cannot be undone. Then you could use your power to save lives instead of taking them away.

STEVE

You knew this was going to happen.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Well, this or something else. You could have smacked your girlfriend on the ass and dislocated her hip. Steve, we didn't force you to get in to that chopper. We didn't shoot it down. We just picked up the pieces and put them back together. And we did a pretty damn good job of it, I would say. I want you to see something.

Oscar Goldman takes out an ultrathin cell phone. Steve gazes at the screen with his bionic eye.

Technology looking at technology.

STEVE

It's incredible.

OSCAR
GOLDMAN

I don't mean the phone, Steve.

Goldman plays a video of an ISIS-like terrorist group.

A HOODED TERRORIST says a few phrases in Arabic and slits the throat of a WESTERNER.

The scene upsets Steve. He can feel the hate way down in his gut.

OSCAR
GOLDMAN

Al-Qaeda wasn't shit compared to these guys--they're the real nutcases. These savages are beheading journalists in the middle of the desert. We know where they are. But they've got guards out there day and night, radars and sensors, and if they so much as hear a peep, an engine or a drone, they'll kill all the prisoners. We didn't have an agent around capable of getting in there.

(beat)

Until now. Time is running out. No government is going to pay the ransom because it would send the wrong message. This mission is real, Steve. If you don't save these people, nobody will. What you signed up to do fifteen years ago. Now you can do.

As the camera moves on to the progressively more determined look on Steve's face...

THE EPIC SCORE SWEEPS US INTO ACT TWO.

- INT. AIRPLANE - IN FLIGHT. DAWN.

Steve parachutes out of a military plane high above the desert.

CUT TO:

- INT. OFFICE OF STRATEGIC OPERATIONS. DAY.

On various screens we see satellite images of the terrorist camp.

Oscar Goldman and Agent Farris brief Steve.

AGENT FARRIS

We've counted seven hostages. (shows the photographs on the screen)

Two French journalists, one Spaniard, one Japanese and three of our own. Between five and ten heavily armed terrorists patrol the camp around the clock.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Our sources say they've got metal detectors and radio frequency sensors strategically placed every ten miles, covering a radius of at least a hundred and fifty miles.

CUT BACK TO:

- EXT. SKY AND DESERT. DAWN.

Steve free-falls.

OSCAR GOLDMAN (V.O.)

You're going to jump alone. No weapons. No communication. No back-up. When all the terrorists are neutralized and the hostages safe, you will use the camp's own communication system to call in the rescue unit.

Steve releases his chute and lands at a designated spot. There are sand dunes in every direction. Steve takes a sip from his canteen, checks his compass and starts running.

FADE TO:

- EXT. DESERT. DAY.

WIDE SHOT. Steve runs through the dunes. He is a tiny dot in the endless desert.

FADE TO:

- EXT. DESERT. DUSK.

The red sun is setting on the horizon.

Relentless, Steve keeps running as the first stars appear in the sky.

The mystical air and the feeling of adventure conjure a certain "Lawrence of Arabia" vibe.

Every shot--Steve's face, his legs, perfectly cut with wide panoramic shots to the rhythm of the music--is breathtaking.

CUT TO:

- EXT. OUTSIDE THE TERRORIST CAMP. NIGHT.

Steve reaches the top of a dune and he can finally see the terrorist camp.

With his thermonuclear vision, he makes out three tents:

The first has seven people inside, the HOSTAGES, guarded by one TERRORIST.

In the next tent, there are TWO MORE TERRORISTS.

The third tent is empty. But behind another dune, he spots a campfire.

Steve focuses on his hearing. He picks up distant voices speaking in Arabic, but the dune keeps him from seeing how many men are there.

CUT TO:

- EXT. TERRORIST CAMP. NIGHT.

Steve moves stealthily through the camp.

Outside the first tent, there is an electric generator. Next to it are several fuel cans.

Sounds of videogames are heard inside.

The two terrorists are on a Play Station. They also have a Nespresso machine.

Careful not to be detected, Steve scans the area to gather more information.

A terrorist armed with a machine gun is guarding the second tent.

Inside, the hostages are chained and naked.

Steve walks towards the dune where he had spotted the campfire.

But suddenly he trips and falls into a pit about ten feet deep.

What he discovers inside is shocking: the heads and bodies of the hostages already murdered.

His eyes fill with hatred. Steve takes a deep breath to control his emotions.

A single jump and he leaps out of the pit.

Leaning against a stone wall, he spots machetes and sables used during the executions.

Steve continues towards the dune.

Behind it, he stumbles upon another FIFTEEN TERRORISTS grilling two lambs over the fire.

They are all armed.

Steve discerns the exact weapon each of them is packing.

CUT TO:

- EXT. TERRORIST CAMP - CAMPFIRE. NIGHT.

The terrorists joke and talk as they eat their lamb. They all seem to be in good spirits.

Suddenly, the generator shuts off and the lights in the camp go out.

CUT TO:

- EXT. TERRORIST CAMP - TENT #1. NIGHT.

The terrorists with the Play Station get frustrated because their game was interrupted.

When they come out to fix the generator, their eyes widen in terror.

They attempt to pull out their weapons, but Steve cuts both of their heads off with a single swift machete slice.

CUT TO:

- EXT. TERRORIST CAMP - TENT #2. NIGHT.

The terrorist guarding the hostages talks on his handy (in Arabic). We don't understand what he's saying, but no one answers.

He grabs his machine gun, locks the door with a thick padlock and walks over to the tent with the generator.

But Steve attacks the man from behind.

He wraps the terrorist's own machine gun around him with such smothering force that he completely crushes his chest.

Before collapsing, the terrorist manages to get off a round in the air.

CUT TO:

- EXT. TERRORIST CAMP - CAMPFIRE. NIGHT. The terrorists around the fire hear the shots. They stop eating and grab their weapons.

The TERRORIST LEADER gets up and yells towards the tents.

TERRORIST LEADER
(in Arabic, subtitled) Ahmed, Karim, what was that?!

No one answers.

Another terrorist near the fire notices that he is wet. The terrorists next to him can feel the spray too.

Spurts of a strange liquid are emanating from behind the dune.

From the smell--and the sudden flare of the fire--they realize that they are being drenched

with gasoline.

Before they can figure out what the hell is going on, the entire electric generator comes crashing into the fire.

The flames erupt while sparks and pieces of firewood spurt out in every direction.

Several terrorists are set on fire.

It's mayhem: the terrorists run and scream while burning alive.

TERRORIST ON FIRE
(in Arabic, subtitled) Water!!! Waaaaaater!!!

A fellow terrorist tries in vain to put out the fire by throwing water on him from his canteen.

TERRORIST ON FIRE
Waaaaaater!!!

TERRORIST WITH THE CANTEEN
(desperate, unable to help)
We're in the middle of the fucking desert!

The terrorist leader realizes that his fellow members are burning alive, so he starts shooting them to put them out of their misery.

Another three follow his lead.

Now only four terrorists are left standing.

TERRORIST LEADER
(to one of them, in Arabic)
Kais, execute the hostages. All of them.
Immediately.

KAIS nods, terrified, as he begins to move cautiously towards the tents.

We stay with the POV of the three terrorists standing. Kais disappears behind the dune. Seconds later, we hear rounds being fired.

The three terrorists clutch their weapons, in anticipation.

Kais' dead body comes flying at them at incredible speed and lands in the middle of the fire.

The three terrorists start walking backwards, shooting in the direction of whatever is hunting them.

Suddenly, the two terrorists on the edges are each struck by one bullet perfectly placed to the head. Dead.

Desperate--out of his mind--the terrorist leader cries out into the night and empties all the rounds of his machine gun in Steve's vicinity.

When he runs out of bullets, Steve's silhouette appears on the horizon.

The terrorist leader flees as fast as he can through the desert.

He turns to see Steve running behind him about 600 feet away.

The terrorist leader continues running as fast as his feet will carry him.

Just seconds later, he turns back again and Steve is a mere few feet away.

It's impossible, but there he is.

The terrorist leader screams in a crazed frenzy. Steve jumps forward and knocks him to the ground.

CUT TO:

- INT. TERRORIST CAMP - TENT #2. NIGHT.

Someone is rattling the lock from outside and the padlock breaks.

When the door opens, the scared hostages can't believe their eyes.

Steve is next to the terrorist leader, whose hands and feet are bound; behind them, the corpses of all the other terrorists are in a huge messy pile.

CUT TO:

- EXT. TERRORIST CAMP. DAWN.

The hostages, finally free, are stunned to see that there are no other soldiers or vehicles.

FREED HOSTAGE #1

(confused)

Where are the others??

STEVE

Trying to get a hold of them.

Steve searches the tents, looking for a way to communicate.

FREED HOSTAGE #2

What do you mean by "trying to get a hold of them?" Did you come here all alone??

Steve finds several cameras and cell phones, but most of them don't work.

STEVE

Aren't you journalists? (tosses them the cameras)

Please take pictures of everything you can find here.

At last, Steve finds a phone with a battery and service. But as he's dialing, he turns around to discover:

On a rocky landing strip, there is an old Cessna Centurion, the plane that flew in the other

terrorists.

CUT TO:

- INT. CESSNA CENTURION - IN FLIGHT. DAWN.

The plane taxis along the rocky terrain and takes off. The freed passengers cheer. The terrorist leader, bound and disgraced, remains silent.

But the plane shakes as it moves upward. It's clearly carrying too heavy a load.

FREED HOSTAGE #3
(worried, to Steve) You said this thing
was for eight passengers.

STEVE
(worried too)
It is. But I put on a few pounds.

All eyes are suddenly on the terrorist leader.

Steve leaves the plane on autopilot, stands up and opens the emergency door.

STEVE
(to the terrorist leader)
Get up.

Suffering, praying, the terrorist leader stands.

But Steve pulls out the entire seat where the leader had been sitting and throws it out the window.

STEVE
See? "Civilization." (pointing to the
floor)
Sit down.

The terrorist leader obeys as Steve returns to the pilot's seat.

FREED HOSTAGE #4
(looking at Steve, astonished)
Who the hell are you, man?

Steve looks over and winks. He's happy and proud to finally experience the glory he has longed for.

In an epic shot, the Cessna Centurion makes its way across the sky passing over a striking red sun.

CUT TO:

- INT. STEVE'S NEW APARTMENT. DAY.

Agent Farris opens the doors into a modern apartment with a great view of the city.

STEVE

Wow.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

(patting Steve on the back)
We'd love to have you at the facility all the time but we can't. You need to have a life. Be comfortable and get out a little.

We sense a nice feeling of fellowship.

AGENT FARRIS

We took the liberty of organizing some of your things. But if there's anything not to your liking, just say the word and we'll rearrange.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Farris, if there's one thing this guy doesn't need, it's our help moving furniture.

Steve notices a new computer, turned on and ready to use.

AGENT FARRIS

We've left you a guide to the most popular websites.

Steve looks down at the sheet of paper, which reads: GOOGLE: FIND ANYTHING
FACEBOOK: FIND OLD FRIENDS TINDER:
ONE NIGHT STAND WIKIPEDIA:
ENCYCLOPEIDA UBER: GET A RIDE
TWITTER: AVOID IT AT ALL COSTS

OSCAR GOLDMAN

(pointing)
And inside the cabinet, you'll find a little present.

Steve opens the doors of the cabinet and finds a brand new vinyl record player.

Right next to it, the complete collection of Bruce Springsteen's records.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Vinyls are in again—can you believe it?
Technology moves forward, but we can't get rid of good old nostalgia.

STEVE

Not everything is about progress. If it's not broke...

OSCAR GOLDMAN

(embracing him)

Steve, I know there is a point where your professional life ends and your personal life begins. So I would ask you please, don't talk about what we are doing with anyone.
(hands him an envelope) In case you need it, this contains information about a fake job we've created as part of your double identity. You can keep your real name for now.

(lowering his voice)

Let me be a little clearer: you can have all the sex you want, but be careful not to fall in love. You would be jeopardizing national security, putting your life at risk, and hers as well.

Steve nods.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Or "his"; I don't want to sound old-fashioned.

Steve smiles and nods again.

CUT TO:

- INT. STEVE'S NEW APARTMENT. NIGHT.

A Bruce Springsteen record is playing. The glorious sound of "the Boss" is comforting.

Steve uses his bionic hand to stir coffee and sugar manually, creating a spectacular layer of foam.

Proud of his feat, he turns on the TV to see the news.

He channel surfs through excerpts of American Idol and dumb ads, stumbling upon a news program talking about the hostage rescue.

The PENTAGON DIRECTOR, standing alongside the freed hostages, gives a press conference.

PENTAGON DIRECTOR

In a secret mission that we are not at liberty to disclose, the U.S. Army was able to rescue all of the hostages were being held captive since September 2015.

Steve continues channel surfing, only to find more commercials and silly sitcoms.

He turns off the television and sits down in front of the computer.

He opens up Facebook. At the suggestion of the new owner of his family farm, he searches for "MATUNAAGA".

Several profiles pop up, including that of his old friend.

He smiles to see the pictures of the years that have passed him by.

Matunaaga embracing Claire during her pregnancy, their new home, their first son, then twin daughters...

The profile also features a picture of Bernard Austin, Steve's father, holding Matunaaga and Claire's son.

Bernard looks sad and empty.

Steve sighs, and then begins typing out a message, but suddenly thinks twice.

He deletes the message and jots down the address on the profile. He hopes to surprise them.

Now that he's figured out how Facebook works, Steve searches for "OSCAR GOLDMAN".

There are several profiles, but none of them match. So he then searches in Google.

Once again, he finds nothing.

Steve searches for the "OFFICE OF STRATEGIC OPERATIONS".

He gets a few hits for organizations with similar names, but not the one he is working for.

Pop-ups start appearing on screen: ads, sex pages...

Steve gets distracted for a moment, but then he closes the spam windows and does a Google search for "AXON CORPORATION".

The Axon Corporation website comes right up, with all the different branches: MEDICINE, SECURITY, ENERGY, ROBOTICS.

A small capsule reads: "ABOUT US" Steve clicks on the capsule.

A black and white picture of the Wiig family appears on screen.

Next to the picture is a brief summary of the family's history.

Steve notices that there is a man in a wheelchair seated in the family portrait: MAXIMILIAN WIIG.

Steve goes back to Google and types in the name.

Several pages appear along with a recent picture of Wiig taken from afar.

He is surrounded by security guards entering a meeting of the selective and shady Bildelberg Group.

Returning to the Google search, one of the hits catches Steve's eye.

It reads: "MAXIMILIAN WIIG IS THE DEVIL"

Steve opens the page, where an accusatory video claims that Wiig is part of an ancient cult.

But the popups offering virtual sex and ads like “ENLARGE YOUR PENIS” keep on appearing.

Steve tries to close the windows, but they just won’t go away.

He hits the power button, but Steve is so angry that he applies too much force and punches a hole through it.

Before it shuts down, the computer gives him a shock.

But Steve is now intrigued, so he stands up and grabs his jacket.

CUT TO:

- INT. STEVE'S BUILDING - HALLWAY. NIGHT.

Steve leaves his new apartment and presses the elevator button, but the elevator door doesn't open. It looks like it's stuck on some other floor.

Steve turns to take the stairs but all of a sudden, he gets another idea.

A hall window looks out a landscaped strip.

It's only three floors high. Why not? Steve opens the window and jumps.

CUT TO:

- EXT. SIDE OF STEVE'S BUILDING. NIGHT. Steve lands on the grass alongside the building.

A FIVE-YEAR-OLD BOY dressed as Batman can't believe his eyes.

STEVE
(emphatically, pointing at the boy)
Don't even think about it.

CUT TO:

- EXT. CITY STREET. NIGHT.

Steve walks through a well-to-do area with shops like Apple Store and Abercrombie & Fitch.

It's a stark contrast with the poverty we saw in Iraq.

Steve watches expensive new cars, people sliding by on skates...

He finally goes in to a Barnes & Noble type bookstore.

CUT TO:

- INT. BOOKSTORE. NIGHT.

As he wanders through the aisles, Steve looks at the bestsellers.

The latest Jane Fonda Exercise Manual shares a space alongside another book entitled "WIKILEAKS AND THE TRUTH ABOUT IRAQ".

In the videogame sector, a PAIR OF TEENAGERS are trying out the latest "Call of Duty" installment; from a soldier's perspective, they fire off rounds at terrorists.

MIRIAM (30, works at the bookstore), takes Steve off guard.

MIRIAM

Hi there, can I help you?

Steve is left staring at her: her eyes, her lips, a beauty mark on her neck, her name tag...

Because she's kind and lovely and has been cast perfectly in the role, we love this woman.

STEVE

Oh. Thanks... I was wondering if you had any books about the Axon Corporation.

MIRIAM

Axon Corporation, let me see. (checking the computer)

Not under that name...

STEVE

(nodding)

What about the Wiig Corporation? Or the Wiig family?

MIRIAM

Hmm, we have "The Wiig Collection". Are you looking for art books?

STEVE

No, cutting-edge medicine, robotics...

MIRIAM

Are you an android trying to figure out where you

came from?

STEVE
(taken aback) Why do you ask
that?

MIRIAM
It was... a joke?

STEVE

Right.

MIRIAM

(a little weirded out) Give me a minute.

Steve nods.

Miriam continues looking.

CUT TO:

- INT. BOOKSTORE - CAFE. NIGHT.

Steve drinks a coffee as he leafs through the different books Miriam has set aside for him.

One of them--a picture of Boris Karloff's Frankenstein on the cover--is titled "BIOETHICS:
WHAT ARE THE LIMITS OF EVOLUTION?"

Steve reads the back cover.

Without meaning to, his bionic ear picks up on a conversation between Miriam and a
GAY CO-WORKER.

MIRIAM
*What about him? Ever seen him
here before...?*

CO-WORKER
*Nope. Cute, huh? What's he
reading.*

MIRIAM
See if he checks me out.

Miriam walks over to a shelf near Steve and bends down to straighten a book, showing off her legs.

Steve, aware that he is being watched, exaggerates staring at Miriam and opens his eyes wide.

When Miriam goes back to her co-worker, she is assured:

CO-WORKER

*Check you out? He almost had a
heart attack.*

Steve is amused by the situation, but suddenly one of the books catches his eye:

“BIONIC MEDICINE: THE SCIENCE OF THE FUTURE”

But what really intrigues Steve is the picture of its author: DOCTOR RUDY WELLS.

The enigmatic face sparks a blurry memory.

The Muzak in the bookstore continues to play and we can hear the customers murmuring, as we move into Steve's FLASHBACK:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - OPERATING ROOM. NIGHT.

RUDY WELLS (70) is patiently working on Steve.

This is a memory of one of the many operations he underwent.

CUT TO:

- INT. BOOKSTORE - REGISTER. NIGHT. Steve waits in line to pay for the book.
Right before it's his turn, Miriam approaches the register.

MIRIAM

(to the CASHIER)

Take a break, Stu. I got you covered.
(looking at the line) Next!

Steve comes up to the register.

MIRIAM

Hey! Was one of those books what you were looking for?

STEVE

(handing her the book by Rudy Wells)
This should keep me busy for a few days... Do you have any other books by the same author?

MIRIAM

(checks the computer)
He published two others, "The Nuclear Man" in 1977 and "Technology is Also Nature" in 1996.

We don't have them in stock but I can order them for you. Want to leave me your email address and I'll let you know when they come in?

STEVE

(thinks)

Why not...? It's
steve75@compuserve.com

MIRIAM

Are you kidding?

STEVE

Why?

MIRIAM

Compuserve went out of business like ten years ago... Where have you been? Anyway, don't worry about it. Tomorrow after noon they should be here, come by anytime you want. I work from four til closing. And then I'm free... (smiles) It's \$17.84.

Steve looks at Miriam and smiles back.

CUT TO:

• INT. HELICOPTER – IN FLIGHT. DAY.

A PILOT FROM O.S.O. (Office of Strategic Operations) flies the helicopter.

Steve and Oscar Goldman are the only passengers.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

The Pentagon is thrilled to pieces, NSA is calling, DEA is calling, everyone wants to know: "Who rescued the hostages?" "What's the new secret weapon?"

Steve nods, cautious.

He doesn't know where they are headed.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

I can imagine how you must feel, Steve, because I once felt the same way. For the cops, it's easy. For the courts, it's easy too. But

whether we like it or not, we're in the business of operating above the law. And sometimes we have to be the judge, the jury and the executioner. We have to be supermen and such a responsibility can be a heavy weight on your conscience. But there is a reason for everything we do. Look at that.

(points through the window,
excited)

They brought trees from across the globe to design these gardens.

A WIDE SHOT from above the helicopter shows the spectacular landscape before a magnificent property.

The variety of tree species forms an incredibly large map of the world.

STEVE

Sir, are we going on a mission?

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Not today, my friend. You're doing an extraordinary job, and someone very important wants to meet you.

The helicopter lands on the property.

CUT TO:

- INT. WIIG ESTATE – GRAND FOYER. DUSK. A MAID opens the doors to a stunning room. MAXIMILIAN WIIG is seated in his wheelchair, near a fantastic fireplace.

WIIG

(looking at Steve) Goldman's Golem!

A man in his eighties, Wiig talks through a device inserted in his throat. However, he appears energetic and lively.

Steve smiles, though he doesn't know what "Golem" means.

STEVE

(stretching out his hand)

It's an honor to meet you, Mr. Wiig.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Give him a soft shake there, Steve...

WIIG

Oh now, now, Mr. Austin, no need for formalities. We all know you're the main event here. Do you like plants?

FADE TO:

- EXT. WIIG ESTATE – PATIO. DUSK.

Steve and Oscar Goldman follow Wiig, who maneuvers comfortably his electric wheelchair.

He wears a yellow polo sweater and loose pants, and gives off an air of wisdom.

WIIG

(pointing to a group of trees)

Phytolacca dioica, commonly known as the ombú, and the silk floss tree--two species common in South America.

Steve notices the large number of GARDENERS and SERVANTS working on the property.

There are also SEVERAL BODYGUARDS. Steve nods to greet them.
They nod back at him.

FADE TO:

- INT. WIIG ESTATE - DINING HALL. NIGHT.

The food is delicious, the classical music is lovely, and the servants come by filling the glasses of wine and champagne every few minutes.

The dining room walls are covered with paintings and symbols of alchemy and masonry.

Steve tries to decipher the images but he can't.

MAXIMILIAN WIIG JR. (40, Wiig's son), has also joined them for dinner.

WIIG JR.

(removes the napkin from his lap)

Mr. Austin, thanks for such a wonderful evening but the Nikkei Index is about to open and I need to make some calls.

WIIG

Someone has to run the business. Son, we have Mr. Austin's account number, don't we?

WIIG JR.

Of course.

WIIG

Because I would like us to deposit six million dollars.

STEVE

What? To me? Oh—no way, sir, I can't accept that. That wouldn't be right.

Maximilian Wiig Jr. finishes typing into his cell phone.

WIIG JR.

I'm afraid it's too late, Mr. Austin. The money should be in your account first thing tomorrow morning. Have a great night.

Steve--astounded, unsettled--looks over at Oscar Goldman.

WIIG

It's one percent of the program's budget, young man, and you earned it. The medical and scientific applications that will be developed from now on have no precedent. Hundreds, thousands, even millions will walk again. See again. Hear again. You're going to take this company to a whole new level. We are very lucky to have met you. A true thoroughbred... I hope you are as happy as we are.

STEVE

I am... I really am... But to tell you the truth, I always wanted to be an astronaut, not a spy.

MAXIMILIAN WIIG

Yes, well, in my experience, what one wants has little to do with destiny. Destiny is that unstoppable force that attracts you towards what you are meant to be. People fear the unknown and they resist it with all their might. They get stuck somewhere in the middle, shielded by a job they can't stand, in a marriage with the wrong person... But a precious few manage to get

further. They walk into the darkness and embrace whatever life has prepared for them.

Wiig lifts his glass.

Steve and Oscar Goldman make a toast to him.

Suddenly, TWO CURVY GIRLS dressed in silk lingerie appear at the doorway.

WIIG

And every warrior who returns successfully from a mission is entitled to a few virgins...

Steve shuffles around on his seat.

The girls come over to the table and begin to flirt.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Well, I wouldn't say "virgins" is quite the word, Mr. Wiig. But

in my humble opinion, experience is always a great asset.

Steve looks a bit uneasy.

The girls are gorgeous but something just doesn't feel right.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

(encourages him)

You should stay here tonight, Steve. You had a lot to drink.

The girls giggle.

WIIG

Enjoy it while you can, Mr. Austin. Believe me, someday you'll miss it!

OSCAR GOLDMAN

George Burns, the comedian, was famous for appreciating the pleasures of women until his final days. A journalist once asked him: "What's sex like after ninety?" And he answered: "Oh, just great. It's like playing pool with a rope!"

Wiig bursts out laughing.

The girls laugh as well. One sits on Steve's lap and nibbles on his ear.

FADE TO:

- INT. WIIG ESTATE - GUEST ROOM. NIGHT.

The girls, half naked, kiss Steve while taking off his clothes.

Steve is excited but he also feels a little uncomfortable.

STEVE

Listen, I haven't been with a woman for some time now. I'm not sure if--

GIRL #1

Shhh... Relax, Stephen.

Steve closes his eyes, breathes deeply, and tries to enjoy.

While one of the girls unbuckles his belt, the other takes Steve's hand and places it on her breast.

STEVE

(shakes his head)

You know what? My hand's not real, your breasts aren't real... I'm sorry, you're both stunning but it's too many prosthetics for a single room.

(sits up)

I don't feel well, I need to go.

CUT TO:

- INT. BOOKSTORE. NIGHT.

Steve runs up to the bookstore. It's about to close. When he catches sight of Miriam, his eyes light up.

Miriam looks happy to see him as well, though she doesn't seem to have good news.

MIRIAM

Steve, right? (shaking his hand)

I hope you won't want to kill me. The books you ordered are out of stock everywhere. It's weird because they were listed as available at a few other branches, but when I made the order, they just disappeared. I tried a few other specialty bookshops, but no luck there, either. So sorry.

But Steve doesn't care about the books. He's come for her.

STEVE
OK... But you're still free after closing, right?

Miriam smiles.

CUT TO:

- INT. BOWLING ALLEY. NIGHT. Steve throws a perfect strike.

MIRIAM
Wow! Are you the national bowling champ or something?

STEVE
Aw, it's just a hobby.

Now it's Miriam's turn.

When she bends over to lift her ball up, a HEAVYSET MAN in the next lane stares at her ass and makes a crude gesture.

Steve notices and gives the man a look.

But the man--a bully weighing about 250 pounds--doesn't back down; instead he goes double or nothing.

HEAVYSET MAN
(holding the bowling ball in his hands)
What's your beef, man? Is checkin' out a girl's ass illegal now?

Steve considers ripping him into pieces, but he knows he needs to control himself.

Plus, Steve notices that the man is with a TEENAGE BOY, who appears to be his son, and he doesn't want to embarrass him in front of the kid.

STEVE
(friendly)
Of course it's not, buddy. Look all you like.

Steve winks at the kid and turns his attention back to Miriam, who has just thrown the ball.

She is not even aware there was any tension at all.

MIRIAM
Not bad for a beginner. Your turn. I'm going to the bathroom.

Steve nods.

As she passes by him, Miriam looks at Steve and smiles. The attraction between them both is obvious.

The heavyset man in the next lane gets ready to throw.

But Steve takes a bowling ball and--with such an incredible force--he throws it forward and over onto the next lane.

The ball hits the target so hard that it shatters all ten pins into hundreds of pieces.

The noise from the impact is deafening, and an alarm goes off.

The heavyset man and his boy stare at Steve in amazement.

STEVE
(taking a new ball) Sorry about that,
buddy.

Before he throws again, Steve spins the bowling ball on one of his fingers as if it were a basketball.

The man doesn't dare to say a word.

CUT TO:

- INT. TEX-MEX RESTAURANT. NIGHT. Steve plays with his fork. He's not hungry. Miriam is finishing her meal.

MIRIAM
So... car insurance, house insurance, life
insurance...?

STEVE
(elusive)
No... It's a little more complicated. I work for a
small company inside a larger company.

MIRIAM
Uh-huh.
(she looks at him as if to say...
"And?")
What's it called?

STEVE

What?

MIRIAM

The company. The small one, the large one...?

STEVE
(tries to remember, but he can't)
It's a subsidiary of the Axon Corporation.

MIRIAM
...whose story you were investigating.

STEVE

(thinking)

Right. Listen, I'm one of those boring office types...

MIRIAM

No one that boring goes off to war. I googled you.

STEVE

(surprised) You what?

MIRIAM

I googled you. You don't know what that means?

STEVE

Are you spying on me?

MIRIAM

Of course. Everyone spies on everyone. Respect for privacy is something that humanity might have lost forever.

Steve looks visibly uncomfortable.

MIRIAM

It's not that I like checking people out, but today you never know. There's a lot of crazy people out there...

(switching topics)

So: army, robotics, state-of-the-art medicine, it's an interesting combo. What exactly do you insure?

STEVE

(smiles, tense)

Can we talk about something else?

MIRIAM

Sure. Of course.

(chewing a bite from her burrito)

Mexican culture is so fascinating, right?

STEVE

I'm one of the good guys, you don't have to worry.

Miriam laughs at the comment.

STEVE

What's so funny?

MIRIAM

How do you know you're one of the "good guys"?

STEVE

Because I fight the bad guys.

MIRIAM

This may sound a little naive, but who are "the bad guys"?

STEVE

Well, I'd say terrorists are bad.

MIRIAM

No doubt about that. They're also very useful. If there were no dangerous terrorists out there, how would the government explain pumping all that money into military technology? Do you know what the number one industry in this country is? War. And the second? Entertainment. That explains a lot. We need to be very entertained to allow the government to do what it wants with all that money we hand over to the IRS. Very entertained or drugged out of our minds...

STEVE

So now drug dealers are useful too?

MIRIAM

Well, someone has to supply our congressmen. Highest concentration of cocaine per inhabitant? Washington DC. But I would say it's easier to hide the truth through entertainment.

STEVE

A good book can also make you think. Or a good movie.

MIRIAM

Of course. But they are no longer a threat. They used to have to ban books but now those same books are buried under piles of junky titles. I know that, because I'm the one who puts the junk out there. And then the truth becomes "just an opinion." Still, there is a truth.

STEVE

And what is the truth?

MIRIAM

That we're the goddamned United States of fucking America, Steve. We sent people to the moon. We just flew a spaceship to Pluto... With all our

potential, all of our knowhow, we could solve the world's real problems. The real issues, the ones that go beyond our self-interest as a nation, the ones common to all human kind.

Steve notices that he's curled the fork into a spiral. He pushes it under the napkin so

Miriam won't see.
He is clearly in a bad mood.

STEVE
I don't know, Miriam... The last thing I came
looking for tonight is a lecture in geopolitics.

MIRIAM
You've just hit the nail on the head. That's the
way I end up ruining every single potential
relationship.

Steve shakes his head, bothered.

MIRIAM
(conciliatory)
So what was it...? What did you come
looking for tonight...?

Steve remains silent for a few seconds, pensive; he can't contain himself, and his eyes tear
up.

Miriam sighs; whatever it is, she is completely taken by Steve's sensitivity.

"YOU SEND ME" BY SAM COOKE PLAYS OVER THE NEXT SCENE.

- INT. MIRIAM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Steve and Miriam push their way into her house, making out. A huge ROTTWEILER is
barking.

Steve tries to get his hand under Miriam's sweater but she stops him.

MIRIAM
Hold on, hold on... I have to feed Nero.

Miriam unwraps herself from Steve and shakes some food into the dog dish.

Steve takes Miriam by the waist and turns her around. He continues kissing her
as he pulls off her clothes.

MIRIAM
I hope you won't be disappointed.

Steve opens her bra.

MIRIAM
I wear a push-up.

STEVE
(kissing her)
The real thing, baby. You have no idea what
that's worth.

Miriam, whom we suspect is a little insecure, feels comfortable and relaxed with Steve.

When she takes off Steve's shirt, she can see marks on his skin: scars from his recent wounds and others from the war.

MIRIAM

(caressing him)

Oh my God, what did they do to you...?

Steve kisses her again and now there's no time for talking. Steve lifts up her skirt. A real sex scene follows, going from very tender to very passionate.

Steve and Miriam have found each other.

FADE TO:

- INT. MIRIAM'S HOUSE - BEDROOM. DAWN. Steve and Miriam are asleep.

But a MOSQUITO buzzes in Steve's ear.

Steve moves his head back and forth, fidgeting.

Miriam opens her eyes halfway and realizes that Steve is having a nightmare.

MIRIAM

Hey... Steve.

But Steve doesn't wake up.

INTERCUT
WITH:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - OPERATING ROOM. NIGHT.

Again, Dr. Rudy Wells is working on Steve's body. Oscar Goldman is also in the room. Rudy Wells seems to be reluctant about something, but Goldman--smiling but persistent--pressures him to continue.

MIRIAM (O.S.)

Steve... Wake up...

The mosquito keeps buzzing, inciting a series of confusing images in Steve's stream of consciousness.

Dr. Killian and Dr. Manners stick things in his eye, in his head, turn him over...

Dr. Killian cuts into some tissue and blood spurts up, spraying his glasses.

MIRIAM (O.S.)

(yells)

Steve!!!

Steve opens his eyes, back in the present. He's very shaken. With his nuclear vision, he spots the mosquito, which is now on the wall right above him.

Steve smacks the mosquito so hard that shards of plaster break off the wall and a painting falls down to the floor.

The Rottweiler, frightened, jumps up on Steve and bites him hard on his bionic arm.

MIRIAM

Nero, no!

Steve carefully pries open the Rottweiler's jaw so as not to hurt him, and then tosses him out of the bedroom.

The Rottweiler continues barking but he doesn't dare attack Steve again.

Miriam is visibly confused: first the hole in the wall, and now the circuits and metal coming out from under the skin in Steve's arm.

MIRIAM

(in shock)

What the hell is going on?

STEVE

(looks at the wall, as he covers his arm
with a sheet)

Is that wall made out of plywood?

MIRIAM

That's your answer? Seriously? Steve gets a text message on his phone.

STEVE

(checks his phone) I've got to go.

MIRIAM

Steve, if you want to see me again, if you have any interest in me at all,
you need to give me a logical explanation for what I just saw.

Steve looks Miriam in her eyes. He doesn't know what to do.

STEVE

Do you really want to know?

CUT TO:

- INT. BLACK SUV. DAY.

AGENT LEROY, African American, drives the SUV that takes Steve to the airport.

Oscar Goldman and Agent Farris brief Steve on a new mission.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

(worried, in a way we haven't seen him
before)

Sorry for the urgency, but this could determine the
future of our country--if it has a future, that is. We
have to act now.

Steve nods, tense.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

We've just learned about a new software developed
by North Korea that will allow them to detonate
U.S. nuclear weapons-- wherever they are stored. If
this is confirmed, they could

destroy our entire army like that.

Oscar Goldman snaps his fingers.

Agent Farris hands Steve a picture of KIM DUK-KOO.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Kim Duk-Koo is the South Korean agent who
discovered this software existed; he infiltrated
the North Korean armed forces for months and
was captured yesterday afternoon. It's very
likely he will be executed within the next few
days. We won't be able to set him free, but we
do hope that before he is killed, we can get a
hold of his research data or find out where the
backup copy is located. Then his bravery will
not have been in vain.

Agent Farris hands Steve a series of documents, including a fake passport with a visa for
North Korea.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Only fifteen hundred tourists enter Pyongyang

each year. With this visa, they're going to let you travel, but according to this passport, there's an international arrest warrant out for you. As soon as you land, you'll be arrested and transferred to a maximum security prison: Kwan-li-so or Camp 22, as they call it.

Agent Farris pulls up blueprints of Camp 22 on the SUV computer.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Fresh prisoners are taken to sector three. Our source says Kim-Duk-Koo is being held in sector five. We need you to break through the bars on your cell, escape sector three, jump to the roof of sector five, enter the ventilation duct, get past armed security, find Kwan-li-so, get the information, escape sector 5, and lastly clear the 50 foot wall that surrounds Camp 22. Our contact will be waiting on the other

side and you'll be taken to a safe house.

Steve looks at Oscar Goldman suspiciously.

But not because he is questioning the way the mission has been put together.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

No one says it'll be easy. But if anyone can pull it off, it's you. They are simply not prepared to stop you.

CUT TO:

- INT. AIRPORT - DEPARTURES. DAY.

Long LINES OF TRAVELERS, POLICEMEN WITH DOGS and all types of scanners and cameras fill the airport.

Oscar Goldman and Agent Farris escort Steve to the security checkpoint.

AGENT FARRIS

(hands Steve a special credential)

With this card, you won't be stopped for any reason. Please destroy it once you're on the plane.

STEVE

(distrustful, to Oscar Goldman)

And if the mission is a success, what are you going to do with the software?

OSCAR GOLDMAN

What do you mean?

STEVE

Are you going to clone your own version? Sell it? Attack North Korea? What does the Axon Corporation get out of the whole thing? Does the entire Office of Strategic Operations work for them?

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Steve, what's going on? Do you feel all right?

STEVE

Not really... Maybe you could call Doctor Wells to see what's

wrong with me. Who is he? Where is he?

OSCAR GOLDMAN

I don't know what you're talking about. If you tell me what's going on, perhaps I can help you...

(to Agent Farris)

Can I get a cup of coffee with Steve, Farris? Do we have enough time? Sit down, Steve.

Steve, still unstable, accepts.

They sit down at an airport coffee shop.

STEVE

You see everything I see?

OSCAR GOLDMAN

You mean, do we monitor the operations via satellite?

STEVE

No, that's not what I mean. Is my eye also a camera? Does it send out a signal?

OSCAR GOLDMAN

No, but we could add one... That's actually a pretty good idea.

STEVE

You could "add one"? Come on, any cell phone sends out signals and I don't?

Steve looks down at his pants and grabs his crotch.

STEVE

Can you see this?

OSCAR GOLDMAN

(laughing)

Jesus Christ, Steve, we respect your privacy.

STEVE

Huh. I'm not so sure about that. Why would I have any privacy?

I'm private property. You spy on the whole world but you don't spy on me, with all these incredible things I'm doing?

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Of course we don't.

70

STEVE

Can you hear through my ears? Or are they your ears? I mean, just because they're inside of me doesn't mean they're mine, or does it?

Doctor Killian and Doctor Manners both enter the airport. Oscar Goldman gestures to call them over.

STEVE

Oh, what a coincidence. Just passing through?

DOCTOR MANNERS

Steve, you're suffering from post-traumatic stress. It's very common among people who went to war.

STEVE

Ha! No, that one's not going to work. Try again.

DOCTOR MANNERS

It's not a joke. There are probably excess chemicals in your system that are provoking some kind of paranoid delusion.

(to Oscar Goldman)

I don't think he's in any condition to make this trip.

Steve stares at a YOUNG COUPLE KISSING GOODBYE and he turns to look Oscar Goldman right in the eye.

STEVE

(serious)

What did you do to her?

OSCAR GOLDMAN

To who?

Steve stands up abruptly and exits the airport.

CUT TO:

- EXT. OUTSIDE AIRPORT AND TERMINAL PARKWAY. DAY. Steve leaves the airport, furious and worried. Oscar Goldman, Dr. Killian, Dr. Manners and Agent Farris follow him.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

Steve, can you please calm down so we can talk?

STEVE

(keeps walking)

If you so much as touch a hair on her head...

OSCAR GOLDMAN

It's not easy to be in my position, Steve. People talk, they read all sorts of conspiracy theories on the Internet, but we--and I include you in this--are working to protect the everyday citizen. I wish the world was plain black and white, but the truth is so much more complex. YEAH, we're saving real lives; YEAH, war is a business; YEAH, the world is full of dangerous people, and YEAH, there aren't many good guys, just some guys who aren't as bad as the others. But above all, Steve, I need you to understand that we couldn't be more pleased with you. We've invested a lot of money in this program and the last thing we want to do is to hurt you or anyone you care about.

AGENT FARRIS

(to Oscar Goldman)

He's going to miss the plane.

STEVE

(turning around and pointing at all of them)

I want all of you out of my head. Now.

DOCTOR KILLIAN

Can we get back to the lab, Steve? Would you do yourself that favor?

Steve notices that other O.S.O. AGENTS walk towards him. A train passes over the bridge

that is right above them.

Steve jumps up from the street and--using his magnetic limbs--he latches himself onto the moving train.

CUT TO:

- INT. MOVING TRAIN. DAY.

The TRAIN PASSENGERS get scared when they see Steve on the outside of the train car trying to get in.

People don't know whether to help him or call security.

Steve doesn't give them time to think: he breaks a window and climbs into the train.

The passengers scream but Steve ignores them; he starts moving from one car to the next.

A map on the wall shows the different train lines that crisscross the city.

Steve checks the map, figures out where he is, and realizes they are about to intersect another train that would take him where he wants to go.

TWO GUARDS come running up from the back.

STEVE
(to a PASSENGER leaning against the
glass)
Excuse me.

The passenger moves aside. Steve breaks that window too.

The whole car of passengers scream.

Steve gets ready and at just the right moment, he jumps through the train window onto the roof of another train passing by underneath.

CUT TO:

- EXT. MOVING TRAIN #2, FACTORY, PARK AND CITY STREETS. DAY.

The second train passes through an industrial park.

Steve jumps from the train onto the roof of a factory, crosses the roof, and jumps into a park located on the other side.

He then sprints down a series of grassy hills towards the city.

A GROUP OF TEENAGERS are skateboarding on a ramp.

As one of them performs a stunt in the air, he notices Steve jumping over him--leaps and bounds.

The teenager can't understand how this is possible. Steve finally reaches the downtown

area.

CUT TO:

- INT. BOOKSTORE. DAY.

Steve enters the bookstore, nervous.

From his POV, everyone in the bookstore--EMPLOYEES and CUSTOMERS--look like special agents.

Steve doesn't see Miriam anywhere.

He heads to the second floor up a long escalator.

He's impatient--jumps up the escalator, three, six, ten steps at a time.

At the top, he recognizes Miriam's co-worker.

STEVE

Where's Miriam? Where is she??

MIRIAM

Steve... What happened?

Miriam comes out from the back with a pile of books she was studying.

Steve is relieved. But only for a moment.

MIRIAM

(pointing at the books)

We have to talk. The doctor--the doctor you recognized, Rudy Wells, he received a special grant from the Wiig Foundation. He worked there for years.

STEVE

(taking her by the hand) Not now.

Steve pulls Miriam down the escalator.

MIRIAM

The Wiigs helped finance the CIA from the very beginning. This book accuses them of orchestrating the Paperclip Operation. Have you heard of Paperclip, Steve? They brought Nazi scientists to America and gave them protection so they could keep working on their experiments!

The STORE MANAGER, alerted by the other employees, comes over.

MANAGER

Miriam...? Everything OK?

STEVE

She's leaving early today. Steve pulls Miriam towards the

door.

MIRIAM
(to her boss) I'm fine.

When they exit with the books, the alarm goes off.

CUT TO:

- EXT. CITY STREETS. DAY.

There are security cameras at the entrance to every store and bank--and on every corner.

Steve tries to avoid them.

MIRIAM
We have to call the cops or go to the press. This
has to go public, it's the only way you'll--

STEVE
Shhh. They're listening.

MIRIAM
Who? How?

A ROLLERBLADER with headphones skates past them. Steve intercepts him.

STEVE
I need your Discman.

ROLLERBLADER
My what? It's an iPod.

STEVE
Give it to me or I'll pound you into the sidewalk.

MIRIAM
(frightened) Steve, for God's sake.

STEVE
(whispering)
It's just my way of saying I need what he's got.

The rollerblader hands over the iPod and skates off in search of a policeman.

Steve stops a taxi.

CUT TO:

- INT. TAXI. DAY.

Steve puts on the headphones and turns up the volume so the
O.S.O. people can't hear the conversation through his ears.

"OVERJOYED" BY STEVIE WONDER PLAYS OVER THE SCENE.

STEVE
(to Miriam, so she'll tell the
DRIVER)
Your house.

Through the window, Steve notices helicopters and drones flying over the area.

Miriam, clearly distraught and frightened, is talking, but Steve can't hear what she says.

Miriam has a headband on. Steve pulls it off, tears a hole in the fabric with his teeth, and puts it over his eyes.

Now he can see with his human eye but the bionic eye is covered, so the O.S.O. can't see through it.

STEVE
(whispers in Miriam's ear)
Grab some clothes, only the essentials. Then
you're going to leave town. I don't want to
know where you're going. Do not use your
credit card anywhere.

Steve opens Miriam's purse and takes out a pen.

STEVE
(writing down)
This is my bank, my user name and my
password. Go into my account and transfer
all the money into yours. And as soon as you
can, withdraw all the cash. There's six million
dollars.

MIRIAM

What???

STEVE

Shhhh. Do it. When things calm down, I'll
find you.

MIRIAM
(takes off his headphones)
Steve, I just met you. I'm not going
anywhere. Are you crazy?

Steve puts back on the headphones.

From the look in his eyes, Miriam realizes that this is a matter of life or death.

CUT TO:

- INT. MIRIAM'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM AND KITCHEN. DUSK. As soon as they enter, the Rottweiler starts barking. Miriam puts him out on the porch and ties him up.

Steve points to the computer.

Miriam, upset, follows; she goes into Steve's account and starts transferring the money.

Meanwhile, Steve goes into the kitchen and searches for some sort of weapon.

He finds a few kitchen knives in one drawer and a hammer in another.

But suddenly, almost without realizing it, he starts to calm down...

The music on the iPod relaxes him.

THE UNPLUGGED VERSION OF NEIL YOUNG'S "TRANSFORMER MAN" IS PLAYING.

Steve breathes deep and he is overtaken by a sense of serenity.

With his eyes half-closed, he enjoys the sound of each instrument, and the song carries him to a faraway place.

MIRIAM

(loud)

Steve!!!

Steve opens his eyes.

MIRIAM

(confused)

What are you doing?

Steve watches her, also confused. He is totally enraptured by the music.

MIRIAM

Steve, you're freaking me out. (thinks,
and suddenly comes to a horrific
realization)

You're being drugged... Somehow, the chemicals...

Miriam takes one of the books she brought--on the future of the pharmaceutical industry.

MIRIAM

Steve, you have to listen to me. (she pulls
off the headphones and shows him the
book)

They can make us sleepy, take away our fears,
calm us down, rev us up, drive us crazy...
They can control our sexual desires.

STEVE

(smiles)
Not as long as you're around.

MIRIAM
(tosses a glass of water in his face)
I'm calling the cops.

STEVE
(confused, upset)
No... That'll make things worse. They control
the police, trust me.

MIRIAM
Steve, no offense, but I can't trust you. They
didn't choose you for your intelligence. They
ARE the intelligence, your job is to smash
heads. They must have thought it was hilarious
when they saw you going into a bookstore.
They must have thought you didn't know how
to read. You signed up for their program
without even understanding what it was about.
You went to war because you wanted to protect
your country. They LOVE war. They profit from
it. Why the hell would people who manufacture
weapons chase after world peace? They don't
give your kind of power to people they consider
intelligent, because someone

intelligent could turn against them. They give
that kind of power to someone they can
control, to someone who's as stupid and
loyal as a dog!

Steve comes back to his senses. Miriam's words have
brought him around.

STEVE
First of all: if I ever had any self-esteem, you've
sufficiently blown it to pieces. And two: why
did Nero stop barking?

Miriam goes back into the living room and opens the door facing the street.

The chain is broken and Nero isn't there anymore.

MIRIAM
(upset) Nero!
Nero!!

Miriam freezes when she sees a stranger petting her Rottweiler.

Steve...?

MIRIAM

CUT TO:

- EXT. MIRIAM'S HOUSE - PORCH. NIGHT. Steve peeks out the door.

Outside it's drizzling.

To his complete surprise, he discovers the ghostlike presence of Jack Ferguson, the big husky sniper during his Iraq tour.

Jack is leaning against the swings in the playground across the street.

STEVE

Jack... You survived.

JACK

They sent me for you, Austin.

MIRIAM

Nero! Get over here.

Jack pats the dog, which scurries back to Miriam.

STEVE

(to Jack) Goldman...?

JACK

You're overreacting. You need to calm down.
Maybe they should have told us more before they sent us out on our missions. The program is still new, but what's happening to you now is going to help us all.

Steve scans Jack's body with his thermonuclear vision. Like him, Jack is filled with bionic implants.

STEVE

What do you want...?

JACK

To help you. Protect you. That's all. Don't try to read into it. With all the money they've invested in this program, they'd rather you come back unscathed without a scratch.

STEVE

We're out of here, Jack.

Steve embraces Miriam, pushes the dog inside, closes the door to the house and starts walking with Miriam.

JACK

Let's do this in a civilized manner, Austin. You need psychiatric help. You're not thinking clearly.

Steve doesn't respond. He walks away with Miriam.

Jack, perfectly calm, yanks the chain off of the swing set he was leaning against and starts to follow them.

CUT TO:

- EXT. CITY AVENUE. NIGHT.

Steve and Miriam walk through the city.

the PEDESTRIANS make their way home at the end of the work day, unaware of what's going on.

Miriam is getting more desperate by the minute.

MIRIAM

(looking back over her shoulder, over and over again)

Who is that guy, Steve? I don't feel safe. I want to go to the police.

Jack walks behind Steve and Miriam at a safe distance. He speaks in a normal voice, knowing Steve can hear him.

JACK

You have to learn how to live in the grey areas, that's all. The problem won't go away. You're privy to classified information and you're unstable.

MIRIAM

Listen to me. Let's go to the press right now and tell your story.

Steve ignores Miriam. He continues to walk forward but he is concentrated on his conversation with Jack.

STEVE

(also talks at a normal volume)

Leave me alone, Jack, that's all I ask.

MIRIAM

(as if Steve were crazy) Who are you talking to?!

JACK

Not just anyone can be turned into what we've become. You are not that disposable...

STEVE

We're puppets, Jack. Isn't it a coincidence that we lost both of our legs? We couldn't jump or run like we do with just one...

JACK

I don't know... I breathe, I'm grateful. I think one has to be appreciative for what you've been given in life. We nearly died. And we nearly died because you lost control of that helicopter.

Steve looks at Jack through the side mirror of a car; he is gaining on them.

JACK

No one wants to hurt either of you. You could be executed in a split second if that were necessary. They'd blow up the whole city block, you know that. They just want to talk to you, explain a few things.

STEVE

Why wouldn't they want to kill us, Jack? I want out of the program for good. And this girl, who believes she's the reincarnation of Che Guevara, wants to go to the press and tell them the whole story. How do they plan on stopping her unless they kill her?

Miriam is getting more and more scared as she hears Steve.

JACK

I'd fuck her brains out so hard she wouldn't remember her name when I'm done with her.

Miriam looks in all directions, seeking help.

STEVE

(looks at Jack, straight on)

Believe me, it's in everyone's best interest to leave us alone. I'm talking to all of you right now.

Steve looks up at the helicopters circling overhead.

JACK

Come with me to the facility, Austin. You're seriously putting this girl's life at risk. You're forcing me to hurt her and things are gonna get ugly. There's no way out of this for you--you're only going to cause damage and destruction.

MIRIAM

Steve, please, we need to go to the cops!!
Now!!

Miriam has spoken so loud that a POLICEWOMAN has overheard.

POLICEWOMAN

(yells out) Stop right
there!

The policewoman, African American, comes over from the corner.

STEVE

Everything's fine here, officer. (to Miriam)
Keep walking.

POLICEWOMAN

(puts her hand on her gun)
I said stop where you are and throw your
hands in the air. Immediately!

The pedestrians walking near Steve and Miriam swerve out of their way, but Steve continues forward.

POLICEWOMAN

(draws her weapon) Stop now or I'll
shoot!

STEVE

Fuck.

Steve turns around, slowly, and sees Jack approaching them.

MIRIAM

(pointing at Jack)
He's the threat here, Officer.

POLICEWOMAN

(turns around to Jack, nervous)
Now you stop right there, sir! Let go of that
chain and put your hands behind your head!

But Jack doesn't stop.

POLICEWOMAN

(on the radio)
All units, 3-45 at Houston and-- (to Jack)
Stop right now or I'll shoot!!

Jack wraps the chain around his fist and continues moving forward.

STEVE

(rushing)
Officer, you're not going to stop him. Lower
your weapon or he's going to kill you!

Jack is just a few steps away.

The policewoman, panicking, has no choice but to shoot. The pedestrians yell and run.
Some crouch to the ground.

The bullets cause Jack pain, but they won't stop him.

The policewoman--she can't believe her eyes--shoots again.

STEVE
(to Miriam) Run!!!

Now Jack's pissed. He takes the policewoman by the throat and pushes her against a wall.

But before he crushes her larynx, Steve lunges towards Jack like a bull and pushes him into the middle of the street.

- EXT. CITY AVENUE AND NEARBY BUILDINGS. NIGHT.

Steve and Jack tumble onto the hood of a taxi, as the DRIVER slams on the brakes.

The windshield shatters.

Jack punches Steve with the fury of a madman and then takes him by the neck.

He pushes so hard that his fingers begin to sink into Steve's tissue.

Steve roars.

Jack puts the chain around Steve's neck and tries to strangle him.

But Steve breaks the chain with his bionic arm, grabs the hammer from his jacket, and starts pounding Jack on the head.

The taxi driver gets out of the car and runs. The pavement is wet.

An oncoming bus doesn't manage to stop in time and skids on the pavement towards the taxi driver.

Steve lets go of Jack and runs for the taxi driver to push him out of danger's way.

But as soon as Jack's back on his feet, he plows into Steve once again.

Another bus coming from the other direction runs them both over.

Police cars swarm the area.

Steve lifts up the tire from the bus that's crushing him, and stands.

He looks around for Miriam, but can't find her anywhere.

Jack stands up too.

Both of them have some of their robotic parts exposed.

The pedestrians don't understand what the hell is going on.

They start taking pictures and filming with their cell phones.

Steve jumps onto the roof of the bus and from there, onto the second floor of a parking lot--that extends a few floors higher.

He starts climbing up the metallic pillars of the parking structure.

Jack isn't following him, and Steve realizes that Jack doesn't have magnetic limbs.

But Jack can jump.

Jack leaps between two buildings across the street from one another--from the second floor of the first to the fourth floor of the other, and so on and so forth--so quickly that he is soon higher up than Steve.

A high-tension electric wire hangs between the two buildings.

Jack yanks the cable so hard that it rips the paneling off the building.

He then--holding the cable--jumps from the top of the building towards the parking lot across the street, coming straight for Steve.

Steve receives the electric shock.

His body trembles, he shrieks from the pain, and the shock deactivates the magnets on his limbs, forcing him to release from the metallic walls.

Both men come crashing down onto the fifth floor of the parking lot, which is partially covered.

- EXT - INT. PARKING LOT. NIGHT. Steve and Jack clash in a ferocious fight.

As they exchange blows, the alarm of every car they run into start going off.

Steve is knocked into a pole that holds up a canvas tarpaulin and the water from the rain accumulated on top comes crashing down on Jack.

Steve grabs the high-tension wire and electrocutes Jack.

The lights on the whole block flicker and go out for a moment. And then come back.

Jack is out of commission, semi-conscious.

Steve takes him by the legs and drags him to the elevator, which is coming down from the seventh floor.

Steve pries open the elevator door, places Jack's head inside, and holds it firmly.

But right when the elevator is about to come crashing down decapitating Jack...

Steve receives--FROM THE VERY INTERIOR OF HIS ORGANISM--an electromagnetic pulse that paralyzes him to his core.

Steve arches backwards, his eyes wide open, in excruciating pain.

Jack, with a final show of effort, manages to sit up just in time to escape the elevator from severing his head.

All of Steve's muscles are paralyzed. Even the ones in his eyes so he sees double.

From his own body weight, Steve leans backwards, runs into the railing and falls three floors down.

Crucified, Steve's body smashes down on the roof of a car. All of the windows shatter. Steve is a dead man: his eyes are open, all of his muscles unresponsive, and blood and other fluids ooze from his mouth.

O.S.O. AGENTS and PARAMEDICS come running over.

The paramedics, perfectly coordinated, place Steve onto a stretcher.

CUT TO:

- EXT. AVENUE - PARKING LOT ENTRANCE. NIGHT.

A heli-ambulance lands in the middle of the avenue, which is blocked off by dozens of police cars.

The paramedics, supervised by Oscar Goldman and Doctor Killian, load Steve into the helicopter.

From the stretcher, Steve can see that Agent Farris has found Miriam.

Miriam yells for help, but Agent Farris grabs her by the hair and pulls her harshly into the black SUV.

There is nothing Steve can do.

Doctor Killian gets into the helicopter.

Oscar Goldman closes the door from the ground, and the helicopter takes off.

CUT TO:

- INT. HELI-AMBULANCE - IN FLIGHT. NIGHT.

A paramedic cuts open Steve's clothes and exposes his chest.

Another paramedic shaves his chest and then, his head; specifically, his left temple.

Doctor Killian puts on a pair of latex gloves and turns on a small electric saw.

Cold, with a blank expression, he begins sawing into Steve's chest.

Steve knows that this is it. He's finished. But suddenly, he hears a voice.

A voice we've never heard before.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

*Steve... If you are hearing this
recording, it means that I am*

*dead and you are about to die.
My name is Rudy Wells. And I am
responsible for your creation.*

Doctor Killian finishes cutting a rectangle of tissue in Steve's chest, right where his heart is, and removes a chunk.

Underneath, there is a plate of kevlar secured into place with micro-screws.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

*You can understand what I am
saying thanks to the only active
sector of your conscience, which
I left in place expressly
against Oscar Goldman's will.*

Doctor Killian now cuts a new rectangle of tissue out of Steve's left temple.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

*I knew he was running an Agency
dealing internationally in
deceit and secretive terror, but
that from such an Agency's*

*interest in my work, there might
emerge unpresented hope for many
savaged by the violence of war
and accident. The chance to
achieve a medical breakthrough
is the cornerstone of the Tera
Program.*

Doctor Killian removes the chunk of tissue from Steve's temple and once again, we see the kevlar plate.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

*I received a several billion
dollar budget and the green
light to experiment on human
beings outside of any type of
protocol.*

The paramedics turn Steve over and begin shaving the back of his neck.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

*At times I felt like God; at others, like Doctor
Mengele. Looking back now, I certainly wasn't
God.*

CUT TO:

- EXT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - HELIPORT. NIGHT.

The heli-ambulance flies over the snowy peaks and lands at the facility.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

*Many men came before you, but
they were only used for testing.*

The paramedics place Steve's body on a mechanical conveyor belt that transports him into an unknown sector, the hidden heart of the facility.

CUT TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - SECRET LABORATORY. NIGHT.

Steve's open, bleeding body is lifted along the conveyor belt to a truly sinister sector.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

*Their bodies, still breathing,
were used to analyze the
compatibility of different
circuits. After, their
functioning organs were removed

and stored, and their remains,
discarded.*

As he moves along the conveyor belt, Steve sees frozen human organs and severely mutilated bodies of MARINES STILL ALIVE connected to different machines that artificially prolong their lives.

He also sees bionic arms, legs and eyes in different containers.

A human butcher house.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

*You were just another soldier,
but your genetic structure
proved apt for a whole series of
enhancements, and you became the
prototype par excellence.*

CUT TO:

- INT. WIIG SUMMER HOUSE. DAY.

We see things from Steve's perspective, as he races the bike on the track, falls into the quicksand and fights the crocodile.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

They tested you.

The shot widens and we discover Maximilian Wiig watching Steve's POV on a huge screen in a magnificent beach house on the ocean.

CUT TO:

- INT. WIIG ESTATE. NIGHT.

With Oscar Goldman as the host, Wiig is offering a cocktail party for SELECT INTERNATIONAL WEAPON MANUFACTURERS.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

They sold you.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

What happens if our best man falls on the battlefield?

(in the exact tone of the series intro)

Gentlemen, we can rebuild him. We have the technology. We can make him better, stronger, faster.

The curtains part and the guests are treated to Steve's POV of the desert mission on the big screen. LIVE.

They drink champagne and eat caviar as Steve confronts the terrorists.

They applaud each time he kills someone.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

And they surely violated your privacy in the most disgusting ways.

CUT TO:

- EXT. WIIG ESTATE – MAIN BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Wiig, in bed with the prostitutes Steve turned down, watches Steve having sex with Miriam on his bedroom screen.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

In future versions of the Tera Program, they plan to use remote control on soldiers as if they were avatars in a video game.

*They aim to enjoy war without
having to go to war.*

CUT BACK
TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - SECRET LABORATORY. NIGHT.

Steve's body continues moving along the conveyor belt.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

*But when they asked me to
include a system that would
terminate you remotely in case
you ever rebelled against their
interests, I felt repulsed by
the program I created.*

At the end of the conveyor belt, Dr. Manners, Dr. Killian and the paramedics--now wearing blue surgical scrubs and masks--are waiting for Steve.

The paramedics move him onto an operating table.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

*When I refused, I knew I was
signing my own death
certificate, and that it
wouldn't be long before I
suffered an accident or ingested
some kind of poisonous substance
with my food.*

Dr. Manners takes a bottle of rubbing alcohol and pours generous quantities onto Steve's chest and left temple.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

*That's why, while still in
charge of the program, I
included the system they asked
for; but also added this
message, without them knowing,
surely out of some hope for
redemption.*

Doctor Killian uses an electric screwdriver to remove the kevlar plate that covers Steve's left temple.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

*The fact that you're hearing
this message means you've let
them down.*

Doctor Manners uses electrodes to connect Steve's left temple to the main computer.

The screen displays Steve's whole medical history, with diagrams of every implant in his body.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

The reason you're not dead yet is simple: your parts are extremely costly and they can be reused. And they need to extract them while your blood is still circulating in order for them to remain functional. For that, they will hook you up to an artificial heart pump.

Doctor Killian repeats the procedure to remove the kevlar plate covering Steve's heart.

We see Steve's heart beating.

Two O.S.O. agents are overseeing the entire medical procedure.

DOCTOR RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

But before doing so, they will remove the device connected to your second cervical vertebrae.

The paramedics turn Steve over, he's now facing down.

Doctor Killian uses the saw to open a new rectangle of tissue on Steve's back of the neck.

Tears and drops of blood fall from Steve's eyes.

RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

This same device paralyzes all of your muscles, transmits images and sounds, and remotely controls the chemicals in your body.

Doctor Killian removes another Kevlar plate. Underneath, we see the device.

DOCTOR RUDY WELLS (V.O.)

That, my dear Steve, is your one chance to escape.

Dr. Manners takes the device between her fingers and removes it from the second cervical vertebrae.

No one notices but Steve's expression changes.

His pupils shrink, his little finger trembles: we realize he has recovered his motor skills.

As the paramedics turn Steve over again on his back, and prepare the external heart pump, Doctor Killian notices a small change in Steve's heart rhythm.

But he doesn't think anything of it.

Then he grabs the scissors, and gets ready to sever Steve's main artery in order to connect

it to the machine.

Just as he is about to cut, Steve grabs Killian by the hand, turns the scissors on him, and forces him to stab himself in the chest.

The O.S.O. agents draw their weapons and start shooting at Steve.

Doctor Manners, horrified, pulls the alarm.

Doctor Killian realizes he's bleeding to death and faints.

Steve kicks one of the agents in the stomach, breaking him in two; then he takes away his gun and uses him as a human shield against the other agent.

First chance he has, Steve shoots the second agent, who's dead on impact.

The secret laboratory is on the lowest floor of the facility.

Through a strip of concave glass located at the base, the snow and mountain below can be seen.

Steve shoots at the glass, but it's extremely thick and only cracks and splinters.

A DOZEN GUARDS come running out from the upper floors.

Doctor Manners runs to open the door for them, but Steve lunges and gets there first.

He grabs a fire extinguisher and crushes the panel that opens the door.

To block the door, he also moves a piece of extremely heavy equipment.

Steve realizes that the equipment uses radioactive materials.

DOCTOR MANNERS
(desperate, to the guards outside)
Open up!!!

The guards pound on the door but can't get it open.

Steve takes two bottles of rubbing alcohol and splashes it on everything in sight: computers, equipment--even the one that uses radioactive materials--.

When the guards see what he's doing through the window on the door, they decide to evacuate the building.

CUT TO:

- EXT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY. NIGHT. WIDE
SHOT FROM ABOVE.

All the alarms start to sound.

The EMPLOYEES working at the facility hurry out of the main entrance and the emergency exits.

CUT BACK
TO:

- INT. AXON CORPORATION FACILITY - SECRET LABORATORY. NIGHT.

Steve puts the kevlar plates, the chunks of body tissue, all the operating tools, and the discs with files on his clinical history on a sheet and wraps it up into a bundle.

Before he sets the place on fire, he takes a moment to grab another bottle of alcohol and splash it on the bodies of the marines that are being kept alive for organ extraction only.

Then he takes the cautery (used to speed up the scarring process by burning the skin).

DOCTOR
MANNERS

Steve, no!!!

But Steve sets it all on fire.

As the flames flare up, Steve jumps straight up, bending his knees in the air; as he comes back down and is about to hit the shatterproof glass, he stretches out his bionic legs and shatters it.

The facility explodes.

Steve falls onto the snow and rolls down the mountain.

CUT TO:

- EXT. MOUNTAIN AND HIGHWAY. DAWN. Helicopters and drones are all over the sky.

From Steve's POV, we make our way down the mountain.

When we get past the last peak, we reach a quiet country road.

CUT TO:

- INT. CAR. DAWN.

A pleasant looking, PLUMP DRIVER WITH GLASSES drives down the country road, singing along with a song on the radio:

"SOMETHING IN YOUR EYES" BY RICHARD CARPENTER

Suddenly something appears up ahead on the road.

The driver slams on the brakes, but when he sees Steve bleeding and with his bionic parts exposed, he is so terrified that he speeds up instead.

The driver continues down the road, feeling a little guilty, but he suddenly realizes that Steve is running alongside his car.

STEVE

Open the door!!!

The driver screams and speeds up, but Steve keeps pace with the car.

Steve breaks the car window, opens the door, and jumps into the passenger seat.

PLUMP DRIVER

Ahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh!

STEVE

Calm down. Nothing is going to happen to you.

PLUMP DRIVER

(on the verge of tears) Thank you!!!

STEVE

Do you have Facebook?

PLUMP DRIVER

What?!

STEVE

Facebook... on your phone? I need to look up an address and for you to drive me there.

The driver can't believe his ears.

CUT TO:

- EXT - INT. CLAIRE & MATUNAAGA'S RANCH. DAY. The wind turns the windmill on the small ranch. Matunaaga is making breakfast in the kitchen.
His TWIN DAUGHTERS are running around the living room. The doorbell rings.

MATUNAAGA

(yells, surprised because it's so early)

Honey, could you get the door?!

CLAIRE (O.S.)

I'm in the shower!

Matunaaga sighs and turns off the burner on the gas stove.

MATUNAAGA
(to the twins, as he walks towards
the entrance)
Careful there, princesses.

Matunaaga opens the door.

After the initial shock, he recognizes him...

MATUNAAGA
Steve...? Oh my god...

Matunaaga instinctively embraces his old friend, whose wounds are still open.

Steve hugs him back, almost collapsing in his arms.

MATUNAAGA
(astonished)
I can't believe this. I'll take you to the hospital
right away.

One of the twins spots Steve, all bloody, and shrieks. Claire comes running out wrapped in a towel.

CLAIRE
(sees Steve) Holy shit...
(to the twins)
It's OK, he's our friend...

Claire also embraces Steve.

STEVE
I wanted so much to come and see you guys. But
not like this...
(to Matunaaga)
We can't go to the hospital, we can't call
anyone. Don't ask me why, but you have to fix
me here.

MATUNAAGA
Steve, I'm a vet...

STEVE
That's as good as it gets.

Steve hands him the items wrapped in the sheet that he brought from the facility.

CUT TO:

- INT. CLAIRE & MATUNAAGA'S RANCH – VET'S OFFICE. DAY. Claire examines Steve's medical history on the computer.

CLAIRE
(looking at his implants and
enhancements)
This is incredible...

Matunaaga, surrounded by cages with geese and rabbits, sews up Steve's chest.

MATUNAAGA

Who did this to you, man? Your heart all exposed--It's a miracle you didn't go into septic shock.

CLAIRE

Please, Steve, let us call our lawyer.

STEVE

(serious)

Claire, this never happened. You never saw me. Someday I'll come back and tell you the whole story.

(to Maatunaga)

I'm gonna need some clothes.

MATUNAAGA

There's no way you're leaving this house. You have to get better. You need rest.

And he does. But...

THE EPIC MUSIC FROM THE SCORE LEADS US INTO ACT THREE.

- EXT. PHONE BOOTH NEAR A TRAIN STATION. DAY.

Steve walks up to a phone booth located right near a train station.

He picks up the phone and dials a simple number: 111-333- 9999

When the operator answers, he asks for:

STEVE

Oscar Goldman.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

Who's calling?

STEVE

He knows.

A few seconds later, Oscar Goldman answers.

OSCAR GOLDMAN (O.S.)

What a shame, Steve. We had paradise and you had to listen to the serpent.

STEVE

Paradise? You and me, naked, walking around? No thanks.

OSCAR GOLDMAN (O.S.)

*So you're the funny man now?
Don't try to compete with me
when it comes to sarcasm. We
both know you don't have the
IQ. You got played like a
tweeny.*

*Your bitch is a spy, Steve. She
never worked at that bookstore.*

STEVE

I'm going to be very clear now, Oscar: let her go.

OSCAR GOLDMAN (O.S.)

(imitating Miriam's friendly tone)

*"Hi there, can I help you?" They
were following us. North Korea. You
think all they have is chink
soldiers who worship their leader?
They also have unlimited funds to
bankroll private spies and
international mercenaries.
They followed you and--*

STEVE

I'm not that dumb. What about her co-worker? And her boss?

OSCAR GOLDMAN (O.S.)

*They're all spies. They put on a
name tag and voila. Believe me,
they infiltrated the Pentagon,
they can certainly handle Barnes
and Noble. She would have gone
with you on vacation and slit your
throat. That way all of our
research, all of our discoveries,
would have been in their hands.
Your body would have given them
instant access to the Tera
Program. But not before they
manipulated you into destroying
our lab.*

STEVE

Why would they need to steal the Tera Program when they can buy it? With all that money, they can just call Axon's toll-free number and order their copy, right?

OSCAR GOLDMAN (O.S.)

*Don't be so gullible, Steve. The
program isn't on the market for our*

enemies to buy.

STEVE

You know, I might not have the IQ, Oscar, but Rudy Wells certainly did. Fuck you.

OSCAR GOLDMAN (O.S.)

(growing suddenly angry) Let's cut the shit and get right to the point: I expect you to kill yourself. And I expect you to do it now. In fact, if we don't find your corpse under the next train that rolls into that station, I'm going to rip this cunt's head off with my own hands. And you know I will.

STEVE

(threatening)

You know I'll find you.

OSCAR GOLDMAN (O.S.)

(laughing)

Of course I do! That's exactly what I want.

Steve, furious, hangs up.

From afar, we hear the train coming. Steve sees it. He hesitates for a moment.

Finally, he goes running towards the tracks and jumps. For a second, we don't understand what's happened.

But when the train passes, we see Steve latched onto the last car, moving away from us.

CUT TO:

- EXT. PHONE BOOTH NEAR A TRAIN STATION. DAY.

A helicopter with O.S.O. agents arrives on the spot.

Agent Farris gets out of the chopper and follows Steve's footprints in the snow, which go from the phone booth to the train tracks.

The last two footprints are deeper and side by side.

AGENT FARRIS

(on the radio)

He ran up to the tracks and then jumped. There are no footprints on the other side, so he must have boarded the train. The last one that went by was heading north, which coincides with the time of the call.

OSCAR GOLDMAN (O.S.)

That's exactly what happened,

*Farris; the security camera
images just came in.*

Agent Farris sees the camera located on the train crossing pole.

OSCAR GOLDMAN (O.S.)
*Return to base. I am going to
send agents to all the stations;
I don't want him to see the
helicopters.*

Agent Farris gets into the helicopter.

When it takes off, we see Steve latched on to it from below.

CUT TO:

- EXT. HELICOPTER - IN FLIGHT. DUSK.

Steve travels with his back against the helicopter; from his POV, he appears to be flying.

With his nuclear sight he sees the people down below. Returning home, so innocent...

A MOTHER AND HER TWO CHILDREN crossing the street, back from school.

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS operating heavy machinery at a construction site.

Meanwhile, his bionic ear picks up Oscar Goldman's voice over the radios in the helicopter.

OSCAR GOLDMAN (O.S.)
*To all personnel in pursuit of
Steve Austin: this is no normal
agent. His behavior can be
erratic. You won't be able to get
a hold of him; you won't be able
to cuff him. He has to be
eliminated. His body organs are
protected: you must shoot for
the neck. We'll try to avoid any
civilian deaths but our top
priority is to execute him. Once
he's wounded, you must continue
shooting until he has been
destroyed.*

Steve notices that the helicopter leaves the town behind.

It flies over a series of checkpoints and on towards a military airport.

CUT TO:

- EXT. MILITARY AIRPORT. DUSK.

The helicopter is still too high for him to jump, but Steve has to be off before it lands in the sector reserved for the Axon Corporation.

So he lets go.

We free-fall with Steve about a hundred feet, until his legs land on the roof of one of the warehouses.

Steve flinches from the pain of the impact but he can--he must--continue.

Creeping along in order not to be seen, he jumps from the roof of one warehouse to the next, approaching the sector of the Axon Corporation.

And suddenly, he sees them from afar:

Oscar Goldman is escorting Miriam towards a private jet, a Gulfstream with the turbines close to the aircraft.

Goldman and Miriam climb up the stairs of the aircraft behind the TWO CREW MEMBERS.

Goldman is on his cell phone.

Steve manages to zone out the multiple airport radio frequencies and tune into Goldman's voice.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

*I'm bringing the girl, Mr. Wiig.
As long as Austin's out there,
she's the only thing that
guarantees our safety.*

But before they board the plane, Agent Farris comes running up the stairs and says something to Goldman.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

(on a handheld radio)

*And to all the agents and
soldiers in the airport: I have
just been informed that our
target is right on top of the
shipping warehouse.*

(looks straight at Steve)

*So long, Steve. And fuck you
too.*

All SOLDIERS and AGENTS on the landing strip spot Steve and draw their weapons.

Steve is totally exposed. And bullets start to fly.

Bratatatatatatatatatatatatatatatatata...

Steve runs towards the other side of the roof, shielding himself from the bullets the best he

can.

He needs to get out of there as quickly as possible, but when he reaches the edge of the roof and looks below to see if it's safe to jump...

Jack Ferguson reappears.

Repaired, recharged and angry as hell, Jack jumps up from the ground and hits Steve mid-air, knocking him back onto the warehouse roof.

Jack hits him with everything he's got: a flurry of tremendous blows rain down on Steve's head.

Due to the weight of their bodies, the roof cracks open and the two men fall into the shipping warehouse.

CUT TO:

- INT. MILITARY AIRPORT - SHIPPING WAREHOUSE. DUSK.

Steve and Jack come crashing down onto the conveyor belt.

Boxes from the weapons division of the Axon Corporation (guns, bullets, and spare parts of all sorts) move along the belt, ready to be shipped across the world.

Jack keeps beating Steve mercilessly.

The conveyor belt carries them into the scanner.

Soldiers and agents enter the warehouse and see the two cyborgs fighting on the scanner monitors.

The fight continues, non-stop punches and blows, but Steve has no time to lose.

He flips so that his head is now alongside Jack's feet.

He wraps his bionic arm around Jack's legs, immobilizing him; then, he gets his right foot under Jack's chin and with the incredible force of his bionic leg, he rips Jack's head right off his body.

A soldier stops the conveyor belt.

Others, with their weapons drawn, board the belt and enter the scanner shooting.

As Steve shields himself from the bullets, he notices the boxes to his left.

They read: "DANGER: EXPLOSIVES"

CUT TO:

- EXT. MILITARY AIRPORT - SHIPPING WAREHOUSE AND AIRSTRIP. DUSK.

An explosion blows out the windows on the right side of the warehouse.

A few seconds later, Steve knocks down the door on the left side of the warehouse and comes running out towards the jet, which has started to taxi down the runway.

When Steve is spotted on the runway, the entire army comes out after him, either on foot, in jeeps or in other military vehicles.

The jeeps catch up to Steve and the soldiers and agents on board shoot.

Steve zigzags to avoid the bullets. Suddenly he hears a much louder shot.

When he turns, he realizes that they've just fired at him with a bazooka.

Steve jumps and the bazooka rocket passes right under him.

As soon as his feet touch the ground, he continues running towards the plane.

All of his powers are activated at the same time.

He hears and sees every shot fired in all directions. Some shots hit him but bounce off the kevlar plates.

The bullets don't stop him, but do force him momentarily off course.

The airplane is speeding up now and it's about to take off. Steve runs at top speed but he's still too far.

The nose of the aircraft points upward and... the plane is in the air.

But Steve won't give up: with an incredible burst of energy, he jumps.

For the last time, we hear the classic sound FX from the original series: Dun-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh-nuh...

Steve latches onto the tail of the plane with his magnetic limbs.

- EXT. AIRPLANE - IN FLIGHT. DUSK.

Steve is attached to the storage compartment of the jet, which is rising quickly.

Suddenly, the hatch opens and Steve is left hanging in the air.

Standing inside, he sees the two pilots wearing parachutes. The first pilot jumps. The second one follows, but Steve catches onto his parachute pack with his real arm--the bionic one is attached to the aircraft--and the pilot is left hanging.

Desperate, the pilot starts kicking and yelling but Steve won't let go.

In the struggle, the backpack breaks and the pilot falls without the parachute, screaming all the way down.

But a tremendous gust of wind blows the parachute out of Steve's hand.

With enormous effort, Steve enters the plane.

CUT TO:

- INT. AIRPLANE - IN FLIGHT. DUSK. Steve closes the hatch.

To his surprise, Oscar Goldman is no longer on the plane.

Evidently, he got out while Steve was fighting with Jack.

Miriam, handcuffed to one of the seats, is sobbing. She's the only passenger.

Miriam can wait; Steve runs to the cockpit. The door is locked but Steve kicks it in.

Once inside, he tries to pilot the plane, but it doesn't respond: not the throttle, not the engines, not the flaps.

Steve punches the dashboard, but it's no use: he can't control the aircraft, which continues ascending.

At 23,000 feet, it levels off.

Steve can't help but notice the moon, which is radiant and magnificent.

Suddenly, whoever is flying the plane remotely sends it into a nosedive.

OSCAR GOLDMAN (O.S.)

*So who's the wise guy now, you
piece of shit?*

Oscar Goldman's voice resounds over the speakers. Miriam now sobs louder. Steve runs to embrace her.

STEVE

(breaks off her handcuffs)

I am so sorry... You don't know how sorry I
am...

Miriam can't stop crying. She loves and hates Steve at the same time.

OSCAR GOLDMAN (O.S.)

*You cost us a fortune and you
made me look bad with a lot of
important people. So let me take
this opportunity to share
something I thought you'd like
to know.*

Steve, desperate, runs back into the cockpit and rips off the entire dashboard.

He cuts some cables, but all he manages to do is to set off sparks.

Suddenly, the wing flaps seem to move into action, but the airplane is dropping so fast that they are ripped off by the wind.

OSCAR GOLDMAN (O.S.)

It wasn't the diabetes that

killed your father...

Steve's eyes open wide. A wave of hatred takes hold of him.

OSCAR GOLDMAN (O.S.)

In fact, Dr. Wells liked him so much that he prescribed an experimental medication that was really improving his health. But your father wouldn't let up with the questions, and frankly, we thought that when you woke up, it would be best if no one was there to worry about you. So we added a little plutonium to his insulin. In a few hours, the old fart's liver literally popped.

(laughs)

And now that I'm on the topic, remember the bank that

foreclosed on the farm? I swear this was just a coincidence, but it also belongs to us!

The plane continues its descent.

In just a few moments, it will crash into the ground. Steve severs more cables, but it's no use.

He's desperate.

Suddenly, when he looks through the cockpit window, he has a revelation.

Down on the ground, about three thousand feet away from where they're about to crash, there is a small lake.

STEVE

(yelling) I've got a plan!

MIRIAM

You do???

STEVE

It's a long shot, but it might work. A plane with no power... glides!

Miriam has no idea what he's talking about.

The turbines are whirling at maximum force; pieces of the aircraft are coming off due to the high speed.

Without a second to lose, Steve opens the right emergency door.

The wind and pressure are terrible.

Steve yanks out one of the seats and as he holds on to the frame of the door, he throws the seat out of the plane.

The seat is sucked into the turbine, which explodes into pieces.

Propelled by only one turbine, the plane violently changes its course and starts spiraling on its way downward.

Miriam can't stop screaming.

Steve crosses onto the other side of the plane and opens the left emergency door.

But the ground is too close, there's no time left to pull out another seat.

With superhuman strength, Steve pulls off the emergency door and throws it out.

The door hits the second turbine, which explodes as well. Without power, the nose of the aircraft jerks upwards.

Steve has no time to put on a seatbelt; he embraces Miriam and holds onto her seat as tight as he can.

We see the crash from inside the plane: one wing hits the water, the aircraft breaks into pieces, noise, vertigo, confusion, and a tremendous final impact.

CUT TO:

- INT. MILITARY AIRPORT - AXON CORPORATION SECTOR. DUSK.

Oscar Goldman checks his binoculars. He looks confused. There has been no explosion and he sees no cloud of smoke. He can't believe it.

Agent Farris and the PILOT controlling the plane on the simulator can't believe it either.

CUT TO:

- INT - EXT. AIRPLANE IN THE LAKE. DUSK.

Steve is breathing under water, with his eyes closed. He is unconscious. But suddenly wakes up.

It takes him a few seconds to realize what is going on.

Now it comes to him: the cabin is completely submerged and Miriam is trapped in his arms.

Steve grows desperate when he sees Miriam's lifeless body.

He rips off her seatbelt and swims with her in his arms as quickly as he can out of the broken

down plane.

Steve surfaces, manages to climb on top of the wing--which is still above water--and lays Miriam down face up.

Crying, grief-stricken, he rips open her blouse, pushes on her chest and gives her mouth-to-mouth, but Miriam doesn't respond.

STEV

E

No, no, no...

Steve repeats the procedure over and over again, but neither the CPR nor the mouth-to-mouth revives her.

Time passes and Steve grows increasingly desperate. Miriam is dead. Steve looks up at the sky and cries out.

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But he doesn't give up.

With the open palm of his bionic arm, he begins forming circles on the aluminum wing of the plane.

His hand moves so quickly that the skin disintegrates and the magnet beneath it is revealed.

When the rubbing of the metals produces sparks, he lifts his bionic hand and pushes it down on Miriam's chest.

Miriam's body receives a tremendous electric shock.

A few seconds later, she starts coughing and spitting out water.

Steve sighs. His eyes fill with tears.

From afar, we hear the sirens of firemen and cop cars approaching.

CUT TO:

- EXT. LAKE, SHORE AND BRIDGE. NIGHTFALL.

Agent Farris and Oscar Goldman get out of the black SUV. The POLICE and FIREMEN are on the scene of the accident. The bridge over the lake has been blocked off. Oscar Goldman, from the shore, watches as the PARAMEDICS lift Miriam into the ambulance. She is receiving oxygen.

OSCAR GOLDMAN

(to Farris, sharply)

The girl dies at the hospital.

Agent Farris nods.

There's no sign of Steve, but Goldman doesn't think he's dead.

He walks along the shore.

Suddenly, something on the water catches his eye.

From the bottom of the lake--a certain distance from where the airplane crashed--bubbles are coming up to the surface.

A few seconds later, at a rhythm similar to human breathing, the bubbles again, only this time, a bit farther from the accident.

Oscar Goldman walks along the rocks, following the path of the bubbles.

It's dark outside now.

Beyond sight of the police officers in the area, Goldman takes a hand grenade out of his pocket.

He stands on a rock and concentrates on the bubbles but when he prepares to pull the pin on the grenade, the bubbles cease.

Goldman leans forward with his eyes glued to the lake, but he cannot see the bubbles anymore.

Suddenly, Steve's hand shoots up from under the water, takes Goldman by his necktie, and pulls him into the lake.

CUT TO:

- INT. LAKE. NIGHTFALL.

Under the water, Goldman manages to pull the pin on the grenade.

But Steve takes Oscar Goldman by the jaw, looks him straight in the eye, and breaks his jaw open—just like he did with the crocodile.

Then he stuffs the grenade inside Goldman's throat.

CUT TO:

- INT. BLACK SUV. NIGHTFALL.

Agent Farris gets into the car and closes the door.

AGENT FARRIS
(to Leroy, the driver) Follow that ambulance.

He points to the ambulance that will take Miriam to the hospital.

Leroy turns the ignition but the explosion from the water gives them both a startle.

The police and firemen working on the scene are also alarmed.

In the confusion, the back door of the SUV opens. Steve Austin gets in the car and

closes the door.

He is damaged again from the plane crash and the grenade explosion.

STEVE

Take me to Wiig.

Agent Farris quickly draws his weapon but Steve, with a single suave move of his bionic arm, crushes his head against the roof of the SUV.

LEROY

(friendly) I can take
you.

STEVE

Thank you. Leroy starts driving.

LEROY

Is the temperature all right?

CUT TO:

- INT. WIIG ESTATE - STUDY, GRAND FOYER AND PATIO. NIGHT.

In the grand foyer and patio, the bodyguards are arming themselves to the teeth.

The HEAD OF SECURITY at the Wiig residence, visibly nervous, closes the armored door to the study.

HEAD OF SECURITY

You stay in here, Mr. Wiig. You've got
nothing to worry about. We'll take care of
him.

A few gunshots are heard from outside the house. The head of security hurries to lock the door.

We stay with Wiig.

From his POV, we hear a whole series of terrible noises that grow increasingly louder as the action approaches: gunfire, shouts, blows, more gunfire, an explosion.

Wiig--in his electric wheelchair--rolls over to a drawer, and pulls out an enormous Smith and Wesson 500 Magnum.

The gunfire and explosions climax and then suddenly, the house falls silent.

Wiig waits, tense, wondering whether they were able to stop Steve.

But someone or something crashes against the armored door of Wiig's study.

The blows are so strong that they start denting the door.

Finally, the entire door frame comes straight off the wall and the steel door falls to the floor with a resounding thud.

Outside is mayhem: dead bodyguards tossed in the grand foyer, curtains on fire, a servant running by...

And Steve... Still standing. Wiig smiles. And applauds.

WIIG

Bravo, Steve. Bravo. Wiig gestures for him to sit.
Steve ignores the invitation and walks slowly towards him.

WIIG

I've been informed that Oscar Goldman is no longer among the living... You've cut off the king's head so now the throne is yours. Would you like to run the Office of Strategic Operations?

STEVE

Oscar Goldman wasn't the king.

WIIG

I see... And now you think I'm the one to behead. Who are you trying to save, Steve? The poor? The helpless? The mindless consumers manipulated by the media? Why? Their lives aren't that important. They reproduce, non-stop, everywhere. Now, "LIFE", that's a whole different matter. Ideas, formulas, power. Our business is international tension--though we don't necessarily create that tension. War pays the bills. Period. But it's a means to an end: to give birth to "the man of tomorrow". We are creating eternal life, Steve. We are reaching that goal.

STEVE

Well, you're not reaching that goal tonight.

Steve is now just a few inches away.

WIIG

What do you think you're doing? I deserve a fair trial, like everybody else.

STEVE

Right.

(looks him straight in the eye)

Guilty.

Wiig draws the Magnum and starts shooting.

Steve covers the barrel with his nuclear hand; all the bullets do is make his arm tremble.

When Wiig empties the barrel, Steve takes the gun from his hand and tosses it to the floor.

Then he yanks off the device that controls Wiig's wheelchair.

STEVE

I'm sorry. We are in the business of operating
above the law.

WIIG

See? We're not so different after all.

Steve spins the wheelchair around.

Straight behind it is the fireplace of the grand foyer.

WIIG

My people will hunt you down wherever you go.
Death will come upon anyone close to you.
Everything you touch will be cursed.

Steve is struck for a second by these words; but then he grabs Wiig by the collar, and propels him and his wheelchair backwards.

Like a ball down the bowling alley, the wheelchair crosses the study, rolls through the grand foyer, hits the stone fireplace and falls over backwards into the fire.

CUT TO:

- EXT. WIIG ESTATE - GRAND FOYER AND GARDENS. NIGHT. Wiig's screams can be heard across the property.
In the gardens, some of the plants and trees that form the giant world map are also in flames.

Steve walks through the grand foyer, out into the gardens, and through the world in flames.

The servants watch him go, afraid but also in awe.

FADE TO:

- TELEVISION REPORT MONTAGE.

Reports on the shady side to the Axon Corporation come to light. SEVERAL CONGRESSMEN close to the Wiig family are being questioned and the FBI is investigating recent disappearances, including that of Doctor Rudy Wells.

As for the explosion of the "pharmaceutical lab in the mountain", the authorities suspect it may have been orchestrated by Iran or North Korea.

JOURNALIST (V.O.)

If these suspicions are confirmed, we could be on the verge of yet another war...

CUT TO:

- INT. PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE. DAY.

Miriam, fully recovered, is seated in an armchair across from a FEMALE PSYCHOLOGIST.

MIRIAM

You hear the story all the time. A woman gets married to a guy, she leaves her career to raise the kids, then he runs off with someone younger and doesn't want to leave her a dime. Steve and I were together such a short time but I felt loved like I never had before. He risked his life to save mine and when he had to go, he left me six million dollars.

PSYCHOLOGIST

(smiles)

Do you know what you are going to do with the money...?

MIRIAM

There are two ways to improve the world. Fighting evil and doing good. After this experience, I know I'm not the fighting evil type.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Do you miss him?

MIRIAM

(sighing, she tears up)

All the time. But I know he went away to protect me.

"INNISHANNON SERENADE", PERFORMED BY FRANK CHACKSFIELD, STARTS TO PLAY.

FADE TO:

- EXT. DEEP FOREST. DAY.

We fly over thick treetops of very old trees.

MIRIAM (V.O.)

Wherever he is, he must be missing me too...

At the end of the forest, we make out a titanium mine below.

MIRIAM (V.O.)

And to honor his sacrifice, I have to find a way to be happy.

CUT TO:

- EXT. TITANIUM MINE. DAY. Time has passed.
Steve, anonymous, with a beard and longer hair, is working in the mine.

A woman's voice surprises him.

IRENE

Mr. Austin... You're a hard man to find.

Steve turns around.

IRENE (50) has the look of a CIA agent.

STEVE

(returns to work) I'm not interested.

IRENE

I was assigned the task of dismantling the Office of Strategic Operations after you blew open that can of worms. But maybe, once the tumor known as

Axon Corporation has been removed, it makes sense to keep the agency operative.

Steve continues chipping the rock.

IRENE

Every institution has its dark side. You happened to be trained and financed by parasites of the government and its citizens.

STEVE

I'm afraid that's the rule, not the exception.

IRENE

So then I'm the exception. The team I lead has stopped five terrorist attacks in the past six years. We also rescued hundreds of children who were

being prostituted by human trafficking networks. If we hadn't done our job, many people would be dead. You caught a big fish, Steve, but there are even bigger ones out there. The Wiig family has powerful friends. And now we know that Oscar Goldman was answering to another man, Jackson McKay. I want to find them all and take them to court.

STEVE

(drops the pick and turns towards her)
Do you expect me to believe that the government is actually going to finance an independent agency that doesn't answer to economic interests? Even if you were gullible enough to believe that, they'd wipe you off the map as soon as you went after someone they'd rather protect.

IRENE

That's where you come in. I studied your file, Steve. Iraq, what happened in that bar. What you did for that woman, the way you pursued your own freedom.
Machines like you can be built. But men like you—you don't come across them every day.

STEVE

Like I said, I'm not interested.

Steve is about to start chipping again, but Irene won't give up.

IRENE

One more thing, Mr. Austin. (hands him
her card)
Rudy Wells was my father.

THE EPIC SCORE STARTS TO PLAY AND GROWS LOUDER OVER THE REST OF THE SCENE.

Steve is left looking at the card.

Irene stares at him for a moment, but since he says nothing, she gets into her car and starts driving down the dirt road.

But when she comes around the first curve, Steve is standing there.

Irene brakes and rolls down the window.

STEVE

I've been thinking. After the unfortunate turn of events you're well aware of, I haven't been that interested in staying alive. In other words, I might be more interested in protecting other people than in taking care of myself. I have no plans to fall in love or start a family either, so here it goes: these are my

conditions.

Irene listens.

STEVE

I work with you, not for you. No chemicals in my body. I want to sleep when I'm tired and get angry when something pisses me off. I won't wear a tracker or a camera. I'm not a video game. I decide who's on my team: doctors, researchers, agents—I choose them all. I want to be able to say no. If I don't like a mission for whatever the reason, it's a no-go. I want the farm that belonged to my family back with all debts and taxes paid. For life. Say no to any of these, and I'm gone.

Irene looks at Steve and can't help but smile.

CUT TO:

- INT. TATTOO PARLOR. DAY.

The TATTOO ARTIST, obese and jaded, charges A FEW TEENAGERS for their tattoos.

On the counter, someone puts down a piece of paper with a design.

It's the exact same Bruce Springsteen tattoo that Steve used to have on his arm.

TATTOO ARTIST

Where you want it?

STEVE

(points to his bionic arm)

Right here.

TATTOO ARTIST

Sure thing. You're the Boss.

STEVE

Right.

The tattoo machine turns on. Steve settles into a chair.

Right when the needle touches Steve's arm...

"BORN TO RUN" BY BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN STARTS BLASTING.

CUT TO
BLACK.

MAIN CREDIT SEQUENCE

As the main credit sequence ends, we open to a final scene.

- INT. MOUNTAIN RESORT IN THE ALPS - LOBBY. DAY.

A SINGLE STATIC SHOT, taken from behind the concierge desk.

In the background, TOURISTS and SKIERS come and go past a magnificent fireplace and a large bay window.

Outside snow is falling copiously.

Steve, with short hair and well shaved again, enters the frame.

STEVE

(leans on the desk)

Excuse me, did I by any chance receive a package this morning?

CONCIERGE

Just a moment, Mr. Bernard. Let me see...

It's clear that Steve is on a mission and uses his father's name as an alias.

As the word "see" lingers, Steve sees someone or something that catches his eye.

We don't see what he sees, but his expression is the same one he had when he met Miriam in the bookstore.

WE ENTER SLOW MOTION. The fire in the fireplace dances gently along with the snowflakes outside the window.

Steve hears the conversation between the concierge and a woman.

A WOMAN WITH THE SWEETEST VOICE WE'VE EVER HEARD.

WOMAN (O.S.)

*Hello. My flight was delayed
because of the snowstorm and I
just got in. I have a
reservation.*

CONCIERGE (O.S.)

Of course. Your name is...

WOMAN (O.S.)

*Sommers. Jamie Sommers. I'm with
the parachuting team.
(to Steve)*

Hi.

STEVE

(captivated)

Hi...

And that's it.