

"SOLDIER"

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL NURSERY - NIGHT

BABIES in bassinets, isolettes, incubators. BABIES sleeping, BABIES blinking, BABIES cooing, BABIES chirping, BABIES squalling.

It's the SQUALLING BABIES, the ones with pinched faces and tiny bunched fists, that seem to interest the TWO ANONYMOUS MEN in Military Uniforms. (Their anonymity is assured by the angles from which they are seen; they are hands, they are feet, they are the backs of heads.)

A lone NURSE watches them grimly as they make their "selections," marking the cribs of the most active, noisy BABIES with X's.

CUT TO:

EXT. VAN/HOSPITAL - NIGHT

ANGLE ON VAN DOORS slamming shut on a dozen squalling BABIES in tiered red cribs.

ANGLE ON THE VAN pulling away from the loading dock of the large hospital as a date is SUPERED over the scene...

CUT TO:

INT. CAGE/BASEMENT ROOM - DAY OR NIGHT

Vicious teeth, savage snarls, tearing flesh as three fierce fighting DOGS battle a single WOLVERINE in large steel cage.

The cage is in the middle of a gloomy windowless room surrounded by twenty TWO-YEAR-OLDS seated on folding chairs and dressed in identical grey overalls. As the TWO-YEAR-OLDS watch the battle, amazement on their innocent faces, a date appears SUPERED over the scene...

WE DISCOVER in the shadows more ANONYMOUS MEN (and WOMEN), some of them in Military Uniforms, observing the children.

CUT TO:

INT. A WINDOWLESS CEMENT ROOM - DAY OR NIGHT

It's creepy: the same children two years older, milling about a bare cement room, apparently unsupervised. They ought to look cute, but somehow these joyless FOUR-YEAR-OLDS look slightly sinister, all of them wearing drab uniforms and military burr-cut hair. Again a date is SUPERED over the scene --

-- just as an AGGRESSIVE FOUR-YEAR-OLD approaches a PASSIVE FOUR YEAR-OLD seated on the floor and kicks him.

It's a harmless child's kick. But then, as the DATE DISAPPEARS, he kicks the PASSIVE FOUR-YEAR-OLD again. And again.

The servo-motor in a remote video camera mounted high on the wall WHINES slightly as the camera pans to the record the action.

CUT TO:

INT. WINDOWLESS CLASSROOM - DAY OR NIGHT

Puzzles. Fingers fit shapes into holes. The puzzles aren't fun puzzles; they're obviously tests of intelligence or dexterity or both. SIX-YEAR-OLDS now, the boys perform in a grim room under fluorescent lights as more ANONYMOUS MEN and WOMEN in polished shoes and sharply creased military slacks cruise the aisles, observing.

As a date appears SUPERED over this scene...

WE NOTICE one of the SIX-YEAR-OLDS is becoming familiar to us. TODD. We NOTICE his intense eyes as he dexterously manipulates a puzzle.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Behind a cyclone fence topped with curlicues of razor wire, the boys, now TEN-YEAR-OLDS, are marching in formation under the supervision of a (faceless) DRILL SERGEANT. Again a date is SUPERED over the scene...

CUT TO:

INT. GYMNASIUM - DAY

Fourteen-year-old TODD is doing bench presses in shorts while all around him his FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD COMRADES work out with weights in a very grim and spartan gym that resembles a sinister concentration camp more than the yuppie spas of the 20th Century. The date appears SUPERED over the scene...

CUT TO:

EXT. OBSTACLE COURSE/MONTAGE - DAY

The FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLDS, TODD among them, jump, roll, dive, crawl, swim, and rappel through a brutal course featuring:

vertical wooden walls, fast moving rapids, tangles of barbed wire, steep rock faces, and finally a jungle of dangling chains with tiny circular "platforms" about eight inches in diameter every ten feet. FOURTEEN YEAR OLDS bloody each other with pugil sticks and padded cudgels while they swing twenty feet above the ground. One of them is knocked off, plummets downward. CRUNCH!

CUT TO:

EXT. SNOW COVERED LANDSCAPE - DAY

Long even strides, two inches of snow. Breathing hard, the SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLDS now lope through hills and woods in shorts and T-shirts, their breath coming in steamy blasts as the date is SUPERED over the scene...

This a brutal cross country run under a grim sky in bitter cold weather, but the SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLDS are super-fit, their faces hard and without expression, their eyes as cold as snake eyes.

Except for the STRAGGLER, a lone boy who's bringing up the rear, obviously in trouble, gasping for air, struggling, struggling, struggling to keep his feet...

ANGLE ON A HILL where ANONYMOUS OBSERVERS, all in military dress, watch.

ANGLE ON THE STRAGGLER, unable to keep his feet, going down, gasping. With fearful eyes, he looks toward the hill where he knows the OBSERVERS are.

ANGLE ON THE PACK, sixteen SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLDS not looking back, even as a single SHOT rings out. TODD doesn't even blink, just keeps running.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

Suddenly, out of nowhere, a scary mechanized pop-up target, a MILITARY FIGURE, erupts from the long grass, weapon pointing. Before the weapon can flash a laser beam, AUTOMATIC FIRE ravages the target and it disappears back into the grass. The boys, EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLDS now, are wearing combat gear and carrying automatic weapons as they advance through a sloping field of tall grass.

Different sophisticated TARGETS pop up urgently, sometimes close, sometimes far, some MOVING rapidly on tracks.

The EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLDS expertly mow down menacing MILITARY FIGURES while holding their fire when ANIMAL TARGETS or UNARMED CIVILIANS and CHILDREN appear.

The eighteen-year-old on point is RILEY, a muscular redhead. TODD is right behind him as a date is SUPERED over the scene...

Suddenly multiple TARGETS appear, charging.

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA! First TARGET down!

RILEY, panning for the next target, holds fire, passes over two MOTHERS HOLDING CHILDREN, pans for a nearby SOLDIER TARGET. But the SOLDIER TARGET zips behind the MOTHERS HOLDING CHILDREN, taking cover, weapon pointed at RILEY.

For half a second RILEY hesitates!

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA! TODD blazes away, mercilessly blowing away the MOTHERS HOLDING CHILDREN TARGET and the SOLDIER TARGET.

THE MAIN TITLE APPEARS

as the ROAR OF GUNS gives way to MUSIC...

CUT TO:

INT. PROCESSING ROOM - DAY

Skillful hands operate a tattoo pen, stenciling an insignia and a number on the left side of RILEY'S face over the cheekbone. His cheek says RILEY, L.B., his face reveals nothing as...

OPENING CREDITS BEGIN

The next face is TODD. The skillful hands with the tattoo pen go to work on his face, marking, stenciling the skin as...

OPENING CREDITS CONTINUE

Then the tattoo artist's hands finish with TODD and move on to the next MAN, leaving TODD staring straight ahead, his cheek tattooed, his face like carved stone, his eyes as unfathomable as the eyes of a statue as THE OPENING CREDITS CONCLUDE.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

Machinegun fire, SOLDIERS in cammies moving through lush tropical growth.

A mortar explodes, a SOLDIER is engulfed in shrapnel. As the smoke clears, the SOLDIER screams mindlessly like a siren. This is real war, not training.

A title and date appear on the screen, saving.

THE BOLIVIAN WAR

As the title fades, we glimpse TODD advancing at a crouch through smoke and enemy fire, blazing away at the unseen enemy. Sweaty and smudged, his uniform torn and stained with blood, TODD reveals nothing on his stone face. But he's clearly unintimidated by the death of his screaming comrade as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. PINE WOODS - DAY

Automatic weapons CHATTER as TODD struggles through thick snowy woods, half-carrying a bloody comrade barely recognizable as RILEY. Bullets spatter bark and leaves as TODD and RILEY take cover behind a fallen log. A date and title appear, SUPERED over the action...

THE MONTANA "INCIDENT"

RILEY is nearly unconscious. TODD glances at his own wound, a savage opening in his side. He considers the torn flesh as dispassionately as a man checking a flea bite.

Bullets whiz around the wounded men as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT, VILLAGE - DAY

Sunbaked landscape, a burning village, ENEMY CORPSES sprawled here and there, burned or horribly mutilated by artillery fire. SUPERED over the CORPSES, a date and title...

THE SAUDI CAMPAIGN

WE DISCOVER TODD, RILEY, and several OTHER SOLDIERS, exhausted, parched, in torn and bloodied uniforms, sharing a single canteen under the blazing sun. War is hard work!

CUT TO:

EXT. LAUNCH PAD - DAY

A fury of flames, the THUNDER of ignition as huge rocket engines lift a space vehicle off the launching pad and propel it skyward.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

Profound SILENCE! The space vehicle that the rocket propelled is a weathered looking military spaceship gliding through the blackness of outer space like a huge shark. A date and title appear SUPERED over the scene...

2017, TANNHAUSER GATE

As the title fades away in the eerie silence, we...

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER PLANET - NIGHT

A huge moon looms in the blackness above a barely visible landscape...

THE ARGENTINE SECTOR

SIX SOLDIERS stagger through the rough terrain in pressure suits and plexi helmets, breathing from tanks.

Sudden automatic fire staggers the lead SOLDIER. His helmet is pierced, air and blood erupt from the hole in his face plate.

The SERGEANT, his futuristic "chevrons" on his helmet, signals the men to take cover, starts to return fire. As a flare illuminates the battlefield, we RECOGNIZE the sergeant through his visor. It's TODD.

CUT TO:

EXT. EXTRATERRESTRIAL CITY - DAY

Bombed out! Buildings turned to rubble, smoking ruins, rain. An extra-terrestrial city ravaged by war to such a degree that it bears an uncanny resemblance to Dresden/Earth in 1945 after the fire-bombing! The architecture, even in ruins, recalls old Europe, and the streets are narrow, as in before (or after) automobiles.

Bursts of AUTOMATIC FIRE, occasional MORTAR BLASTS. A spooky battle between unseen SOLDIERS is taking place in seemingly deserted streets and alleyways. And SUPERED over the gloomy scene...

THE THIRD DRESDEN MOON

(1.15 Earth atmos, acceptable oxygen)

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! Shots!

Suddenly a terrified MOTHER dashes along the street, a screaming BABY in her arms, looking for shelter.

A CIVILIAN MAN pops out of a doorway, pulls her to safety.

REVEAL TODD, watching from the shell of a once proud building.

TODD'S POV of four ENEMY SOLDIERS running at a crouch among the rubble.

ANGLE ON TODD watching them scurry into a cellar door. TODD turns and gives a hand signal.

ANGLE ON RILEY twenty yards away, hidden behind exposed machinery, acknowledging the signal and, along with a THIRD SOLDIER, advancing toward the cellar.

EXT. CELLAR DOOR

TODD, RILEY, and the THIRD SOLDIER converge stealthily, coordinating with hand signals.

TODD pulls the pin on a grenade, and RILEY and the THIRD SOLDIER kick in the door.

TODD tosses the grenade in as RILEY fires a withering barrage of automatic fire through the cellar door.

BAHWHOOM! The grenade EXPLODES.

Then, RILEY, TODD and the THIRD SOLDIER charge in.

INT. CELLAR

HEAVY FIRE as TODD, RILEY and the THIRD SOLDIER spray the room.

ANGLE ON TODD signaling cease fire.

Sudden silence. Drifting smoke. Then...GROANS.

Four ENEMY SOLDIERS are sprawled motionless, horribly eviscerated. A fifth ENEMY SOLDIER, horribly wounded, is groaning.

ANGLE ON TODD surveying the scene, stone faced.

TODD'S POV of the enemy dead, and several CIVILIANS equally dead, as well as the dead BODIES of several CHILDREN.

BANG! RILEY shoots the groaning ENEMY SOLDIER.

Silence again.

CLOSE ON TODD, his stone face. What does he see?. What does he feel? Anything? A mystery!

CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS - DAY

A spartan room, bare bunk-beds. Rain POUNDS on a window that looks out into a stormy sky over the godforsaken ruins of the Third Dresden Moon.

TODD is sitting on a bunk, shirtless. His new rank has been tattooed on his right cheek; there's a scar under one eye and another scar that distorts his lip slightly. The names of various battles have been neatly stenciled down his left arm, an official record, not a decoration. TODD is silent, staring into space. The room is full of SOLDIERS in T-shirts, fatigues, sleepwear. WORDS APPEAR SUPERED OVER THE SCENE...

The WORDS FADE AWAY, the silence continues, the rain BEATS on the barracks, no one says a word, they just stare into space or watch the rain beat on the windowpane. They look like robots...used robots, made individual only by their different scars.

CUT TO:

EXT. BARRACKS - DAY

Rain. Low buildings, boarded windows, slogans painted on the war-scarred walls, the makeshift barracks in one building, command quarters in the next.

A lone figure, a MAN IN A PONCHO, hurries through the downpour, passing the barracks, heading for the command quarters.

INT. COMMAND QUARTERS

Entering, the MAN shakes rain off his poncho. His name is RUBRICK, he's thirty-five, a lieutenant. He faces the two bored OFFICERS lounging in the cluttered office where outdated equipment is strung together by mazes of wire and the desktops are heaped with printout sheets and styrofoam coffee cups.

The captain, CHURCH, has his feet on the desk. He's fifty years old, gray and fat and soft. The other officer, SLOAN, also a lieutenant, is a thirty-five year old woman, dark, moderately attractive, but not particularly happy.

RUBRICK

Colonel Mekum has his "boys" unpacked.
I think he wants to show them off.

CHURCH

Emmmmp.

RUBRICK

They look...impressive.

CUT TO:

INT. STATION - DAY

A NEW SOLDIER fills the frame, a perfect-looking man/boy of about twenty built like a linebacker, powerful looking with sculpted unscarred musculature. He looks straight ahead, unblinking, and so does the one next to him, and the next one. Twenty of them are standing in line in one corner of an enormous space that was once a station of some sort. They don't seem to respond to the chill or to the occasional drops of rain from the skylights leaking sixty feet above them.

Wearing dripping ponchos, CHURCH, SLOAN, and RUBRICK are looking the robot-like monsters over like so much meat, while a brighteyed blond colonel about thirty, named MEKUM, stands proudly by, glowing with satisfaction.

The vast interior is so large that in spite of clusters of stacked crates, part of a dismantled spaceship, a rusty earthmover, numerous large pieces of machinery, and a whole arrangement of exercise gear, the place has huge open spaces and a sense of emptiness to it.

SLOAN walks close to the line of NEW SOLDIERS and studies one, her eyes drifting over their muscular bodies. She breaks the long silence.

SLOAN

Well, they're...pretty.

CHURCH

(to Mekum)

What's so hot about them?

MEKUM

(proudly)

Very much improved. In every way.

RUBRICK

This is Colonel Mekum from Q. He's their commanding officer.

CHURCH

(dubious)

Improved...how?

MEKUM

As I said, in every way. Physically and psychologically. More endurance, quicker responses, better hand-eye, improved technical training. Where the First Psychology gave you ninety-eight percent obedience, this bunch gives you 99.4.

CHURCH

(dubiously)

Mmmmmm. Weeell, you know my old daddy was in maintenance and he had a saying...

RUBRICK and SLOAN exchange an eye-rolling private glance that means they've heard a lot of Daddy's sayings.

CHURCH

...He used to say, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

MEKUM

(patronizing)

I...see. I'm not sure I quite get your...point...

CHURCH

(indicating the Veterans)

Well, the soldiers we've got now, they've been through all kinds of heavy shit...and they've always got the job done. Now these new ones, these "hot shots" of yours...what kind of action have they seen? They are battle-tested, aren't they?

MEKUM

That's up to you field guys. H.. Q. wants you to break 'em in when you do the annual security sweep in January.

CHURCH

The sweep is just routine, not even police action. I'd like to see some sort of...meaningful evidence...

MEKUM

Such as?

CHURCH

Maybe we could run some tests. Kind of a comparison, the old and the new...

RUBRICK and SLOAN exchange a startled glance, but MEKUM doesn't seem fazed as we...

CUT TO:

INT. STATION - DAY - LATER

A WEAPON FIRING! BUDDA! BUDDA! BUDDA! The automatic weapon is being fired by the veteran soldier RILEY. He's blazing away at an elaborate electronic target a hundred yards away in the huge space.

TODD is watching with the other VETERAN SOLDIERS. They're seated on the floor, wearing drab fatigues, directly across from the twenty NEW SOLDIERS.

As TODD glances at them, the NEW SOLDIERS look back unblinkingly. (The VETERANS, in spite of their impassive expressions, look very human compared to the NEW SOLDIERS. Their battle scars mark them as individuals in sharp contrast to the perfectly-muscled young giants across from them.)

The firing stops, and RILEY, his weapon empty, leaps to his feet and salutes RUBRICK, who's been watching the demonstration with the rest of the officers.

RILEY

Sir!

RUBRICK

Very nice, Riley. Fall away.

RILEY

(another salute)

Sir!

As RILEY joins the VETERANS squatting motionlessly, RUBRICK glances at the shredded electronic target, glances at his stopwatch, then looks at Mekum.

RUBRICK

Thirty seconds, 90 percent hits.

MEKUM smirks, picks up the weapon, disassembles it rapidly.

MEKUM

Let's make it more difficult.

RUBRICK, CHURCH, and SLOAN exchange glances of disbelief as MEKUM scatters the disassembled parts onto the concrete floor with a loud clatter.

TODD watches, unblinking, as MEKUM looks to the NEW SOLDIERS.

MEKUM

Caine Six-Oh-Seven!

A blond Nordic giant is suddenly on his feet among the NEW SOLDIERS. There is real dignity in his salute; he's like a pro.

CAINE 607

Sir!

MEKUM

Assemble the weapon, load, fire on the target from various evasive positions in a thirty-second period.

OFFICERS look at each other again in disbelief.

MEKUM

Starting...now!

MEKUM punches his watch as CAINE 607 gracefully begins to pick up pieces of weapon, doing it rapidly, yet without apparent haste.

TODD is watching, revealing nothing.

CLACK! KA SHACK! CLICK! CAINE 607 slaps the weapon together, loading a magazine with a final KA SHUCK, then he dives to the floor, firing a rapid burst at the electronic target which blinks wildly...

OFFICERS watch, impressed.

CAINE 607 is firing from another position.

The target goes crazy.

CAINE 607 is rolling and firing at the same time.

The target goes wild.

MEKUM's watch clicks off 27 seconds...28...29...

The firing stops.

TODD stares impassively as CAINE 607 salutes. Beside him, RILEY watches also.

MEKUM
(to Caine 607)
As you were, soldier.

RUBRICK is looking at the electronic target, grudgingly impressed.

RUBRICK
Ninety-nine percent...

MEKUM
(smug)
While taking evasive action...

RUBRICK
(amazed)
That's...very good.

CUT TO:

INT. WEIGHT AREA/STATION - DAY - A LITTLE LATER

A NEW SOLDIER cleans an awesome weight with what looks like ease as RUBRICK, CHURCH, and SLOAN again exchange impressed glances and MEKUM watches smugly.

They're still in the giant warehouse in the gym section among all sorts of ominous exercise devices. The NEW SOLDIERS and VETERANS are gathered in separate groups at attention, their faces like stone.

TODD is watching the big man handle the weight easily.

MEKUM
See? Much stronger.

CHURCH
What about endurance?

CUT TO:

EXT. RUINS - DAY

TODD is loping through sheets of rain. The terrain around him features ghostly shells of buildings, shards of a city nearly invisible through the curtains of rain.

His feet slash through flooding gutters and trash filled streets bordered by ruins as he runs smoothly, evenly, keeping a good pace, his breath rasping rhythmically, his eyes revealing nothing, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICER QUARTERS - DAY

SLOAN accepts a cup of hot coffee from RUBRICK as she considers the plastic "papers" MEKUM has spread on the cluttered desk. Ponchos have been hung by the door. MEKUM is pointing to various numbers and paragraphs.

CHURCH has been staring out the window into the pouring rain. He turns to MEKUM and interrupts.

CHURCH
Our man has been out there fifteen minutes now. Shouldn't you send one?

MEKUM
(smug grin, to Church)
In a minute.
(turning back to Sloan)
Now, see this test? This shows what they do under sleep deprivation conditions. Forty-eight hours awake and they can...

CUT TO:

EXT. TODD RUNNING/RUINS - DAY

Rain slashes his face as TODD runs, his eyes staring vacantly into the blinding storm, his legs pumping evenly, his feet chopping through the thick mud in a wasteland of shelled apartment buildings where rat-like CREATURES scurry out of his way as we...

CUT TO:

INT. STATION - DAY

Separated by fifteen yards, the two groups of SOLDIERS, the NEW and the VETERAN, sit on the cold cement floor, staring vacantly into space as they await orders. Occasionally a VETERAN will rub his chin, another will scratch his nose, but nobody says anything, and when their eyes accidentally meet, they look away deliberately, expressionless. Nobody flinches when a big door opens and pale light streams in.

MEKUM is standing there in a poncho.

MEKUM

Melton, Eight Five. Forward.

MELTON, one of the husky new soldiers, climbs to his feet and steps toward MEKUM, saluting.

MELTON

Eight Five, sir.

MEKUM

Ten miles, Melton, on the run.

MELTON's face shows no expression as MEKUM continues.

MEKUM (O.S.)

You've got sixty minutes. Go.

MELTON

Sir!

MELTON heads out into the rain running smoothly and easily as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. TODD/RUINS - DAY

TODD's breath comes in even rasps as his feet splash over rough terrain, splash splash splash, hard work, but nothing in his stone face indicates he's not equal to the task. Splash splash splash!

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICERS QUARTERS - DAY

In the cluttered office, RUBRICK, CHURCH, and SLOAN look up from a conversation as MEKUM enters dripping wet and takes off his poncho, smiling smugly.

MEKUM

My man left exactly twenty minutes after yours. Make a note of that.

RUBRICK

What are we supposed to do with the old soldiers?

MEKUM

(a shrug and a grin)
Old soldiers never die.

CUT TO:

EXT. TODD/RUINS - DAY

Running. Splash splash splash! TODD makes a turn, heading back, his face like stone, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICERS QUARTERS - DAY

MEKUM is filling his coffee cup as he speaks.

MEKUM

They'll serve as a labor force. You can use them for physical stuff... loading, unloading, repairs, power lines, that kind of thing.

(a glance around the office)

Even cleaning...sweeping...,uh, tidying up.

CUT TO:

EXT. TODD/RUINS - DAY

Breathing steadily, raspily, TODD lopez through the rain. Something makes him glance back over his shoulder.

Thirty yards back he sees a vague shape, obscured by rain.

TODD looks ahead again, his face revealing nothing, his legs maintaining the same even pace, running, running, running.

Then he looks back again.

The vague shape is taking form, a GHOSTLY RUNNER getting closer.

TODD continues at the same even pace. He doesn't look back again until he feels closeness. Then he looks.

IT'S MELTON only a few yards behind him, running effortlessly, keeping a steady pace that's faster than TODD's. The bigger man moves even with TODD without even looking at him, as though TODD weren't there, and then he moves ahead like a big machine, inexorable.

As TODD runs, eyes straight ahead, he can see MELTON becoming ghostly, disappearing in the curtains of rain ahead as we...

CUT TO:

INT. STATION - DAY

The huge doors are open to the rain as SLOAN, CHURCH, RUBRICK, and MEKUM watch for signs of TODD. Still dripping wet, the muscular MELTON is standing beside MEKUM, breathing heavily but not desperately.

MEKUM

Of course, age is a factor, but the real factor is the training program, especially the psychological. The mind controls the body after all, and we're doing wonderful things with the mind.

A shape appears in the rain a hundred yards off, moves closer, takes the form of a runner running. It's TODD, still moving at the same pace, his face like stone.

TODD lopes into the big warehouse and, breathing hard but evenly, comes to a halt in front of RUBRICK and salutes.

TODD

Sir.

RUBRICK

At ease, soldier.

CHURCH has been thinking and now he speaks to MEKUM.

CHURCH

What's the price of all that speed?
It he tired?

MEKUM

Tired?

CHURCH

Todd here ran the pace he's been taught to run. He's still strong. Send him up the chain, Rube.

RUBRICK

(to Todd)
Soldier! Up the chain!

TODD

Sir.

TODD salutes and lopes toward ten chains that dangle from the rafters sixty feet above, grabs one, and starts up it, hand over hand.

MEKUM watches TODD climb, then looks at CHURCH who's looking at him expectantly.

MEKUM grins at CHURCH.

Then MEKUM looks back at TODD, not hurrying.

TODD is thirty feet up and climbing, passing the eight inch circular "platforms" or footholds in the chain every ten feet.

MEKUM

(sharply)

Melton, on the double! Up a chain!

MELTON

(saluting)

Sir!

MELTON takes a few easy strides, gracefully catches a chain midstride, and starts up, climbing easily and twice as fast as TODD.

CHURCH, SLOAN, and RUBRICK crane their necks as the two men struggle upward toward the rafters.

Three quarters of the way up, MELTON comes even with TODD, then passes him.

MEKUM, watching, smirks.

CHURCH is watching too, and he's still not satisfied. His brow is knit, something's bothering him.

ANGLE HIGH ABOVE, AMONG THE GIRDERS

Stonefaced, MELTON is resting on a "platform" on the chain, sixty feet up, beneath the girders, swaying gently.

His stony gaze is on the next chain where TODD is arriving at a "platform" on an adjacent chain...only three feet away.

Their eyes meet, TODD and MELTON alone together sixty feet up, three feet apart. Neither man blinks, neither man flinches, neither man reveals anything at all...

LOW ANGLE, LOOKING UP

CHURCH considers the men high above, then turns to MEKUM.

CHURCH

What about...spirit?

MEKUM

(as in "what's that?")

Spirit?

(...a grin)

Oh! You mean "AQ"... "aggressive qualities"?

CHURCH

Whatever the latest jargon is.

MEKUM

Much better, much higher. For example, where your old ones expressed ninety percent of their sexual energy in aggressive physicality, these new ones are ninety-nine percent without sexual inclination. It's all aggression.

SLOAN

(dryly)

Real men!

CHURCH

(sharply, to Sloan)

At ease, Lieutenant.

(turning to Mekum,
serious)

What if they fought?

A sudden silence.

SLOAN raises her eyebrows, gives RUBRICK a look.

Frowning thoughtfully, MEKUM looks up.

MEKUM

You mean up there?

CHURCH

(to Rubrick)

Go ahead, Rube. Tell Todd to take him.

MEKUM

(sharply)

No!

They all look at MEKUM. Is this the chink in the armor? The new soldiers can't fight?

CHURCH

"No"?

MEKUM

Not fair. No contest. Send two more of your old ones up.

Now CHURCH, RUBRICK, and SLOAN are stunned. They exchange a glance.

MEKUM

Go ahead.

RUBRICK shrugs, turns to the VETERANS still sitting stoically in a group on the cement floor.

RUBRICK

Romero, A. -- Goines, D.L. -- up the chains.

Two of the veterans, ROMERO and GOINES, leap immediately to their feet and climb rapidly.

SLOAN, CHURCH, and RUBRICK exchange a look as MEKUM smirks confidently.

ANGLE ON TODD AND MELTON ABOVE. They're still facing each other across the sixty foot drop.

MELTON glances down... without losing sight of TODD.

ROMERO and GOINES are coming up the chains fast, hand over hand. They're within ten feet, their impassive faces look dangerous.

Nothing shows on MELTON's machine-face, but he starts a slight motion in his chain so that he spins slowly. That way, as the veterans surround him, he keeps a continual eye on all three.

TODD, his face impassive, eyes MELTON vigilantly.

ANGLE ON RUBRICK BELOW

For a long moment RUBRICK looks up at the three men dangling around the new soldier, then he shouts loudly at them.

RUBRICK

Get him, men!

ANGLE ON TODD as SMASH! TODD is hit hard in the face even as he starts to swing. WHAM! MELTON hits him again and TODD loses his grip on the chain, starts to fall, grabs at the chain, clutches, slides...

ANGLE ON MELTON, CRUNCH!, hit as he swings at MELTON. WHAM! MELTON hits him again, hard.

GOINES swings against MELTON from behind, smashing at him with his free hand and with both feet.

MELTON ignores the blows from behind as he grabs ROMERO by the face with one hand, yanks the face close to his own, and squeezes mercilessly.

ANGLE ON TODD, TWENTY FEET BELOW. He's managed to get a foothold on one of the mini-platforms. His face horribly bloody, he looks up at the action twenty feet above him and sees MELTON suddenly hurl ROMERO downward.

ROMERO rockets down past TODD...

ANGLE ON THE FLOOR as SMASH! ROMERO's body crunches against the cement not far from RUBRICK, SLOAN, and CHURCH, splattering them with blood.

Their eyes are wide with disbelief and horror as they look up again...

ANGLE ON MELTON in the girders as he turns to face the man who's been clubbing him from behind...GOINES!

GOINES swings his chain wide and MELTON, eyes merciless, deadly, swings after him.

ANGLE ON TODD, bloody, struggling up the chain hand over hand. His eyes follow MELTON above as the new soldier swings and swings, trying to get a blow at GOINES.

Just then, GOINES lunges at MELTON, SMACK, SMASH, he hits him hard, and WHAM! MELTON hits him back...

ANGLE ON TODD who has climbed to a "platform" foothold on his chain five feet above the swinging fighters. TODD looks down on MELTON's back as the big man swings close, watching, tensing, then...

TODD dives off his chain and lands on MELTON's back, crooking one arm around the new soldier's neck and pounding him with one free hand and strangling him with the other arm.

MELTON gurgles while GOINES hits him in the face.

ANGLE ON MEKUM WATCHING BELOW. For the first time a frown of concern wrinkles his brow.

ANGLE ON MELTON AND TODD on chains just below the girders. MELTON slams an elbow back into TODD's ribs hard and TODD gasps for air, but...

GOINES uses the moment to slam a knee into MELTON's balls and...

MELTON gasps, then grabs GOINES by the neck with one hand, rips him from the chain, and sends him plunging violently downward even as...

TODD goes for MELTON's face with his free hand.

SLAM! MELTON slashes TODD in the ribs with an elbow.

TODD savagely gouges out one of MELTON's eyes.

ANGLE ON MEKUM, sixty feet below, enraged at the sight of MELTON's injury.

ANGLE ON THE VETERANS watching the brutal fight with blank impassive faces, RILEY among them.

ANGLE ON THE NEW SOLDIERS watching, robot-like.

ANGLE ON THE STRUGGLE OVERHEAD. SMASH! SMASH! SMASH! MELTON's elbows drive back into TODD's ribs. The breath knocked out of him, TODD gasps for air, pain contorting his face.

MELTON manages to get TODD's forearm into his mouth and bites furiously, drawing blood.

TODD grits his teeth in pain.

WHAM! Another blow to the ribs from MELTON's elbow.

TODD is losing his grip.

RILEY watches below, his face a mask.

MELTON bites and elbows furiously.

TODD loses his grip and grabs at MELTON, rakes flesh as he begins to fall and then...

Plunging downward, TODD grabs wildly at the chain and catches it ...but he keeps falling, the chain ripping flesh from his hand for twenty feet until...

He can't hold on any longer! TODD plunges the last thirty feet to the floor, landing with a terrible crunch right on top of ROMERO's broken body below.

Sudden silence!

ANGLE ON THE VETERANS watching impassively as TODD lies motionless, sprawled on ROMERO's body.

ANGLE ON THE NEW SOLDIERS revealing no feelings.

ANGLE ON CHURCH, SLOAN, and RUBRICK looking stunned and shaken.

It's MEKUM who breaks the silence, SCREAMING furiously at the one-eyed MELTON who's still sixty feet up...

MEKUM

GET DOWN HERE! GET DOWN HERE ON THE
DOUBLE, GET YOUR ASS DOWN HERE, YOU
MISERABLE PISS ANT STINKING SHIT FOR
BRAINS!

CHURCH, SLOAN, and RUBRICK lift their stunned faces from TODD to MEKUM who's continuing to rant at MELTON as MELTON comes down the chain fast...

MEKUM

COME ON, DOUBLE IT UP; DOWN, DOWN,
DOWN, YOU MISERABLE THIRD RATE
SHITHEAD INCOMPETENT CLOWN!

MELTON lets go of the chain and drops the last fifteen feet, landing gracefully on his feet in front of MEKUM and salutes.

MELTON

Sir!

MEKUM

LOOK AT YOU, YOU BIG DUMB SHIT, YOU'VE
LOST AN EYE. WHAT THE HELL GOOD IS A
GODDAMN ONE-EYED SOLDIER? DO YOU
KNOW WHAT IT COST TO BREED YOU, YOU
BIG MORON? TO TRAIN YOU, FEED YOU?

As MEKUM turns, including all the NEW SOLDIERS in his continuing tirade, CHURCH, SLOAN, and RUBRICK confer in low voices.

RUBRICK

They're...fantastic!

CHURCH

(reluctant agreement)

Mmmmmmm...

SLOAN

(worried)

We could have a problem here, couldn't we? I mean, we just lost three men...

CHURCH

Oh, I wouldn't worry about that.
"Training accident." Paperwork.

SLOAN

What about the bodies?

CHURCH

(turning away)

Incinerator.

Turning his back on SLOAN and RUBRICK, CHURCH approaches MEKUM who's still raging, indicating MELTON to the blank-faced NEW SOLDIERS.

MEKUM

WHAT GOOD IS THIS MAN NOW? WITH ONE
EYE! HE'S GOT NO DEPTH PERCEPTION!
HE'S CANNON FODDER. ALL HE CAN DO IS
WALK POINT AND TAKE THE FIRST HIT.

CHURCH

(interrupting)

They're very...impressive.

MEKUM

(fuming)

Yeab, well, the big moron shouldn't
have lost an eye.

CHURCH glances at TODD's corpse draped over ROMERO's broken body, tries to assuage MEKUM.

CHURCH

It was our best man who got his eye...
Todd, a real tough one. Survived
police action in Montana, fought in
the Argentine Sector, and in the
Saudi Campaign to say nothing of --

MEKUM

Old news! They're nothing at all!
Wait until you get these new fellas
into some real action. I guarantee
you'll be awed. I guarantee it.

The NEW SOLDIERS sit impassively, the bleeding MELTON among them, staring right at the VETERANS.

Not far away three dead bodies lie motionless as we...

CUT TO:

INT. FURNACES/FURNACE ROOM - NIGHT

A rage of flame! The mouth of a huge furnace leers with yellow fury, eight feet high.

Two men, BURNERS, in asbestos fire suits and helmets, appear, laboriously dragging a tattered sofa leaking stuffing. With effort they shove it into the blazing furnace where it is quickly consumed. Slowly the BURNERS turn and trudge back for another load as we REVEAL A REFUSE BIN, seven feet high, looming in the shadows not far from the flickering light of the furnace. It's overflowing with junk, barely distinguishable in the gloom.

The BURNERS grab blindly and haul out the next object.

It's ROMERO's dead body. They haul it out of the bin and let it flop limply to the floor where ROMERO stares sightlessly at nothing.

The BURNERS stare at the body, exchange a blank look through their visors, shrug, and start to drag the heavy carcass toward the flames.

INT. REFUSE BIN/FURNACE ROOM/CLOSE BY

In the near darkness, the faintest flickering light reveals two tangled BODIES, motionless in the confusion of refuse. But not quite motionless! A hand opens and closes! A bloody hand! Fingers twitch.

INT. FURNACE ROOM

RAGING FLAMES as ROMERO's body is tossed unceremoniously into the fire where the flames begin to [...]

For half a second the BURNERS watch ROMERO melt into fire, then they turn their backs and head back for another load.

INT. REFUSE BIN/FURNACE ROOM

BURNERS' hands reach in and haul out another corpse, GOINES, dragging the body right over TODD's body.

As GOINES' shoe drags over TODD's face, TODD's eyes flicker stupidly.

Then GOINES' corpse is pulled over the edge of the bin.

TODD blinks, fights for consciousness. Where is he? He moves his head...

INT. FURNACE ROOM

The BURNERS, silhouetted by flames, feed GOINES' body to the furnace.

CLOSE ON THE FURNACE as GOINES' body is consumed by raging flames.

ANGLE ON THE BURNERS trudging to the bin. They reach in blindly for whatever's next. Tugging with effort, they struggle the clumsy object over the rim, and let it fall to the floor. It's a mattress!

Communicating with a look, the FIRST BURNER drags the mattress toward the fire while the SECOND BURNER reaches again into the bin.

The SECOND BURNER frowns through the visor, struggles with something, frowns, wrestles with it.

Finally, with great effort, he pulls out a big carton that immediately spills old magazines on him.

Disgusted, he pulls the partially full carton across the refuselittered floor toward the furnaces.

ANGLE ON HIS FEET, as the SECOND BURNER struggles toward the fire, stepping over a trail of blood which is hardly noticeable in the flickering firelight.

He passes another big corrugated bin with a sign on it. The sign says NONFLAMMABLE WASTE DISPOSAL...and the trail of blood leads to that bin!

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTER SPACE - DAY

Silence! A vast blackness with only a few tiny lights in the infinite depths.

A battered rusty spaceship glides slowly and silently into view. This is a GARBAGE SHIP and it looks it. Awkward and slow and totally unglamorous, it moves through space like a great clumsy church made of steel as we...

CUT TO:

INT. HOLD/GARBAGE SHIP - DAY

As the massive doors on the underside of the ship open, light spills in and there is a huge ROAR as tons of debris, including massive pieces of machinery, huge statues, old vehicles, and numerous containers, spill out through the open bays and tumble downward. The one that says "Nonflammable Waste" on the side careens against the bulkhead with a THUNDERING sound, then hurtles downward.

EXT. JUNK MOUNTAINS/LANDSCAPE

As debris from the ship tumbles down onto one of several huge mountains of junk that loom 800 hundred feet above a windswept terrain dimly lit by four pale suns, the bays close, and the rusty GARBAGE SHIP glides away.

Still the cascade of machines and other bulky junk THUNDERS down the steep slopes, shattering, breaking into parts, tumbling and tumbling, settling here and there, while a SCREAMING WIND, very powerful, picks off the lighter pieces and carries them off like snow blowing off a mountain.

The familiar-looking container somersaults halfway down the slope where it bursts open, spilling a confusion of junk.

Above the container, a huge drum smashes into a hunk of machinery and splits, oozing an awful looking liquid that spills down onto the contents of the container, sizzling and smoking on steel, eating it like acid.

Not far from a smoking piece of steel, WE FIND TODD'S foot protruding from the junk heap! It's motionless! Acid drips and hisses.

ANGLE ON TODD, sprawled "inside" the mountain of junk, grimacing in pain as acid hits his exposed foot. Trapped in the debris, battered and bloody and weak, he struggles to move, fights the heavy objects pinning him, fights to avoid the dripping acid. As the wind SCREAMS furiously, he continues to struggle against the junk that pins him, as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE MOUNTAIN - DAY - A LITTLE LATER

TODD's head, caked with blood, appears from the junk like a man looking out of a cave. Wind seizes at his hair furiously.

He looks up, sees four pale suns in the sky...just as a huge steel lathe comes somersaulting down from above like a loose boulder, and TODD has to duck hastily to avoid certain death.

As the heavy steel tumbles down the slope below him, wind plucks a twelve-foot I-beam from the slope next to him and whips it off in a frenzy.

Holding on for dear life, TODD looks down at the ground four hundred feet below and sees a bleak wasteland strewn with junk shifting and skittering in the wind.

He notices something and reacts.

Far down on the floor there is a strange pattern of lines...and moving along one of the lines are four tiny FIGURES...they could be humans...but maybe not!

For a moment TODD watches them.

Then he starts to climb downward through the labyrinth of junk "inside" the mountain, and we...

CUT TO:

EXT. LOWER ON JUNK MOUNTAIN - DAY - MINUTES LATER

Far down the slope, perhaps forty feet from the foot of the massive mountain, TODD's head pokes out of the confusion of junk and he looks down at the FIGURES below.

Seen more closely, the FIGURES are more distinct, but no less mysterious. Heavy outer garments like huge parkas and hoods blur their individual shapes as they inch across the landscape, apparently clutching one of several crisscrossing wires that stretch tautly for miles across the bleak terrain like "roads" through the wind.

TODD watches as one of the FIGURES moves off the "road." He's trailing rope that attaches him to the others as he struggles through the wind, walking almost on all fours like an ape.

TODD watches the FIGURE moving among bits of junk until he locates something he wants, picks it up, and starts to struggle back toward the others, dragging his burden after him.

TODD is watching what would seem to be some sort of scavenging process by these strange unearthly FIGURES as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. FADING SUNS - DUSK - LATER

The four suns are changing color, dimming in the sky, as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. LANDSCAPE AND JUNK MOUNTAIN - DUSK

Tiny in the distance, the four FIGURES are moving together along a cable, headed away from the junk mountain.

At ground level now, TODD is watching them, crouched behind a massive transformer that teeters slightly in the wind in spite of its great bulk.

Peeking around the sheltering transformer, he spots one of the taut cables lashed to an enormous piece of junk near the foot of "his" mountain. The cable is twenty yards away in a "canyon" of junk and he'll have to move across open space partially exposed to the wind in order to get to it.

He starts out from behind the transformer...

WHOOOOOO! Screaming wind lifts him and hurls him thirty feet, his arms flailing. He comes down even further from the cable, struggling to keep on his feet. Gritting his teeth, he fights the wind, struggles toward the cable.

Suddenly a chunk of steel whips at him and he ducks just in time as it whistles close to his head.

TODD drops to the ground and starts to crawl "under the wind," toward the taut cable, and we...

CUT TO:

EXT. STEEL HENGE - DUSK - LATER

Seen by TODD, the four tiny FIGURES are far ahead, disappearing in the distance and the dusk.

Following them on a taut wire, TODD is passing through a barren landscape punctuated by strange ruins, great shapes of steel thrusting out of the ground and looming over and around him, vaguely recognizable as the wreckage of a space vehicle that must have crashed long ago.

The mountains of junk squat a mile behind him. He's come a long way, it's almost dark, he's weak.

He hangs onto the wire, walking with effort.

He can no longer see the creatures ahead of him on the wire.

He notices something thirty yards off the wire to the right.

Steel crosses. Maybe a hundred of them. A cemetery.

Just then, the wind catches TODD, yanks him, but he hangs onto the wire, holding on desperately as the wind pulls at him and makes him flap like a pennant in the breeze.

Then the wind dies enough for him to get both hands on the wire and get weakly to his feet. For a moment he looks like he might collapse, but he doesn't, and we...

CUT TO:

EXT. LANDSCAPE - NIGHT

At night the four suns glow darkly like night lights.

TODD is alone on the planet, punished by the savage wind, struggling along the wire, shivering.

Every step is an effort, but the eyes stare into the dark and they reveal no emotion, not even when he suddenly tenses, seeing something ahead.

In the distance a faint light glows.

TODD considers it as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. WINDOW/SKYLIGHT - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

The window is detached plexi from some kind of vehicle, embedded in a low mound of "earth" like a skylight. Whatever is making the light comes from below in a sort of hut that slopes only inches above the ground.

TODD is hanging onto the cable only ten yards from the strange window. He can see more of them glowing all around him, as well as silhouetted pipes issuing smoke to the wind.

TODD drops to his belly to keep under the wind. He crawls ten yards to the window and peers through it.

TODD'S POV of a fantastic confusion of color and movement seen through the thick scratched plexiglass window. The wild blurs of activity make no sense to him whatsoever, nor do the very FAINT SQUEALS of sound barely audible over the deafening ROAR of the wind.

(What he's seeing in the room below is a violent pillow fight between eight BOYS and GIRLS ranging from four to ten years old. Wearing cotton shifts dyed red, blue, or yellow they're smacking each other violently with rag pillows and laughing happily in a dormitory-style full of stacked bunks.)

ANGLE ON TODD, prone on the "roof," mystified. He's never seen anything like it. His grease-covered face barely reveals his puzzlement when he is suddenly distracted by a change in the wind.

The ROARING WIND that has dominated the environment since he first arrived has diminished to a strong breeze.

TODD tries sitting up. The breeze doesn't overpower him. He looks around.

The meaningless SHRIEKS of the pillow fight, though still muffled by heavy plexiglass, are LOUDER now, but TODD's attention is on the other window/skylight that glows from this strange "roof" and on the strange sound that's coming to him, borne on the breeze... a MUSICAL sound.

Struggling weakly to his feet, TODD staggers toward the next window. The MUSIC is LOUDER as he approaches -- it's waltz music played on an accordion.

TODD drops to his knees and peers through the next window.

TODD'S POV through the second "window," another mysterious vision! The color and movement are more subdued, but TODD is just as puzzled.

What he's seeing indistinctly through the thick plexiglass is an OVERHEAD VIEW of a man and a woman gliding across the floor, moving as one, first this way, then that, in time to a WALTZ. In the corner, another person is making a strange movement that seems to initiate the music...

ANGLE ON TODD, flat on the roof. Now that the weak breeze has given way to a deathly stillness, the mysterious (to him) MUSIC is clearly audible as TODD peers through the plexiglass at the warm scene below, as puzzled by the waltzing couple as by the pillow fights.

Then he gets to his feet again and in the stillness makes his way past a smoking chimney toward the next window. Halfway there he freezes...listening!

A strange haunting WHISTLING sound is coming from somewhere...

TODD looks around at the blackness beyond the roof windows. There's nothing visible...

The mysterious sound is louder now, drowning out the music ominously, drowning out everything, everything, everything.

Suddenly TODD understands, but he's too late...

ROOOOOOOOOOAAAR! It's the WIND, back with renewed fury, more powerful than ever!

TODD is hurtled into the air, tossed head over heels by the wind, struggling, clutching at empty air in vain, buffeted, slammed to the ground, lifted again before he can flatten himself, tossed violently, somersaulted helplessly...

EXT. INSIDE A TRENCH

WHAM! TODD is slammed face first to the ground. For a long moment he's motionless, untouched by the HOWLING WIND for reasons that aren't clear.

Finally he rolls over weakly and looks up.

In the weak light he can just make out the steep earthen walls of a narrow trench looming eight feet straight up, protecting him from the wind howling overhead.

TODD tries to get up...but the fall has injured his leg and he slumps to the floor of the three-foot-wide trench, too weak and injured even to crawl.

Lying there, barely conscious, gasping for breath, he suddenly sees something...

Shoes! Less than a foot from his bloody face.

He manages to lift his head a little and look up.

Silhouetted by the light spilling from an open door in the trench wall are four children...ELLEN, ten, WILL, six, TOMMY, five, and JOHNNY, eight.

Barely conscious, TODD can just make out the astonishment on their blurred shadowy faces as they look down at him in amazement. Then they go OUT OF FOCUS altogether as TODD slumps unconscious and everything goes BLACK BLACK BLACK, and we...

CUT TO:

INT. MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

VOICES, CONFUSION. About fifty people are jammed into the low-ceilinged meeting room, all of them talking at once. They are PIONEERS, men and women of all ages and many races, a hardy, weathered-looking group dressed in plain clothes of muted color.

Their faces seem to have been etched by the wind with deep lines, the skin burnished, and even the younger ones have crow's feet around the eyes from squinting.

As they chatter excitedly, asking each other what happened, who found him, where, and so on, a sharp-faced fifty-ish woman, HAWKINS, is standing behind a table in the front of the room, calling for order.

HAWKINS

Please! Quiet, please!

Just as the hubbub finally dies down, a grizzled pioneer named SLADE bellows loudly at her.

SLADE

Just tell me one thing! How many of
then are there and are they armed?

HAWKINS stares SLADE down, refusing to speak until she has real silence. When she finally speaks, her voice is calm and controlled.

HAWKINS

There is a man...one man. He was found in the trench by several children...

A sudden murmur dies away quickly under HAWKINS' hard stare.

HAWKINS

The man was not armed.

A murmur goes through the crowded room, then a woman named ELISE speaks over the hum of voices...

ELISE

How could there only be one? How could he get here?

HAWKINS glances toward MACE, a muscular, bearded man, about thirty.

MACE

He was unconscious. We couldn't ask him anything. He --

A commotion in the back room causes MACE to break off as JIMMY PIG, a clean-shaven burly-looking pioneer in his thirties, pushes his way in, followed by four more PIONEERS. All five of them are wearing their huge hooded parkas, strange Eskimo-type wind goggles, and carrying weapons.

JIMMY PIG

Nothin' out there. We couldn't see nobody, couldn't see no ship, no vehicles, nothin'...plus the wind's up again real strong.

An excited hubbub. HAWKINS is trying to restore order when SLADE shouts over the commotion.

SLADE

They're hiding, I bet.

HAWKINS ignores him as she speaks with firm authority.

HAWKINS

Let's everybody calm down right now!
(beat; silence; then)

We have an injured man among us. One man. A traveler. Unarmed.

(another pause; then)

We all want to do the decent thing.

The decent thing is to help him.

Mace's wife, Sandra, is looking after him now. Now, I'd like a vote of support on this course of action from all of you.

The way she says it, you know she's used to getting her way, and, in fact, PIONEERS are exchanging glances and nodding when SLADE shouts again.

SLADE

You keep an eye on him, Mace! You watch him!

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

TODD is on his back in a bed in a tiny earth-walled bedroom. He stares stupidly at the woman bending over him. She is SANDRA, a woman of twenty-five who is attractive, but not in a glamorous way. It's a very natural beauty worn with intelligence and dignity. She's wiping away blood and grease from TODD's face.

TODD's eyes flick around the room even as he lies motionless.

He sees a window high on one wall.

He sees old-fashioned magazine pictures and bits of patterned material hung here and there for decoration.

Clothing hangs from pegs on the walls.

He doesn't see the look in SANDRA's eyes as she discovers the savage scar on his forehead or the sergeant's tattoo on his cheek. Eyeing these telltale marks, SANDRA pours liquid into a spoon and holds it to his lips.

SANDRA

Want to try some more of this?

TODD swallows weakly.

SANDRA smiles, stands up, moves toward the door.

SANDRA

You rest now. I'll give you more later.

TODD watches her exit.

He hears her VOICE in the next room...a low murmur.

He's looking around again when a NOISE makes him look back toward the door.

A two-year-old is crawling into the room on hands and knees. The baby boy, NATHAN, stops just inside, seeing TODD in the bed.

NATHAN looks into TODD's eyes with childlike interest and wonder. TODD meets the look with those blank soldier's eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM

A second tiny room next to the bedroom is the rest of the Mace/Sandra/Nathan living quarters. MACE and SANDRA are deep in conversation.

MACE

What do you mean he's survived worse?
Did he say something?

SANDRA

No, but he's covered with old wounds,
all sorts of scars. Knife scars,
bullet scars, burns.

MACE

(worried)
A soldier!

SANDRA

There are words on his shoulder.
Tannhauser Gate, the Argentine Sector,
Montana, Bolivia, Shanghai 2012...

MACE

The Tannhauser Gate was a battle...

MACE and SANDRA look into each other's eyes, very worried.
Then...

SANDRA

We'll have to sleep on the floor.

MACE

(suddenly alarmed)
Where's Nathan?

MACE is looking around. He spots the open door to the bedroom,
hurries to it, and disappears.

SANDRA starts after him, looking worried...but before she
gets to the door, MACE reappears with NATHAN safely in his
arms.

MACE

If there's any danger to Nathan --

SANDRA

(interrupting grimly)
I won't permit danger to Nathan.

MACE and SANDRA lock eyes in firm understanding as we...

CUT TO:

INT. WAR SHIP - DAY

EXPLOSION! SCREAMS! SMOKE! A SIREN! We're in some kind of war ship in outer space during a battle.

The interior is a lot like the interior of a submarine, cramped even in the best conditions and right now the conditions are awful as SOLDIERS in bulky space suits stumble through thick smoke while a SIREN WHOOPS urgently and wounded SOLDIERS scream in agony.

WHOOOOM! Another EXPLOSION! SCREAMING METAL!

Part of the bulkhead is shot away and the suction is like wind, ripping SOLDIERS out of the hole into space.

We FOCUS ON a soldier in a space suit who's wedged himself behind a cannon. As we look closely at his visor, we recognize TODD who's firing back at the enemy while all around him SOLDIERS are screaming and dying as we...

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

SUDDEN SILENCE! TODD blinks awake. He looks around.

It's the same bedroom, but morning light is streaming in the high window.

He can hear SOUNDS...LAUGHTER...coming from beyond the door.

INT. OTHER ROOM

NATHAN is wobbling forward with wide eyes as MACE holds one of his hands and SANDRA holds the other. They're teaching the child to walk, encouraging each step. But when they let go, NATHAN totters forward only one step before landing flat on his ass. MACE and SANDRA laugh, making the whole thing a game, and NATHAN, after a moment of confusion, joins in the laughter. It's a warm moment until SANDRA, sensing a presence, turns toward the bedroom, suddenly serious.

MACE follows her look.

TODD is standing in the doorway, supporting himself on the door frame, his soldier's eyes full of unspoken menace... one leg heavily bandaged.

SANDRA

(nervous)

You must be...you must be feeling better.

TODD says nothing. His eyes flick to NATHAN.

MACE is watching TODD sharply.

MACE

We're teaching the boy to walk.

SANDRA

(nervously filling
silence)

He's late learning. He was sick for
a long time.

TODD says nothing. His eyes follow MACE who's gone to the corner where he's seizing a heavy metal rod that might be a weapon.

TODD tenses. Ready. Dangerous.

As MACE turns toward him, MACE doesn't notice the danger in TODD'S eyes.

MACE

I got something for you.

He innocently approaches with the metal rod.

Super alert, TODD watches MACE hold the rod out to him.

MACE

Here.

TODD looks mistrustful.

MACE

Like this.

MACE demonstrates, using the rod like a cane.

MACE

See?

Expressionless, TODD watches MACE use the cane.

MACE

Practice with it. In a day or two
maybe you'll be strong enough to go
out to the garden with Sandra.

MACE never even realizes how much danger he was in.

CUT TO:

INT. OTHER ROOM - DAY - A LITTLE LATER

TODD's heavy boots come close to NATHAN, the cane clumps down, just missing him.

NATHAN looks up with open-mouthed innocence and childlike wonder at TODD who looks past him, walking very cautiously with the help of a cane.

TODD looks down at NATHAN. Their eyes meet for a moment.
TODD is wearing one of the heavy parkas the pioneers wear.

SANDRA answers a KNOCK at the door, opens it, revealing ELLEN, the ten-year-old, in the doorway. Behind her are JOHNNY and WILL, as well as several other CHILDREN of various ages.

ELLEN

I came for Nathan.

But ELLEN's eyes are on TODD and so are the others crowding behind her to peep over her shoulder. They all want to get a look at TODD, but when he looks in their direction, they retreat shyly.

SANDRA is wearing a parka too. She picks up NATHAN from where he's sitting near TODD's feet and carries him to the door, giving him a kiss, then handing him to ELLEN.

NATHAN starts to cry and holds his arms out to his mother as ELLEN hugs him and comforts him.

TODD watches the drama as ELLEN and SANDRA comfort the child and soothe his fears at being separated from his mother.

Nothing shows in TODD's eyes...but affection seems to fascinate him.

As ELLEN and her cohorts hurry off with NATHAN, they sneak over-the-shoulder glances at the strange monster, TODD.

Just then MACE, dressed in a heavy parka also, comes out of the bedroom and heads for the door.

MACE

Let's go. Come on, Sergeant.

MACE is heading out the door as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. INSIDE THE TRENCH - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

Single-file, a dozen PIONEERS move along a trench as the wind SCREAMS overhead.

We DISCOVER the cane and boots of TODD among them. The MAN in front of TODD glances back at him occasionally, curious, while MACE and SANDRA walk behind him.

As they pass huts, there are windows high in one sloping wall of the trench. TODD doesn't notice the distorted faces of the CHILDREN peering out at him, their noses pressed against the plexiglass, full of curiosity as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. A JUNCTION OF TRENCHES - DAY

Three trenches meet. Some of the PIONEERS move off to the left, some to the right. MACE is going left, but SANDRA guides TODD toward the right with her.

SANDRA

This way...

MACE gives her a wave. He waves at TODD too. TODD looks confused at the wave, then he salutes.

MACE is startled by that. He sort of grins as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. GARDEN - DAY - LATER

A nasty little snake, a ten-inch VIPER, slithers through the dirt among the neat rows of seedlings growing there until...

SQUASH! One neat blow from the sharp edge of a trowel decapitates the VIPER.

SANDRA flips the still wriggling thing aside and wipes her trowel clean in the dirt as TODD watches with those blank snake eyes of his.

They're on all fours in a garden. The garden is simply a much wider trench covered by a trellis so the light can be regulated. There are already neat rows of vegetables are growing. Behind them, kneeling PIONEERS are planting new seedlings and weeding around more mature plants.

SANDRA turns back to place a seedling in the dirt with only an offhand glance at the dead VIPER.

SANDRA

You have to watch out for them. They probably wouldn't kill someone your size, not if you were healthy anyway. But they'd make you pretty sick. Someone smaller...like me, or a child...

Her meaning clear, SANDRA continues to demonstrate to TODD how to plant the seedling in the earth.

SANDRA

In a month this one will be as big as those.

TODD follows her look to the other side of the trench where the plants are already eighteen inches high.

Other PIONEERS, working on their hands and knees also, are sneaking glances at TODD, among them, a middle-aged woman named JUDITH and an older woman, EMMA.

SANDRA frowns one of their looks away protectively as she selects another seedling from a tray and hands it to TODD.

SANDRA

Here. You try one.

TODD looks at it. He doesn't exactly look scared, but he handles it gingerly, seemingly intimidated by the delicate seedling. He starts to plant it carefully as we...

CUT TO:

INT. DINING COMMONS - EVENING

Jabbering VOICES, the click of utensils. Heaping plates of food are being passed the length of long tables set up in communal style. JOHNNY is kicking ELLEN under the table, WILL flips a piece of food at TOMMY when his mother, ILONA, isn't looking, and the outspoken SLADE is lecturing a pioneer named CHESTER.

SLADE

You can't talk to a soldier no more than you can talk to a...a...bomb! Or a bullet! They're trained, they're killing machines. They got an objective and they go after that objective and nothing stops them but killing them.

CHESTER

(a glance over his shoulder)

Just one? To kill us all?

The conversation gets the attention of JOHNNY and WILL who stop food-fighting to listen to the adults talk.

SLADE

First off, if there's one, there's more. That's how it is, soldiers travel in bunches. Second, they don't waste soldiers on folks like us, that's for police! Training soldiers to kill weaklings like us is not what they call "cost effective."

CHESTER

Then who do they fight?

SLADE

Other soldiers! There's a saying, "Soldiers deserve soldiers."

ANGLE ON ILONA noticing WILL and TOMMY listening.

ILONA

Slade, hush up.

ANGLE ON TOMMY and WILL glancing toward the next table.

ANGLE ON THE NEXT TABLE where TODD, wedged between SANDRA and MACE, is eating like a machine, looking neither right nor left as people jabber all around him.

ANGLE ON JUDITH whispering to EMMA at a nearby table as she watches TODD eat.

JUDITH

You see how much he's eating?

ANGLE ON SLADE who turns now and boldly addresses TODD across the gap between the tables...

SLADE

I don't see how you can not remember
how you got here, Sergeant.

There's a sudden hush in the noisy room, broken only by a few urgent whispers and a cough.

TODD looks up from his food and meets SLADE'S look.

SANDRA scowls at SLADE as SLADE persists...

SLADE

You're not a deserter, are you...
Sergeant?

The silence is even more charged than before.

SANDRA looks alarmed. Someone coughs. The tension is unbearable.

TODD

No, sir.

A sigh of relief from everybody! But SLADE presses on.

SLADE

Then how come you're not with your
unit?

JIMMY PIG

Oh, come on, Slade, let the man eat.

SLADE

It's not an unreasonable question.
(to Todd)
How about it, Sergeant?

ANGLE ON TODD, actually struggling with the question... remembering. Suddenly he blurts...

TODD

I was...replaced.

MACE

Replaced?

TODD hesitates for half a second before answering.

TODD

By a better soldier, sir.

There are looks exchanged among the PIONEERS as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

A little seedling is fitted into the earth gently. TODD's strong hands pat the earth around it.

TODD reaches for another seedling. He's one of a group of ten PIONEERS, all on their hands and knees, all working intently, silently. They seem to have accepted him. Nobody stares.

TODD is carefully putting the next seedling in the ground when something causes him to look up.

Five ENEMY SOLDIERS in torn and dirty uniforms are looming over him, weapons pointed at him. All around them is a desert of sand stretching forever under a baking sun.

One of the soldiers kicks TODD.

ANGLE ON EMMA, JUDITH, and several other PIONEER WOMEN exchanging nervous glances as they look back to where TODD's kneeling.

There are no soldiers...but somehow, he's trampled several rows of seedlings.

TODD looks toward them, confused, disoriented by his "memory."

The women look away quickly, frightened, and we...

CUT TO:

INT. OTHER ROOM - NIGHT

SANDRA is changing NATHAN's diaper as she chatters, her back to TODD.

SANDRA

...And it got worse and worse. My father hadn't had any work in three months and...also...there were other things...violence... political feelings. My father said he'd heard it was better in the Trinity moons.

(MORE)

SANDRA (CONT'D)

A lot of other people must have had the same idea because the ship was jammed with people...mostly families. That's probably why it broke down...overloaded.

SANDRA

Across the room, TODD, wearing a T-shirt and baggy pants, is sitting on a stool, his face impassive as ever.

As SANDRA talks, her back to him, TODD's eyes are on the contours of her body against the shift she's wearing. It's very...erotic.

SANDRA

Even after they made the repairs, it barely got off the ground, it was an old converted mining transport, a piece of junk to start with. It just...dropped. Maybe you saw what's left of it...out there in the wind. A lot of people died. And we couldn't make any radio contact... So we were stuck here. Nobody was happy about it. A few years later, when the dumpers started coming over and dropping stuff, people tried to get their attention with explosions and fires. But it didn't work. They must be unmanned...or they just don't care. Maybe they think we're garbage too!

TODD'S face is as inexpressive as ever while his eyes caress the shape of her body...and she, unaware, continues to reminisce.

SANDRA

So there really wasn't any choice. People had to pull together and make the best of it. We became a...community.

As SANDRA maneuvers NATHAN, TODD catches glimpses of her breasts pushing against the material of the shift. She continues, still not noticing where his attention is.

SANDRA

One good thing...nobody bothers us. Who'd want to fight over a godforsaken place like this?

A wry laugh. She turns to put NATHAN down on the floor and catches TODD's eyes just as he shifts them quickly from her breasts.

For a moment it's awkward...she looks at him...then she recovers.

SANDRA

I guess that's what you like! The fighting, I mean. The wars.

(unsure, a question really)

You must...you're a soldier...

TODD doesn't answer, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR (AND MEETING ROOM) - DAY

The CHILDREN are peeking around a doorway, watching something in the meeting room.

HAWKINS, coming along the dirt-walled corridor, spots the CHILDREN ahead.

HAWKINS

You children are supposed to be doing lessons.

The CHILDREN barely acknowledge her as she comes even with them. She looks at what they're looking at.

What they're seeing through the doorway is TODD, shirtless, doing an eerie sequence of tai chi exercises. His muscular body ripples, revealing an incredible map of scar tissue that speaks eloquently of the life he's led...gash marks, long zippers of stitches, the puckered patches of burns.

HAWKINS watches for a long moment, her eyes worried.

In the midst of a slow graceful movement, TODD suddenly whirls and delivers a lightning blow to an unseen enemy with amazing speed and fury, the terrible force contained in the movement all too obvious.

Even as HAWKINS and the CHILDREN gasp silently, TODD returns to the graceful, almost balletic movement, even spookier now, that preceded the deadly thrust.

The CHILDREN's eyes are like saucers, their jaws agape.

HAWKINS shudders...and breaks the hypnotic spell, speaking aloud to the children.

HAWKINS

Lessons.

CUT TO:

EXT. INSIDE TRENCH - NIGHT

It's dark, the wind's HOWLING just above the trench walls as TODD peers into a faintly lighted window in the wall of the trench [...]

TODD's POV THROUGH THE BEDROOM WINDOW reveals a tender moment between MACE and SANDRA as they enter the bedroom and kiss. A flickering candle on a low table, the only light, exaggerates their shadows.

ANGLE ON TODD, his face revealing no feelings as he turns away.

Light spills from other windows, some more brightly lit, as TODD begins to jog along the trench, gradually picking up speed, until he's running hard through intermittent pools of light in the maze of dark trenches.

CUT TO:

EXT. BARREN WASTE - DAY

Stillness! No wind! Everything is quiet.. Bits of junk are strewn across the landscape under the four suns.

MACE'S VOICE (O.S.)

She's down now, but she'll come up again. Always does.

EXT. INSIDE A TRENCE

As MACE continues talking to TODD, he loads the pockets of his heavy parka with miscellaneous hunks of metal.

MACE

(continuing)

That's why we're weighing down. And that's why we're always on the wire even when the wind's down, like now. You don't get much warning. Here, load up, you'll want the weight, I promise.

MACE hands heavy hunks of metal to TODD who's wearing a parka like MACE'S. He pockets the metal obediently.

Behind them a small crowd of PIONEERS are doing the same: JIMMY PIG, SLADE, CHESTER, RED, a woman named SALLY and several OTHERS. In addition to the parkas, they wear eskimo-style eye-protectors and carry canteens, tools, and coils of rope attached to various parts of their outfits.

ANGLE ON MACE noticing TODD eyeing the rifle JIMMY PIG is carrying.

MACE

Oh, we're not going to shoot anything. That's not what we mean by "hunting."

(then, laughing, to Jimmy)

Jimmy Pig, you're not going to shoot anything, are you?

JIMMY PIG

(laughing)

What could I hit?

MACE

(to Todd)

It's how we call for help. Two shots.
There'll be someone on duty, listening
in case we get off the wire and get
lost or something. We have flares
too. Come on.

Other are already climbing the ladder out of the trench to the surface above as MACE urges TODD to follow.

CUT TO:

EXT. STEEL HENGE - DAY

It's very still, no wind. The little group of PIONEERS is moving along a wire that passes close to the towering ruins of the wrecked spaceship. They are tiny figures in the vast landscape.

CLOSER ON TODD AND MACE as they plod along in the line of PIONEERS. MACE indicates the wreck off to the right.

MACE

Sandra said she told you how we wound
up here. Our parents and so on.

(turning left,
indicating)

Over here, we call these "catcher
trenches."

TODD follows his look to a long open trench leading, apparently, nowhere.

MACE

(continuing)

Smaller stuff that blows across the
ground, it falls in these trenches,
it works sort of like a filter. We
go through the trenches sometimes
and get some good stuff.

As they pass close along the trench, TODD looks in and observes the trench is knee deep in muddy water with rusty machine parts and assorted junk protruding.

MACE chuckles at the sight.

MACE

We try to work 'em when they're dry.
It's lousy going in there when they're
flooded. You can see...

A sudden SHOUT, "HETTUP! YO!" Distracted- [...]

TODD looks forward, sees RED pointing to a chunk of steel a hundred yards off the wire.

ANGLE ON JIMMY PIG, already fastening his safety rope and a second rope to the wire, then heading off toward the piece of steel, trailing the two ropes.

ANGLE ON MACE, explaining the procedure to TODD.

MACE

Whatever looks useful, if we can get a rope to it, we'll go for it. But you can't ever go further than your safety line because it'll come up on you with sometimes maybe ten seconds or even less.

TODD is watching JIMMY PIG as he approaches the piece of steel and starts to attach his rope to it.

MACE

Like right now. You hear that?

TODD listens.

Nothing at first...then a very faint WHISTLING. The sound he heard that first night when he was on the settlement "roof."

MACE

It's close when you hear that.

TODD can see JIMMY PIG. He's attached the rope to the steel and he gives a signal.

As PIONEERS start to haul on the line, pulling the steel toward them, MACE shouts at JIMMY PIG.

MACE

SHE'S GONNA BLOW, JIMMY.

JIMMY waves, starts back toward them.

MACE indicates for TODD to help haul the steel and the two of them are just joining in the effort when...

WHOOOOOOOOOO! THE WIND IS SUDDEN AND FEROCIOUS! IT STAGGERS THEM!

MACE

GRAB ON, SERGEANT!

TODD follows MACE'S example and, like the others, grabs the wire and hangs on as the wind SCREAMS and tears at them.

One of the pioneers, CHESTER, shouts, points.

They all see JIMMY PIG being blown faster than he can run, his legs churning desperately to keep up with his wind-propelled body. To no avail! He's suddenly airborne, his legs still churning like cartoon legs as he flaps helplessly at the end of his safety tether like a kite, fifty feet in the air.

An eighty-pound steel barrel blows past, tumbling in the wind. Bits of junk zip dangerously around like missiles.

ANGLE ON THE PIONEERS, crouched low on their knees against the wind, clutching the wire with one hand while they pull on JIMMY PIG'S safety line. But the wind is too strong...until suddenly TODD is pulling, and TODD'S strength makes the difference... slowly JIMMY PIG is pulled toward them...and PIONEERS exchange amazed glances at TODD'S strength.

As he pulls, TODD notices what the others don't...

ANGLE ON THE RIFLE dropped by JIMMY PIG, ten yards away.

ANGLE ON JIMMY PIG as he's hauled safely in to the group of PIONEERS who clap him on the back and hug him. CHESTER is laughing so hard he can barely stand up as he tries to describe and mimic JIMMY'S desperate effort to outrun the force of the wind...

CHESTER
(shouting, guffawing)
JIMMY...RUNNING...CAN'T.. .HA HA
CAN'T.. .KEEP UP WITH HIMSELF... HA
HA HA...

CHESTER breaks off, suddenly sober, staring off, and the others turn to see what he's looking at. Everybody stops laughing.

ANGLE ON TODD, carefully moving away from the wire to retrieve the rifle!!! The WIND is dropping off some, enough to stand.

ANGLE ON MACE and the other PIONEERS reacting with alarm at the sight of TODD picking up the rifle.

ANGLE ON TODD as he turns, rifle in hand.

TODD'S POV of the PIONEERS staring at him, the WIND diminishing further.

ANGLE ON TODD locking toward them. Nothing shows on his face.

ANGLE ON SLADE looking sour. Trouble! Just what he expected.

ANGLE ON MACE, taking a deep breath, smiling as he moves toward TODD, holding out his free hand for the rifle...

MACE
Uh, thanks, Sergeant. Thanks a lot...

But MACE breaks off, realizing that TODD'S attention is elsewhere.

TODD is beyond MACE toward the landscape.

MACE (and the other PIONEERS) turn to see what TODD'S looking at.

ANGLE ON THE "JUNK MOUNTAINS" in the distance, several miles off, where, hovering high above the junk mountains, an ancient DUMPER SHIP issues a steady stream of metal and concrete debris onto the junk heaps far below. The faint THUNDER of the refuse tumbling onto the steep slopes is just audible over the SOUND of the wind.

CLOSE ON TODD, as he realizes how he got here.

ANGLE ON MACE, reacting to TODD'S intense interest.

MACE

Dumpers. They come every twenty or thirty days.

As TODD turns and looks at MACE, MACE puts out his hand again for the gun.

TODD seems to notice the weapon in his hand for the first time. Unhesitatingly, he hands the rifle to MACE...

As MACE casually takes the weapon, the PIONEERS breathe a sigh of relief, grinning again as the tension eases.

TODD has turned his gaze back to the DUMPER SHIP, fascinated. So that's what they did to him!

Just then, JIMMY PIG claps TODD heartily on the shoulder.

JIMMY PIG

Thanks, partner. These no-goods woulda just let me blow away.

TODD, reacting to the smack on his shoulder, looks at JIMMY PIG like what was that? Are you hitting me?

But all the PIONEERS are gathering around TODD in such a jovial manner that the puzzled soldier sort of understands this isn't an attack.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE (OTHER WORLD) - NIGHT

A CHRISTMAS TREE! The corny little tree with plastic needles, blinking lights, and topped with a super cute angel is only a foot high. It's sitting on CHURCH'S cluttered desk next to framed photographs of CHURCH'S wife and children. We can hear MEKUM'S voice badly transmitted...

MEKUM (V.O.)

Sorry to disturb the tranquillity of outer space on Christmas Eve, but I'm off to the Caribbean in a few hours, and I wanted to make sure you'd got the transmission on the security sweep.

Glowering at the monitor where MEKUM's badly transmitted VIDEO IMAGE is quivering and distorting, CHURCH waves the print-out map he's holding in his hand, a map showing hundreds of little dots against a vast field, stars and moons in the vast sea of space. RUBRICK and SLOAN watch as CHURCH addresses MEKUM's image indignantly.

CHURCH

We got it all right. This is an outpost here, not the Third Army! You've got us securing thirty-four locations and erecting monitor units in one month and --

MEKUM

(interrupting)

Piece of cake, guys! These are totally remote, totally uninhabited territories. All you do is set down, send out a patrol purely as a formality, then have those veterans of yours put up an A-Type unmanned monitoring unit. You should be on about number twenty-five by the time I get back from my vacation...

CHURCH

What if we do run into people... say squatters or refugees?

MEKUM

(a frown)

Well, you sure as hell don't want to get involved in evacuating people and that sort of thing.

(then, meaningfully)

My advice would be to..."avoid paperwork."

CHURCH

Eliminate them, you mean.

MEKUM

Well, no one's out there, but officially these are "hostile zones." Therefore you'd be within your rights to classify anyone as "hostile," I think. But I repeat, you should be

(MORE)

MEKUM (CONT'D)
worried about boredom, not action.
Any other questions before I go?

CHURCH hesitates. SLOAN and RUBRICK look at him. Then CHURCH blurts a question, his voice breaking...

CHURCH
Down there...is it snowing?

MEKUM
(a smirk)
Not in the Caribbean. Have a good
Christmas, guys. See you when I get
back.

MEKUM'S IMAGE disappears and the video screen goes blank, leaving a glum silence broken only by the DRUMMING of the rain on the roof.

CHURCH moodily strolls toward his desk, and his eyes go to the photographs.

His wife and children smile back at him from the pictures.

Just then SLOAN taps him, and he turns to see her handing him a cup full of amber liquid.

SLOAN
Merry Christmas, Captain.

RUBRICK is pouring another glass from a bottle of Scotch as the little tree winks on and off, and we...

CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Silence. Darkness.

Dim shapes in the darkness, hard to distinguish. Rain BEATS on the roof monotonously, relentlessly. The room is alive with BREATHING. Then we hear a MUFFLED WHOOP from outside. The darkness is suddenly tense, the BREATHING changes rhythm. The RATTLE of the door breaks the quiet. The door swings open, a flashlight stabs the dark. A woman GIGGLES: SLOAN!

The flashlight beams and wavers in the darkness, catching brief glimpses of the faces of the NEW SOLDIERS. Their eyes glitter in the lurching beam, their faces are ghostly like vampires. RUBRICK switches on a dim overhead lamp as he and SLOAN (holding the flashlight) and CHURCH stagger drunkenly into the bunkhouse, carrying a couple of half-empty bottles.

SLOAN
Hi, fellas. At ease!

RUBRICK
Merry Christmas, everybody.

Eyes riveted on the THREE OFFICERS, the NEW SOLDIERS are unresponsive to Christmas cheer. In fact, they look almost angry, like big dangerous animals, as the three OFFICERS stagger stupidly down the row of bunks, every eye following them.

CHURCH
We brought you a little Christmas tree.

CHURCH almost falls over as he places the tree on the floor.

As stone faces watch him without expression, RUBRICK waves a couple of bottles.

RUBRICK
And some good cheer.

SLOAN, giggling, does a provocative bump and grind.

SLOAN
How about some Christmas pussy, guys?
Anybody for a quick piece?

The NEW SOLDIERS don't react. Stone faces.

RUBRICK
(smirking)
That's "conduct unbecoming," Sloan.

SLOAN
It's Christmas! Haven't you heard of piece on earth? "Piece on earth," get it?

CHURCH
(suddenly serious,
sober)
Christ, I wish we were on Earth.

RUBRICK sets three bottles down and indicates them to the NEW SOLDIERS.

RUBRICK

Eat, drink, and be merry, men. For
tomorrow you go on patrol in the
"hostile zone."

RUBRICK burps stupidly as the NEW SOLDIERS stare back at him from their bunks, muscles bulging, eyes glittering, nothing but danger in their stone faces as we...

CUT TO:

INT. PIONEER MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

"JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE BELLS, JINGLE ALL THE WAY." In sharp contrast to the gloom of the soldier Christmas, the PIONEERS, MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN, are SINGING and celebrating.

There's a six-foot carved wooden tree festooned with makeshift decorations and ringed with heaps of presents in crude wrapping.

There's an appetizing looking buffet and a punchbowl.

ANGLE ON TODD seated against a wall not far from the door. He stares uncomprehendingly at the merriment all around him. What on earth is going on? What are they doing?

JIMMY PIG is marching around in a Santa Claus costume, doling out presents to ELLEN, WILL, TOMMY, JOHNNY and OTHER CHILDREN.

JIMMY PIG

HO HO HO! HO HO HO!

Passing TODD, JIMMY PIG acknowledges him with a wink and a special "HO HO HO."

TODD'S eyes give away his confusion. What the fuck is this? JIMMY PIG in a fake beard and a fake stomach? This is the craziest shit TODD has ever encountered.

ANGLE ON NATHAN, a wrapped present in hand. He hasn't a clue what it is or what he should do with it.

Laughing, MACE and SANDRA hover over him, showing him how to pull the wrapping off. Great idea! NATHAN likes pulling wrapping off! That's fun. SANDRA and MACE watch joyfully as NATHAN tears at the wrapping enthusiastically.

ANGLE ON TODD getting to his feet.

ANGLE ON NATHAN pulling away the last of the wrapping to expose a pull toy, a METAL BIRD on crude wheels made of wire and junk.

MACE takes the toy, demonstrates pulling it. The wings flap as the wheels turn!

NATHAN reacts with delight and amazement! Then grabs it!

A SUDDEN SCREECH

ANGLE ON TODD looking alarmed. He's on his way to the door, but EMMA is charging at him, SHRIEKING!!!

Not sure whether this is an attack or not, TODD watches the older woman scramble onto a stool next to him, still SHRIEKING giddily.

As TODD eyes her (and everybody else) warily, she gives him a peck on the cheek and points over head.

TODD looks up, sees a strange cloth decoration with a sign on it that says "MISTLETOE."

Means nothing to TODD. There's a burst of applause as EMMA scrambles off the stool. Somebody starts to sing "GOD REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN."

A MONTAGE OF FACES: JIMMY "SANTA" PIG, MACE, SANDRA, RED, CHESTER, SALLY, ELLEN, HAWKINS, even SLADE, SINGING.

ANGLE ON THE DOOR. No sign of TODD! Gone!

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT - MINUTES LATER

A low wind MOANS and mingles with strains of "OH, HOLY NIGHT" as TODD bellies up to the "skylight" and peers down at the scene below in the Meeting Room.

TODD'S POV THROUGH THE SKYLIGHT. The merriment has evolved into a more spiritual mood as the PIONEERS join in the solemn hymn.

But TODD spots NATHAN trying to pull his pull boy along so the wings flap. NATHAN is pretty wobbly and he goes down hard and starts to cry.

Immediately SANDRA disengages from the adults and rushes to the sobbing NATHAN and clutches him to her breast, soothing him...and MACE joins her, hovering over his son.

ANGLE ON TODD, watching. After a moment, TODD scrambles off the roof and drops into the adjoining trench while "OH, HOLY NIGHT" continues to blend with the sougning WIND.

EXT. INSIDE THE FRENCH

Lit by spill from a window in the wall of the trench, TODD starts doing push-ups. One-two-three-four-five-six-fast-fast-fast-fast.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR AND MEETING ROOM/SETTLEMENT - (ANOTHER) DAY

HAWKINS is walking along the corridor outside the meeting room when she hears strange SOUNDS. She approaches the door and looks in.

ELLEN and other CHILDREN (including NATHAN) are playing children's games on the floor, paying no attention to the source of the strange noises...JOHNNY and WILL.

JOHNNY and WILL are doing exercises, obviously inspired by TODD's martial calisthenics, and including the sudden violent movements.

As the two boys make their ritual grunting noises, HAWKINS frowns a worried frown, and we...

CUT TO:

EXT. TRENCH GARDEN - DAY

The seedlings have grown to twelve-inch stalks. SANDRA is pulling some from the ground as TODD imitates her. She shows him the fat edible root.

SANDRA

We'll eat these.

Other PIONEERS are also harvesting, with occasional glances at TODD as we...

CUT TO:

INT. OTHER ROOM - DAY

Cleaning vegetables, SANDRA is separating the roots, shaking the dirt off, cutting away the excess.

TODD is carefully following her example, cutting the stalks away with the knife.

NATHAN is tottering across the floor on a beginner's wobbly legs.

SANDRA

It seemed like he was never going to walk. Then all of a sudden...he's an expert.

Whump! NATHAN falls on his ass.

SANDRA

(a laugh)

Well, not quite an expert.

TODD watches SANDRA go to NATHAN and hug him affectionately.

Turning back to the vegetables, stone faced, TODD cuts his finger. Blood flows. He ignores it, continues working...

But SANDRA, returning to the vegetables, notices TODD's cut finger and immediately grabs a rag and takes his hand.

TODD looks startled as she takes his finger. Then, staunching the blood with the rag, she looks him in the eye, curious.

SANDRA
Sergeant Todd...what's it
like...what's it like being a soldier?

What's it like...? TODD stares at her, trying to process the question. Seeing his difficulty SANDRA tries to help...

SANDRA
What do you think about?

No answer, a stare.

SANDRA
Do you think about food? Or women?
You must think about something.

TODD gulps. His blank stare could pass for stupidity.

SANDRA
What about feelings then? You must
have feelings. You must feel
something.

TODD wets his lips. He seems about to answer...and yet it's difficult for him. He could kill a person easier.

On the floor NATHAN GOOS happily, oblivious.

TODD
(at last)
Fear.

SANDRA
(startled)
Fear! You mean...you feel afraid?
(as he nods)
That's when you're in battle... What
about other times? Now, for example?

TODD
Fear.

SANDRA
(amazed)
Now?

TODD
Always.

A stunned silence. Finally SANDRA speaks...

SANDRA
You don't...look afraid. You look
fearless.

TODD looks at her. This is incredibly difficult for him, like physical labor. He wets his lips and take a breath.

TODD
Fear and...discipline.

SANDRA
(growing horror)
Oh, my God. But there's nothing to be afraid of here. I can't hurt you. I wouldn't.

TODD
Always. It makes us...alert.

SANDRA is overwhelmed. She reaches for him, hugs him to her breast like a little baby, holding him.

But TODD is as tense in her arms as steel. He can't relax. He's even trembling.

NATHAN, on the floor, looks up, smiles innocently.

SANDRA lets go of TODD and steps back, looking at him, her face troubled, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

ELLEN is supervising block building (babysitting) with several of the younger children (OMAR, BUCKY, ANGIE and JANICE) while WILL and TOMMY play their own separate games close by. Then WILL looks up and sees something disturbing.

WILL
You're not supposed to do that anymore.

He's speaking to JOHNNY who is doing martial exercises.

JOHNNY
So what? I'm a soldier.

WILL
They're gonna kick him out.

ELLEN looks up from the blocks.

ELLEN
They can't kick him out...

WILL
They're gonna. My father --

ELLEN

(interrupting strongly)

My mother says when someone's sick or hurt, you have to help them. You don't have a choice.

JOHNNY

(getting interested)

Yeah, but what if the hurt person is...evil?

ELLEN

You still have to help them... because if you don't, you're evil!

WILL

(importantly)

My father says...uh...he says, "Soldiers deserve soldiers."

TOMMY

Yeah. That's what my father said too.

ELLEN

My father's making Sergeant Todd a scarf because he saved his life one time. He's knitting it.

WILL

That's dumb. Your father's dumb.

WILL is smirking with satisfaction at having settled that when out of nowhere ELLEN's little fist hits him hard on the nose. WILL looks stunned. Blood oozes from his nose. He starts to cry.

ELLEN looks horrified at what she's done as we...

CUT TO:

INT. OTHER ROOM - DAY

The scarf! It's been knitted with an elaborate and colorful design.

JIMMY PIG'S WIFE (O.S.)

Jimmy knitted it himself. He worked on it for two months.

SANDRA is examining the knitted scarf as JIMMY PIG and his WIFE stand in the doorway.

SANDRA

It's beautiful, Jimmy. He'll love it.

JIMMY PIG looks very embarrassed. He shrugs.

JIMMY PIG

He saved my life out there. I guess
Mace told you.

SANDRA

(nods)

You should give it to him yourself.
I think he's in the meeting room...
doing...exercises.

JIMMY PIG nods, takes the knitted scarf back from SANDRA as
we...

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY/CITY - NIGHT

Frantic CIVILIANS, mostly women and children, are illuminated
by FLASHES from rocket fire overhead as they scramble for
cover amidst heavy CROSSFIRE from automatic weapons.

A terrified LITTLE GIRL, separated from her family, seeks
shelter in a doorway when suddenly she's confronted by THREE
SOLDIERS IN RED UNIFORMS looming over her.

Looking up in abject horror, she sees a RED SOLDIER casually
pan his assault rifle, pointing the muzzle right at her from
only a foot away, unmistakably flexing to fire.

BLAM! Suddenly the RED SOLDIER is blown backwards violently,
shot in the chest.

ANGLE ON TODD, visored, in a torn black uniform, firing again.

BLAM! A SECOND RED SOLDIER goes down.

CLICK! TODD's weapon jams.

As the LITTLE GIRL, amazed to be alive, watches open mouthed,
TODD swings his weapon like a club, attacking the THIRD RED
SOLDIER before he can aim.

Then she runs, leaving TODD savagely beating the THIRD RED
SOLDIER to death.

TODD is delivering a final savage blow to the prone body
when a movement or shadow catches the corner of his eye and
he whirls savagely to defend himself from behind --

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

WHUMP! JIMMY PIG is slammed up against the wall of the meeting
room, TODD's big hand around his neck.

Gurgling desperately, his eyes popping out of his head, JIMMY
PIG stares helplessly into TODD's merciless soldier eyes and
his stone face only inches away.

TODD blinks. He sees he's got a terrified JIMMY PIG pinned to the wall, his feet dangling two feet off the floor. Slowly he lowers JIMMY PIG to the floor.

All JIMMY PIG can do is squeak desperately and point to the floor.

JIMMY PIG
Scarf! Scarf!

TODD looks down. He sees a knit scarf lying on the floor. He doesn't understand. He looks up.

He sees JIMMY PIG'S WIFE, HAWKINS, SLADE, and several other PIONEERS standing in the doorway of the meeting room, their stunned expressions indicating they just saw something horrifying.

TODD stands there, isolated, bare-chested, his huge muscles glistening with sweat, decorated with terrible scars and mysterious tattoos, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. OTHER LIVING QUARTERS - NIGHT

EVA, Johnny's mother, is reacting, horrified.

EVA
What... .? What... are...those?
Chester! CHESTER!

CHESTER, Johnny's father, rushes in to see what the commotion's about.

ANGLE ON JOHNNY in the tin cauldron that serves as a bath tub. JOHNNY'S bare chest and shoulders are covered with crude imitations of TODD'S tattoos.

JOHNNY
(sullen) Those are my war marks.
From the battles I fought.

CHESTER and EVA exchange a look.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

MACE and SANDRA are lying awake in the bed in darkness. For a long moment they're both silent with the silence that comes in a heavy moment in a conversation. Then MACE speaks, his eyes on the ceiling.

MACE
There's going to be a meeting. People
are upset about him.

SANDRA
He's not fully recovered.

MACE
That's what scares people. He gets
stronger every day.

They're both silent for a long moment. MACE has something weighing on his mind that he hesitates to say...but finally he says it.

MACE
I've caught him... sneaking looks at
you. At your body.

SANDRA
I know.

A heavy silence, then...

SANDRA
Are you afraid of him, Mace?

MACE stares at the ceiling and speaks with difficult honesty.

MACE
Yes.
(pauses, then)
God knows where he's been...or what
he's done.

Another pause before...

MACE
I've never been afraid of anyone
before...not this way. I feel he
could break me in half...with no
real effort and no real...feeling.

SANDRA
He told me he's afraid.

MACE
Maybe he is. It doesn't matter.

MACE is staring grimly at the ceiling as we...

CUT TO:

INT. WINDOWLESS CEMENT ROOM - DAY OR NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Silent and surreal, the events of 1986 continue with the PASSIVE FOUR-YEAR-OLD sitting on the floor while the AGGRESSIVE FOUR-YEAR-OLD looks down at him, and other FOUR-YEAR-OLDS gather ominously.

It's only now, as he gets to his feet, suddenly trading vicious blows with the AGGRESSIVE FOUR-YEAR-OLD that we realize that this

passive boy is FOUR-YEAR-OLD TODD. The boys don't fight like children; they don't quit or cry as the blood flows.

Highly-polished shoes, sharply creased trousers, and eyes glittering from the shadows are all that is visible of the faceless OBSERVERS who make no move to interrupt the violence.

FOUR-YEAR-OLD TODD, his nose pouring blood, exchanges savage hurtful blows with his opponent, bloodying him viciously, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. OTHER ROOM - DAY (PRESENT)

Eyes! The adult TODD blinks away the memory, stares straight ahead... into NATHAN'S face, only six inches from his own.

They're all alone in the room. It's very quiet.

NATHAN smiles a tentative smile, raises a hand, reaches out to touch TODD'S face, affectionately, curiously, testing their friendship...

ANGLE ON TODD, his eyes. Dangerous. He draws his face back enough to avoid being touched.

NATHAN looks unsure. He's used to affection. Then he realizes... it must be a game! He reaches out again...

Again TODD avoids the touch...and as he does so, something catches his eye.

TODD sees a VIPER sliding across the floor toward NATHAN.

NATHAN doesn't see it; he's still trying to figure out this game.

TODD pulls off his boot and hands it to NATHAN.

NATHAN accepts it, thinks it's a gift. He's pleased. It's that kind of game! He gives TODD a friendly "thanks for the boot" smile.

TODD points to the VIPER which is close to NATHAN now.

NATHAN looks at the VIPER. He doesn't understand what he's supposed to do.

TODD makes a hitting motion with his hand.

The VIPER is close to NATHAN, coiling.

NATHAN looks from the VIPER to TODD.

TODD indicates the VIPER with his eyes. His look is intense, a message in his eyes.

The VIPER is like a spring, it strikes...

TODD's hand is like a blur, almost invisible as he catches the snake and flips it a couple of feet.

NATHAN stares.

The angry VIPER SPITS and HISSES and coils to strike again.

NATHAN looks at TODD.

TODD eyes the boot, then indicates the VIPER with his eyes.

NATHAN frowns; he's getting the idea.

The VIPER is about to strike again...

SQUASH! A heavy boot comes down on the snake, crushing it.

TODD looks up to see MACE standing on the snake, reaching down for NATHAN. As MACE hugs the boy protectively to his chest, he glares down at TODD with eyes blazing with fury.

TODD meets the look without blinking. He never blinks.

SANDRA (O.S.)

What happened?

TODD turns to see SANDRA standing in the bedroom door, her eyes almost as hard as TODD's as we...

CUT TO:

INT. MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

TODD stares impassively as HAWKINS address him...

HAWKINS

No one here has any animosity toward you, Sergeant. None of us here is your enemy.

TODD is standing in front of the room full of grim-faced PIONEERS, all looking at him. It's like a court.

HAWKINS is flanked by MACE and SANDRA...

HAWKINS

Moreover, we respect your qualities. We have no doubt that you are a very, very good soldier.

As she speaks, TODD's blank stare considers the weathered faces of the PIONEERS facing him. He sees CHESTER, EVA, RED with his WIFE, JIMMY PIG and his WIFE, SLADE and MRS. SLADE, JUDITH, EMMA, SALLY. As HAWKINS continues, TODD's sharp eyes pick out details. He sees JIMMY PIG opening and closing his hands nervously,

He sees SLADE fingering a barely noticeable rifle barrel.
CHESTER has a weapon too.

HAWKINS (O.S.)

But, because of your training, I don't think you'll ever be able to function in a group like this, a community of vulnerable people, of families, of children, where the ability to fight is not the sole purpose of existence.

The PIONEERS are nervous, ready for trouble, afraid TODD might take this badly and fly off the handle.

As TODD's huge hand opens...and closes, their eyes are on it. He could pick up the table and hurl it at them, break men in half with his bare hands. His face is like stone, his eyes like diamond chips as he glances toward SANDRA.

TODD sees SANDRA is moved, trying to suppress her emotions, biting her lip, as HAWKINS goes on...

HAWKINS

You're different from us, Sergeant. We don't hate you for that, but we have agreed that to try to include you would pose an intolerable risk to the community itself.

MACE

We'll give you any tools you need, warm clothing, a good knife, boots...

SANDRA

(emotionally)

And if you're ever sick...or you get hurt...

MACE

You're a friend, Sergeant. It's just...

MACE doesn't finish. TODD's eyes glance again at the PIONEERS. They too seem moved, not so ready to shoot.

TODD blinks. Once. And we...

CUT TO:

EXT. INSIDE THE TRENCH - MORNING (WIND)

TODD is wrapped in a heavy parka, his mouth wrapped with the scarf JIMMY PIG knit, his eyes covered with eye protectors as MACE hands him another sack in addition to the one already over his shoulder.

MACE

If you need us...you can ask us for help.

TODD glances at the knot of PIONEERS gathered in the trench, all eyes on him. SANDRA is among them with NATHAN in her arms. For just a second TODD's eyes go to the cheerful face of NATHAN; then he turns to MACE.

MACE is startled to see TODD pull the scarf from his mouth to speak. He's never spoken before unless spoken to.

TODD

It's not true.
 (then, with great effort)
 I'm not a good soldier.

Then TODD replaces the scarf over his mouth and starts to climb out of the trench into the wind as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. LANDSCAPE (AND STEEL HENGE) - DAY - LATER

Four suns glare down from the sky onto the vast, windswept wasteland.

TODD is a tiny dot in the vastness, traveling like a bug along one of the long cables that stretches for miles and miles. He's out by the skeleton of the old ship as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER PLANET - DAY

A low slung armored vehicle on caterpillar treads RUMBLES over a steep rocky terrain faintly backlit by a cold sun that looms enormously on the horizon while giving off only a faint glow.

Hanging on to the outside of the insect-like scouting vehicle (called a "CRAWLER") are two nasty-looking NEW SOLDIERS in space suits designed for battle, their heavy rocket rifles cradled and ready, their visors blank and ominous.

INT. CRAWLER

The husky sergeant, CAINE 607, steers the vehicle and speaks into a radio mike at the same time.

CAINE 607

Crawler, Crawler to Daddy. No hostiles!

The GUNNER beside him and the NEW SOLDIERS in the back seat stare stoically out the windows as CAINE 607 replaces the mike.

INT. COCKPIT/DADDY

RUBRICK is sitting at a console cluttered with coffee cups and half-finished cheeseburgers, responding to the radio.

RUBRICK

All right, Crawler, Crawler, we got you. This is Daddy. Continue per, over.

RUBRICK turns to CHURCH who's standing in the cramped cockpit, staring out a window at the gloomy planet outside, watching the CRAWLER creep over the terrain.

RUBRICK

We're clear. We can send a crew out.

CHURCH

(bored)

Sloan's already on it.

CUT TO:

INT. CREW QUARTERS/DADDY - DAY

An oval hatch door swings open and SLOAN enters.

VETERANS in coveralls, slumped or sprawled on steel-tiered bunks, scramble obediently to their feet, eyes on SLOAN.

SLOAN

Suit up, fellas. Time to go build another play house.

As VETERANS start to pull space suits from under the bunks, SLOAN turns her back on them...but hesitates before exiting as though expecting something. Sure enough, veteran RILEY speaks up.

RILEY

Sir.

SLOAN

Yes, Riley, what is it?

SLOAN says it even before she's turned. She knew who it would be.

RILEY

We haven't been issued weapons, sir.

SLOAN

(as to a child)

You won't need weapons, Riley. You're not soldiers anymore.

RILEY
 (saluting)
 Yes, sir.

SLOAN
 You don't even have to salute anymore.
 A simple "Yes, sir" will do.

RILEY swallows hard and with effort keeps his hand from saluting as he speaks.

RILEY
 Y-yes...sir.

SLOAN turns her back and exits.

As the door closes, RILEY, unable to restrain himself any longer, salutes hastily as we...

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. COCKPIT - DAY - LATER

Through the cockpit window in the bluish glare of a work-light, VETERANS, dressed in space suits, can be seen erecting a prefab hut on the harsh moonscape.

SLOAN is watching them through the window while behind her RUBRICK lounges with his feet on the console and reads a current magazine on a VDT. CHURCH is partially visible in the background, poring over charts in the navigator's cubicle. It's very quiet until SLOAN speaks, almost to herself.

SLOAN
 Every time it's time to send them out, Riley asks about weapons. And every time I tell him they don't need weapons anymore, they're not soldiers anymore.

RUBRICK
 (eyes on VDT)
 Jesus! It says here Macy's is going out of business. Can you imagine that? New York without Macy's?

Silence. SLOAN watches the VETERANS outside through the window. They're working like a team of ants in space suits, erecting the hut.

CHURCH gets up noisily from the navigation cubicle and joins them, shaking his head.

CHURCH
 Next one's going to be a real pain in the ass.

RUBRICK

(reading, not
interested)

Yeah? What flavor pain in the ass?
Gravity pain in the ass? Atmosphere
pain in the ass?

CHURCH

How about a "gaseous currents" and
"urgent convections" pain in the
ass.

SLOAN

I think you're trying to say a "wind
pain in the ass."

RUBRICK

Wind!

CUT TO:

INT. PIPE - DAY

WIND! As the wind RAGES outside, TODD, wearing his parka, crouches over a tiny fire inside a huge open-ended pipe twelve feet in diameter. He stares at the bleak, windy landscape outside his shelter. He looks primitive, like a caveman, and very very alone as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. PIPE - DUSK

The fat section of pipe is twenty feet long squatting in the blowing litter on the grim landscape in the shadow of the junk mountains. Somehow that inanimate pipe also looks lonely in the vastness as the four suns overhead darken toward evening.

CUT TO:

EXT. STARS - NIGHT

Stars glitter behind the dimmed suns as the wind HOWLS and we...

CUT TO:

INT. PIPE - DAY

The fire is nothing but coals. TODD sits stoically over the embers, more alone than ever, chewing on a piece of dried food, part of his spartan meal.

As he chews, he stares blankly at nothing until...

A single tear crawls down one cheek.

Then another.

TODD looks like a stone statue oozing tears. He reaches up and touches the strange water with his finger, then studies the finger, as though a tear were the most remarkable thing he's ever seen. He cannot remember anything like this; he cannot remember ever having cried.

And suddenly, without warning, he's convulsed with tears, heaving with sobs, alone in the big pipe with the pitiful little fire, bawling like a baby as we...

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A VIPER writhes across the floor through the patterns of light streaming through the window, a sinister presence, full of menace and evil designs.

The VIPER winds its way toward an object that will prove in a moment to be a corner of the bed.

SMACK! The VIPER doesn't make it! SMACK! Another blow from MACE's heavy boot being swung by hand.

The VIPER coils and HISSES angrily, wounded and dangerous.

SMACK! The boot again!

NATHAN wields it awkwardly, hitting bravely at the HISSING VIPER!

SMACK! NATHAN hits again and...

MACE rolls over in the bed.

SMACK! MACE comes awake, looks around.

MACE lunges from the bed.

SMACK! Just as NATHAN gives the damaged VIPER another blow, MACE snatches the boy in his arms and yanks him away.

SANDRA sits up in bed, looking around, alarmed.

MACE is holding NATHAN, staring down at the VIPER.

The VIPER has given up the ghost, lying limply on the floor.

MACE hugs NATHAN to him and looks toward SANDRA. They both look at the boot. And at the dead VIPER.

Their eyes meet and, for a long moment, they just look at each other.

CUT TO:

INT. OTHER ROOM - DAY - A LITTLE LATER

MACE is wearing his parka, pulling on his eye protectors hurriedly as he opens the door to the corridor. SANDRA's voice makes him stop and turn to her.

SANDRA

Mace! What about the vote? Everybody voted.

Mace glares at her for a moment, knowing she's right. Then he turns away and starts out defiantly.

MACE

We voted wrong!

SANDRA looks relieved and worried at the same time and we...

CUT TO:

EXT. LANDSCAPE - DAY

This time MACE is the tiny figure struggling along the wire in the wind, alone on the vast landscape under four suns.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTER SPACE/DADDY - DAY

The military ship called "DADDY" (Defend And Attack Deployment Entity) is a big ugly insect gliding through a black silent void. On the grimy bulwark of the ship are the letters NAF followed by serial numbers and the logo of the North American Forces.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT - DAY

CLOSE ON space charts. CHURCH's finger is indicating a tiny dot on the chart surrounded by a vast sea of space.

CHURCH

It's a dump. Literally.

SLOAN and RUBRICK are looking over CHURCH's shoulder while a NEW SOLDIER sits stonefaced at the control console flying the ship.

SLOAN

No shit! We're gonna set up a monitor on a garbage dump! So we can monitor garbage rusting?

RUBRICK

Will the wind affect the patrol?

CHURCH

The Crawlers are low enough and heavy enough, they won't blow. The men should wear armored vests and carry double weapons and ammo for the weight. They may have to use lines too, like mountain climbers.

RUBRICK shakes his head, snorts disgustedly.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTER SPACE/DADDY - DAY

As the grimy skin of the ugly military ship looms across our vision, a tiny orb is visible off the bow in the distance, a remote world, destination of "DADDY" as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. CABLE/LANDSCAPE - DAY

Alone, MACE is pulling himself along the cable as the wind buffets him.

Ahead the cable stretches past the skeleton of the ship and the "catcher trenches" toward the mountains of junk towering over the flat landscape several miles off.

A heavy barrel blows by, then an old refrigerator tumbles past.

MACE squints into the wind.

Off to the right about a quarter mile away he can see a big piece of pipe...and a thin trail of smoke blowing out of the pipe and disappearing in the wind.

MACE struggles along the cable past flooded "catcher trenches" as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. PIPE/LANDSCAPE - DAY - MINUTES LATER

The pipe lies fifty yards off the cable to the right. As MACE pulls even with it, he can see right inside.

TODD is standing just inside the mouth of the pipe, looking straight out at MACE...but the light is behind him and MACE can't see TODD's face as he SHOUTS at him.

MACE

TODD! TODD!

(pauses, then)

TODD! WE WANT YOU TO COME BACK! WE MADE A MISTAKE!

MACE starts toward him, letting go of the wire, struggling in the wind.

TODD watches him come.

MACE stumbles on, dances a few feet, recovers, struggles toward TODD, SHOUTING... .

MACE

TODD! WE'RE SORRY! WE WERE WRONG!

Just then a sharp gust staggers MACE, driving him several yards toward a "catcher trench."

He's teetering on the lip of the flooded trench, about to fall in, when TODD's strong arms grab him.

They look like a strange four-footed beast as TODD drags him through the wind in an awkward "embrace" toward the cable.

Once MACE has the cable in his hands, he laughs and gasps...

MACE

Damn! Thank you, Todd. God damn! I almost took a... a...swim there!

MACE breaks off. Todd isn't listening; he's looking off toward the horizon.

MACE follows his look.

Five miles away he can see an ugly insect-shaped spacecraft descending from about ten thousand feet.

MACE

My...God! Someone's landing.

TODD doesn't answer. He's staring at the descending ship with soldier eyes and a stone face as we...

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDORS/SETTLEMENT - DAY

Excitement, confusion. PIONEERS and CHILDREN are clogging the narrow earthen corridors, shouting excitedly, hurrying outside.

SANDRA opens her door into the corridor, concerned...

SANDRA

What's going on?

JUDITH

Someone's landing! Jimmy Pig spotted a ship!

SANDRA stands there stunned as excited PIONEERS mill past her, jamming the corridor, and we...

CUT TO:

EXT. CABLE - DAY

TODD is on the cable with MACE, his eyes on the squat beetle-like object crawling slowly toward them through the junk half a mile away.

MACE

Look at that. It's some kind of vehicle. A landing party. HEY!

MACE raises his arm to wave.

Without taking his eyes off the approaching CRAWLER, TODD grabs MACE's arm and pulls it down.

MACE looks at TODD, sees the grim expression on TODD's stone face, and suddenly MACE is worried too.

INT. CRAWLER

Peering through binoculars, a soldier in the front passenger seat, the GUNNER, nudges the DRIVER and indicates something to the right.

Two tiny FIGURES in the distance on a long cable.

The driver is the beady-eyed giant, CAINE 607. Reacting to what he see, he adjusts the vehicle to the right.

EXT. CRAWLER/LANDSCAPE

Two ominous NEW SOLDIERS wearing plexi-goggles and bulky armor under their uniforms hang on the outside of the CRAWLER in the wind, their waists dangling with weapons and equipment, big rocket rifles across their chests. They're looking ahead toward the long cable, as their nasty-looking vehicle grinds slowly forward through the litter, an evil vision.

EXT. LANDSCAPE

TODD and MACE are running, TODD in the lead, buffeted by wind, struggling through a clutter of old machinery, diesel engines, turbines, scattered haphazardly on the flat desert floor.

MACE is running too, not as well, and TODD has to reach back and grab him, pull him along...

MACE

Maybe...
 (gasp)
 ...maybe...they're...
 (gasp)
 ...friendly...

INT. CRAWLER

The GUNNER works a servomotor, aiming a cannon, as he peers through a scope.

Through the scope, surrounded by digital readouts, we see two tiny running FIGURES...

EXT. CRAWLER

BALAAM! BALAAM! The CRAWLER cannon FIRES ...

EXT. LANDSCAPE

MACE screams, he's hurled wildly mid-stride, tossed ten yards.

TODD looks back, sees him lying on the sand, screaming in pain.

TODD turns back, sprinting, low, weaving, tossed by the wind.

WHOOOM! Another SHOT. If the wind hadn't blown him, TODD would have been hit.

MACE is screaming. His right leg is gone.

TODD gets him, drags him, stumbles.

WHOOM! Another SHOT, another miss.

TODD struggles for cover, staggering in the wind with MACE on his back.

INT. CRAWLER

Through his scope, the GUNNER sees TODD and MACE dive behind a big turbine.

Unhurriedly the GUNNER flicks a switch on the dash.

CAINE 607 nods approval.

The GUNNER works the servo, bringing the cannon to bear on the turbine.

EXT. TURBINES

TODD is dragging MACE along behind the cover of the turbine, glancing back for what he knows will occur.

BAWHOOM! The area where they disappeared EXPLODES, chunks of steel fly.

TODD keeps pulling MACE, who looks half dead as...

BAWHOOM! The TURBINE is hit again!

INT. CRAWLER

Through the scope, the GUNNER aims again and watches another chunk of turbine disintegrate.

The GUNNER glances at the robot-faced driver. Their eyes meet. CAINE 607 nods. Obviously, they've killed the two men.

The GUNNER points to the cable.

CAINE 607 follows the look, nods, and alters the course of the vehicle in toward the cable as he reaches for the radio mike.

EXT. ABANDONED ENGINES/TERRAIN

TODD is crouched over MACE inside an abandoned diesel engine not far from the disintegrated turbine. He's making a tourniquet to stop the bleeding from the stump of MACE's leg. MACE looks awful, pale, in shock. He speaks weakly.

MACE

Oh, shit, Todd...I'm...dead... aren't I? I'm not going to make it.

TODD meets his look but doesn't answer. He finishes the tourniquet and turns his back on MACE to peer out through a gap in the engine at the CRAWLER.

TODD sees the CRAWLER approach the cable, watches it veer left and start to travel along the cable...straight toward the colony!

TODD turns and looks into MACE's face. MACE's eyes are clouded with horror.

MACE

Why? Why? No answer.

MACE

I'm not. .a soldier.
(then...)

A.. .mistake? Was it...a mistake?

TODD shakes his head no. MACE's eyes fill with new horror.

MACE

Oh, my God. They won't...they won't...? Not Sandra! Not... not...Nathan!

TODD turns away from MACE and peers through the machinery.

He can see the CRAWLER is a hundred yards away now, traveling along the cable toward the colony.

He can see the faces of the NEW SOLDIERS hanging on the outside of the CRAWLER, hard faces, goggled and ominous.

When TODD turns back to MACE, he finds MACE eyeing him with pure hatred. MACE sneers weakly.

MACE
Soldiers! Soldiers...
(gasp)
...deserve...soldiers!

His eyes roll back. He's dead.

TODD peers out again at the NEW SOLDIERS. They look invincible as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. DADDY/LANDSCAPE - DAY

The spaceship is squatting on the barren ground a mile from the junk towers like an ugly insect.

INT. MESS/DADDY

RUBRICK sticks his head in the door of the cramped officers mess.

RUBRICK
People. They've spotted people!

Both CHURCH and SLOAN look up in astonishment from the card game they're playing on a tiny fold-out table.

CHURCH
"People"! "People"? What do you mean
"people"?

RUBRICK
Two civilians. Unarmed. They've killed
both of them. They've spotted smoke
from some kind of camp and they're
going to check it out.

SLOAN
A camp! Jesus Christ!

CHURCH
Damn!
(worried)
Did they ask for assistance?

RUBRICK
Not yet.

CHURCH frowns, considers, then frets...

CHURCH

Like my daddy used to say, "Nothing's
ever as simple as it's supposed to
be...except shit."

SLOAN

(rolling her eyes)
Thank you, "Daddy."

RUBRICK

Who do you think they are?

SLOAN

The civilians?
(a shrug)
Squatters...refugees. I don't think
we want to know, do we?

CHURCH

Good point.

CUT TO:

EXT. GARDEN TRENCE - DAY - A LITTLE LATER

HAWKINS, JIMMY PIG, RED, and other PIONEERS are peering over
the lip of the trench just beneath the trellis.

A half mile off they can see the CRAWLER creeping in their
general direction.

The garden is full of excited PIONEERS with their CHILDREN,
everybody trying not to trample the plants, but trampling
them anyway, as HAWKINS addresses them...

HAWKINS

I'm going to go out and talk to them.
More than likely they're friendly.
If not...
(indicating Jimmy
Pig, others)
...those of you with weapons will be
ready to defend us. The rest of you
go back.

HAWKINS turns abruptly and looks over the rim The CRAWLER is
closer now, only a quarter mile away, angling to the left
along the wire.

HAWKINS starts to climb out of the trench, boosted by JIMMY
PIG and CHESTER. She's waving her arms, shouting.

HAWKINS

HERE! OVER HERE!

SANDRA looks worried.

INT. CRAWLER

CAINE 607 and the GUNNER both see the tiny figure waving at them a quarter mile away, trying to get their attention.

As CAINE 607 adjusts their course to the left, the GUNNER's servomotor WHINES as he aims, peering through the scope at the helpless figure of HAWKINS.

EXT. SETTLEMENT/LANDSCAPE

ANGLE ON HAWKINS suddenly reacting to the sight of the vicious-looking CRAWLER coming straight toward her, now only five hundred yards away. They don't look too friendly! Frightened, she's lowering her arms and turning when ...

BLAAAAM! The cannon flashes, HAWKINS flies backwards!

EXT. INSIDE GARDEN TRENCH

HAWKINS' body flies back onto the PIONEERS in the trench. Panic erupts as...

CHESTER raises his light rifle and starts FIRING over the lip of the trench.

BAWHOOM! The whole edge of the trench explodes, dirt flies, and CHESTER is hurled backwards, dead.

PIONEERS are screaming and running wildly down the trenches.

JIMMY PIG bravely aims his rifle over the lip of the trench.

He sees the CRAWLER is lumbering right at him.

PING! PING! His shots are pitiful. The CRAWLER keeps coming.

ANGLE ON JIMMY PIG. No choice but to retreat. He turns and hurries down the trench after the others as we...

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICERS MESS/DADDY

CHURCH and SLOAN look up from their card game again as RUBRICK sticks his head in the door to report the latest.

RUBRICK

Report from Crawler One. Everything under control. No need for assistance.

CHURCH

There's resistance?

RUBRICK

Ineffectual. About fifty disorganized people with almost no fire power. Three men are going in to clean them out; one man's staying with the Crawler.

CHURCH

Humph. Sounds reckless, three against fifty. The old ones, the veterans, they would have called for support...just in case.

Again RUBRICK and SLOAN exchange a glance and an eye-roll at the fretting old fuddy-duddy. Then SLOAN changes the subject brightly.

SLOAN

Speaking of Riley and his old soldiers...why don't we let them start putting up the unit? It's gonna take forever in this wind.

CUT TO:

INT. CREW QUARTERS/DADDY - MOMENTS LATER

RILEY is standing rigidly in front of his book in crew quarters, flanked by the rest of the VETERANS in similar positions, facing SLOAN.

RILEY

Will we be issued weapons, sir?

SLOAN

(a sneering smile)

No, Riley...no weapons. You're not a soldier, Riley.

CUT TO:

EXT. INSIDE THE TRENCHES - DAY

The NEW SOLDIER comes straight, like some inexorable death machine, lumbering awkwardly with his burden of weapons, goggled and blank faced.

A PIONEER is backing away ten yards in front of him, firing wildly. POW! POW! POW!

The NEW SOLDIER looks at one of his armor-gloved hands, opening the palm in front of his face. His hand's been hit. He shakes it, annoyed, like it was a bee sting, then he aims at the PIONEER.

WHOOOOSH! A tongue of fire from the NEW SOLDIER's flame thrower engulfs the helpless PIONEER as we...

CUT TO:

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

PIONEERS are crouching in the room when the door bursts open, and a tongue of flame turns the room into a firestorm and we...

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

SANDRA has NATHAN screaming in her arms as she calmly herds frightened CHILDREN through a corridor, JOHNNY, WILL, and ELLEN among them.

SANDRA

Keep going, children, don't panic,
don't panic.

But if her demeanor doesn't reveal her fear, her eyes do.

CUT TO:

EXT. INSIDE ANOTHER TRENCH - DAY

Two Pioneers, SALLY and RED, lunge from a doorway into the trench and fire a rifle and a pistol at a THIRD SOLDIER who's advancing along the trench.

BANG! BANG! PING! SPLAT!

SALLY and RED dive back in the doorway for cover where a pioneer named SINGH is crouched, watching with alarm the THIRD SOLDIER advancing unfazed.

ANGLE ON THE THIRD SOLDIER coming toward them.

ANGLE ON THE PIONEERS HUDDLED IN THE DOORWAY

RED

They got armored vests. You got to aim for exposed parts like the face...

SINGH

Here goes.

RED and SALLY watch SINGH step out directly in front of the advancing THIRD SOLDIER and FIRE five shots rapidly...PING! PING! PING! PING!

WHOOOOSH! RED and SALLY see SINGH incinerated before their eyes.

Exchanging a horrified glance, they turn to retreat down the interior corridor, but before they get two steps, they freeze...

A SOLDIER is in the corridor, not looking at them, but breaking down a door. They can't go that way!

Trapped, they turn to see the THIRD SOLDIER almost to the doorway, his flame thrower aimed, his finger on the trigger, and...

A blur! Something lands on the THIRD SOLDIER from above the trench, and the THIRD SOLDIER falls over backwards, slamming hard to the floor of the trench.

But he's a super soldier, so that almost at the same time he hits the ground he's already lunging upward to regain his feet and fight except...

A knife blade rips across his throat, opening it wide in one swift movement, and...

The THIRD SOLDIER's head sags back because not even superman can fight with no neck and the last thing he sees through his plexi goggles is...

TODD looming over him with a bloody knife, a face like stone, and fierce soldier's eyes.

ANGLE ON THE DOORWAY, where RED, SALLY, and another PIONEER peer around the corner, eyes wide with amazement at the sight of TODD kneeling over his victim.

ANGLE ON TODD, ripping the utility belt off the dead THIRD SOLDIER, yanking grenades and ammo from the bulky body, stuffing a heavy pistol in his own waistband.

RED approaches him timidly.

RED

You want help, partner?

TODD glances up at him, and RED sees TODD'S eyes and RED backs away quickly because...

TODD looks badder even than the new soldiers!

Turning back to the dead man, TODD goes for the last item...the goggles. Ripping them off he reveals...

A one-eyed soldier. The dead man staring up at him is MELTON.

For just a moment TODD stares into the dead face, revealing nothing of how he feels, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. OTHER ROOM - DAY

NATHAN is SCREAMING in terror on the floor, ignored as SANDRA and CHILDREN haul the bed from the bedroom to aid to the heap of

obstacles they've placed in front of the door already. The stove, everything is wedged against the door to the corridor.

As they heave the bed against the mountain of furniture and other belongings, the door quivers, the heap of furniture shifts.

INT. CORRIDOR

The FIRST SOLDIER, as big as an offensive tackle, shoulders the door again, and it gives...

INT. ROOM

CHILDREN SCREAM as the mountain of furniture heaves backwards, and the door opens part way, revealing the FIRST SOLDIER.

SANDRA grabs NATHAN and hands him to one of the children.

SANDRA

Into the bedroom, all of you.

SANDRA picks up a stool to defend herself.

INT. BEDROOM

Dashing into the bedroom, the children are greeted with a terrifying sight! SMASH! Soldier boots are kicking out the little window high in the wall, SMASH, SMASH, SMASH, and the window collapses, a boot sticks through the opening...

INT. OTHER ROOM

Unhurriedly, the giant FIRST SOLDIER bulls through the furniture, tossing the bed and table aside like sticks.

SANDRA smashes at him with the stool, hitting him twice, hurling it in his face.

The FIRST SOLDIER shakes off the blow as if he'd been hit by a feather. But she's got his attention. He turns his goggles at her, starts to raise his weapon as...

SANDRA turns and disappears into the bedroom...

INT. BEDROOM

As SANDRA dashes into the bedroom in blind retreat she runs smack into the chest of another soldier!

Helpless and horrified, she looks right into a cruel stone face and goggled eyes, and she gasps...

SANDRA

Sergeant Todd!

TODD never takes his eyes off the door as he brushes her roughly aside with one hand, while his other arm aims the heavy rocket gun right at the door and...

The FIRST SOLDIER comes into the doorway with his flame thrower raised to torch women and children and what he sees is TODD looking right at him, aiming the rocket gun, and BAWHOOM, the FIRST SOLDIER is blown clear back across the other room with a shot right in the chest.

ANGLE ON SANDRA, still on the floor where he knocked her, watching TODD exit the room, weapon raised, his utility belt dangling bandolier style across his chest.

He looks like...one of them! A soldier!

INT. OTHER ROOM

Crossing the next room, TODD moves quickly to the door, flattens, and peers into the corridor.

He sees the SECOND SOLDIER heading toward him.

BLAM! BLAM! TODD fires twice around the door and sees...

The SECOND SOLDIER staggering back, hit, firing a pistol from his hip...

Dirt explodes around the door frame as TODD ducks back. Quick as a wink, he yanks a grenade from his utility belt, triggers it, and flips it around the corner as CRACK! a shot rips at his arm.

BAWHOOM, the grenade goes off and, bleeding from his arm, TODD swings into the corridor, and follows the grenade with three quick rocket shots.

INT. CORRIDOR

Keeping low, TODD charges, his weapon pointed at the fallen SECOND SOLDIER.

The SECOND SOLDIER is sprawled bloodily in the corridor, the walkie-talkie on his chest squawking urgently.

WALKIE-TALKIE (V.O.)

Crawler One calling Double Mike.
Give me an "okay," Double Mike.

TODD seizes the walkie-talkie, presses the transmit button, and snarls a throaty animal growl into the mike...

INT. CRAWLER/LANDSCAPE

CAINE 607 is sitting at the wheel of the motionless vehicle parked near the trench garden, radio mike in hand, when he hears the low ANIMAL SNAPL come across his speaker.

CAINE 607's robot race reveals nothing as he listens to ANOTHER GROWL. WIND HOWLS outside.

Then he flicks a switch on the dash and puts the mike to his mouth, his face expressionless.

CAINE 607

Crawler to Daddy, Crawler to Daddy.
Come in, Daddy!

CUT TO:

PORTHOLE VIEW/EXT./INT. OFFICERS' MESS/DADDY

Seen through the thick plexi-porthole; heavily-clothed VETERANS are struggling with a wall, trying to erect the pre-fab unit while the wind, inaudible inside the ship, rages around them, staggering them this way and that. What we hear in the quiet interior of the mess is CHURCH voicing his disbelief.

CHURCH (O.S.)

"A growl"! He heard a growl?

RUBRICK, looking uneasy, is facing CHURCH who's looking up at him from a game of solitaire at the little table. SLOAN is biting her fingernails in the b.g.

RUBRICK

Well, he didn't say the word "growl."
He said a "throat-noise," but I asked
him to imitate it and it sounded
like a growl to me.

CHURCH

My God! Who are we fighting here!

RUBRICK

(nervous)

I think...I think we have to assume
the missing men are...down.

CHURCH

(getting up, pacing)

I knew Mekum's hotshots were green.
No reinforcements, then they walk
right into an enemy stronghold.

RUBRICK

We could send reinforcements now...

CHURCH

(sharply)

Absolutely not. Those bastards are
just waiting in there for us. No
more of this fancy super-soldier
shit. We do it with the hammer...

RUBRICK and SLOAN exchange a nervous glance as CHURCH paces agitatedly.

RUBRICK

Uh, what does that mean, "the hammer"?

CHURCH

(suddenly smug)

My daddy always said, "When you want to insert a nail in a piece of wood, you don't do nothing fancy or glamorous, you don't finesse or play the hero, you just pick up your damn hammer and hit that sumbitch till it's in."

SLOAN

(under her breath)

Christ! Now Daddy's a carpenter!

RUBRICK

(to Church)

I...don't...quite...follow...sir.

CHURCH

(decisive, sharp)

Take the whole unit, both Crawlers, and tell 'em to pound that place with rockets, cannons, mortars, everything we got...from a safe distance.

RUBRICK

(brightening)

Raw firepower!

CHURCH

It may not be heroic, and we may waste some ammo, but by God we'll get the job done.

CUT TO:

EXT. LANDSCAPE - DUSK

The four suns are dimming noticeably, dusk is falling.

The wind HOWLS, junk drifts and shifts.

A corpse turns over in the wind. It's HAWKINS' BODY, ravaged by the turbulent air, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. EARTHEN CORRIDOR/SETTLEMENT - NIGHT

Someone is dragging a CORPSE down the smoky lamplit corridor as little NATHAN watches SANDRA tending to the bloody wounds of a PIONEER lying on the floor. As the CORPSE is dragged past NATHAN, the lifeless, vacant eyes stare right at the uncomprehending little boy.

NATHAN sees the pioneer's seven year old daughter, ANGIE, sobbing uncontrollably at the sight of her father's wounds. SANDRA is trying to help with the bandages and console ANGIE at the same time while all round her in the hellish atmosphere people GROAN and children CRY OUT.

NATHAN doesn't understand it, it's confusing. MEN and WOMEN loom past him. He wobbles off down the corridor, toddling away from the sounds of pain.

SHUK! KA-SHUK! Strange SOUNDS come from a doorway ahead, the doorway to the meeting room. CHAK! KLAKE! SHIK CHIK KA CHIK! The sound of metal and metal, metal parts CLICKING and SLIDING.

Alone in the corridor, NATHAN toddles innocently forward, toward the SOUNDS.

INT. MEETING ROOM

NATHAN wobbles into the meeting room doorway and stops there, staring.

The burnt furniture has been heaped in one corner of the room, leaving a large open space where TODD, bare-chested, a tourniquet on one arm, is squatting on the floor, skillfully reassembling a stripped rifle.

Surrounding him on the floor in neat piles are the rocket rifles, pistols, ammo clips, utility belts, goggles, torn armor vests, boots, grenades, knives, and flashlights he salvaged from the dead soldiers. TODD looks up at NATHAN and their eyes meet.

NATHAN recognizes his "friend," tries a tentative little smile. But TODD just stares at him, and the unformed smile fades from NATHAN's face. For a long moment they just look each other in the eye very seriously.

SANDRA enters, her dress covered with the wounded man's blood. Not noticing TODD, she rushes to NATHAN, grabs him...

SANDRA

Nathan, thank God, there you...

Suddenly seeing TODD she breaks off, stares at him.

Squatting on the floor, surrounded by weapons, TODD'S eyes meet hers for a long moment...then he looks away, goes back to assembling the weapons with quick sure movements, almost as if he wanted to avoid her eyes.

SANDRA wets her lips to speak, hesitates, then finally blurts out what she can hardly bear to ask...

SANDRA

Did he find you?

No answer. TODD finishes with the weapon, starts checking the next one.

SANDRA

My husband...Mace...he went out to look for you. He...found you, didn't he?

TODD looks up at her and nods. Their eyes lock.

SANDRA

They...killed him...didn't they?

TODD nods, turns back to his arsenal.

SANDRA stands there, hugging NATHAN to her chest, holding her tears in, her lips quivering, fighting to conquer her emotion. After a long, difficult moment, she wins the battle with herself. She looks numb, stunned, but she's not crying.

TODD has begun to dress. He straps a sheath knife to one ankle, pulls on boots. Then he pulls a jersey over his muscular torso, covering all the old scars, the tattooed names of battles, and the tourniquet on his arm.

Staring at him with glazed eyes, SANDRA notices a blotch of blood form on the jersey, leaking through the tourniquet. She speaks numbly.

SANDRA

Your wound...it's still bleeding.

Stuffing his pockets with ammo and other items, TODD glances at her with eyes that glitter dangerously.

TODD

I like to bleed, sir.

SANDRA stares at him stupidly as he continues to dress, pulling on a heavy armored vest.

SANDRA

It doesn't...hurt?

TODD pulls on a second armored vest, one that already has a ragged hole in it from a rocket.

TODD

Not enough, sir.

SANDRA watches him go to the heap of charred furniture in the corner and take a blackened stick from it, watches him smear charcoal under his eyes.

SANDRA

How do you know they'll come back?

TODD looks at her, a savage with blackened eyes.

TODD

They're soldiers, sir. Like me.

SANDRA
What...what do they want?

TODD
Nothing, sir.

SANDRA
Nothing?

TODD
They are obeying orders, sir. It's
their duty.

For a moment SANDRA is silent, then...

SANDRA
You know who they are, don't you? Do
you know how many there'll be?

TODD crosses two utility belts across his armored chest like
bandoliers.

TODD
Seventeen more, sir.

SANDRA
Seventeen! My God!
(suddenly energized)
You can't fight seventeen yourself!
You have to organize the rest of us,
show us what to do. We don't have
your...your skills...but we're not
cowards. We'll do what you tell us,
we'll --

TODD
(interrupting, softly)
No.

His voice is soft as silk but hard as steel. She looks into
his eyes. Does she detect a hint of approval, of respect, in
those flat expressionless snake eyes?

SANDRA
Wh-why not?

TODD turns to go, laden with weapons, a flamethrower on his
back, a rocket rifle on his shoulder, another in one hand.

TODD
Soldiers deserve soldiers, sir.

SANDRA
But...one soldier...against seventeen!

He looks back at her, right into her eyes this time.

TODD

I am going to kill them all, sir.

CUT TO:

INT. CREW QUARTERS - NIGHT

The NEW SOLDIERS are putting on their heavy gear in ominous silence, covering their muscular torsos with armored vests and utility belts while SLOAN watches from the hatchway.

SLOAN

Double belts, double ammo, double everything! You've got to be heavy out there or you'll blow away, fellas...and we wouldn't want that, would we?

They continue dressing obediently, their eyes the sullen eyes of robots. But CAINE 607 speaks up, at once respectful and dignified...

CAINE 607

It's dark now, sir.

SLOAN

You're afraid of the dark, Sergeant Caine?

CAINE 607

No, sir. But the manual says --

SLOAN

That's what nightscopes are for, soldier. For the dark.

CAINE 607

Yes, sir. But the sixth rule is "never give the enemy an advantage unnecessarily." If they're expecting us --

SLOAN

(erupting)

Listen, Sergeant, this may come as news to you, but you're not a real hot thinker! Your pitiful efforts at tactics have cost us three men already. So turn it off, that little pea brain of yours!

(turning to the others)

That goes for all the rest of you mental giants too. All you have to do is go boom-boom. Understand? Boom-boom! Kill kill! Say it... kill...kill...kill...

Draped in battle gear the seventeen NEW SOLDIERS obediently repeat the words after her, their eyes blank and sullen... "Kill kill kill..." They look like somber death machines as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

In the harsh blue glare of work-lights RILEY and the crew of VETERANS, dressed in heavy parkas, are struggling in the wind to erect the second side of a small hut.

RILEY sees something, reacts.

He sees seventeen NEW SOLDIERS exiting the ship in the fringe of the work-lights, ominous death machines in their heavy gear and goggles, partly lost in shadows like some vision from hell.

RILEY stares at them, at the men who carry the weapons he used to carry, his face like stone, his eyes a mystery as we...

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

SALLY and RED are guarding a door to the trench when a CLANKING noise in the corridor behind them makes them turn and look. Their jaws go slack with amazement.

Clanking toward them is TODD, so armored and laden with fighting gear he looks almost like a medieval knight! He says nothing as he looms closer to them, heading for the door. The two of them shrink hastily out of his way.

EXT. INSIDE THE TRENCH

Stepping into the trench, TODD hears the wind SCREAM overhead. He approaches crude steps dug in the side of the trench and begins to pull himself up into the wind.

As he climbs, the SCREAMING wind changes pitch radically, and by the time he bellies over the lip of the trench, the wind is only a breeze.

Getting to his feet and finds even the breeze is dying, replaced by a terrible stillness.

As TODD looks off into the darkness, a voice calls to him from the trench behind him.

SANDRA (O.S.)
Sergeant! Sergeant Todd!

TODD turns back, looking down into the trench, and sees SANDRA looking up at him.

SANDRA

Sergeant...these soldiers...the ones you're going to fight... Are these the "better ones"...the ones who replaced you?

TODD looks at her for a long moment, his face a mask, before he nods almost imperceptibly. Her eyes are full of tears.

SANDRA

Sergeant Todd...I think they...I think...someone made a serious... mistake.

TODD looks into her eyes. It is impossible to tell if he knows that she cares about him and that she is blessing him.

After a moment he turns away and lumbers off into the darkness, the CLANKING of his equipment the only sound in the spooky stillness.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUNK/TERRAIN - NIGHT

Two CRAWLERS cut through the night fifty yards apart. Four of the NEW SOLDIERS cling to the outside of one CRAWLER, five on the other, two on each CRAWLER operating spotlights that pan the darkness to the sides while the headlights illuminate the skeleton of the crashed ship and shadowy chunks of machinery littered across the terrain ahead of them.

It is very still. No wind.

INT. CRAWLER ONE

A DRIVER is at the wheel, a GUNNER beside him, studying the night through an infrared scope. Behind them, two more NEW SOLDIERS sit lost in shadows in the back seat, staring impassively out the window at the spooky spotlights combing the eerie junkyard.

EXT. CRAWLER ONE

The LEFT FRONT SOLDIER sits on the fender seat of CRAWLER ONE, peering along the beam of his spotlight, scrutinizing the sinister shapes in the darkness, when...

BLAM! He's shot in the face, slammed back into the windshield of CRAWLER ONE.

INT. CRAWLER ONE

Vision blocked, the DRIVER is fighting for control of the vehicle as the GUNNER to his right screams into the radio mike...

GUNNER

CRAWLER ONE, WE ARE RED! RED! WE ARE RED!

By veering sharply, the DRIVER is able to shake off the body that was blocking his vision, clearing his shattered windshield.

EXT. JUNK TERRAIN

Seven of the NEW SOLDIERS -- the three hanging on CRAWLER ONE and the four from CRAWLER TWO -- drop off into the stillness. One checks the LEFT FRONT SOLDIER's body while the others, barely visible in the weak light, fan out, keeping low, taking cover in the random junk strewn all around them.

ANGLE ON NEW SOLDIER ONE, a corporal, crouched behind a huge piece of discarded agriculture machinery. He yanks a flare from his waist band and fires it.

The FLARE bursts overhead, exposing the ghostly terrain to a bright green light.

ANGLE ON THE JUNK AND THE SKELETON SHIP: a ghostly graveyard. No wind. Nothing moves. No sign of TODD.

INT. CRAWLER ONE

Maneuvering across the junk-strewn landscape, the DRIVER peers through the cracked windshield at the green terrain, looking for TODD as the RADIO crackles...

RADIO

Crawler Two to Crawler One. Do you have a sitrep?

THE GUNNER and the DRIVER exchange a glance. The GUNNER takes the mike and speaks into it.

GUNNER

Crawler Two, we are one down, responding to sniper activity.

INT. CRAWLER TWO

CAINE 607 is at the wheel, speaking into his mike.

CAINE 607

Crawler One, do you require assistance?

RADIO

That is negative. We will eliminate the sniper and rendezvous at target.

CAINE 607

Roger, One. We are proceeding to target.

CAINE 607 accelerates the CRAWLER.

EXT. JUNK TERRAIN

The flare fades and the near darkness returns.

ANGLE ON NEW SOLDIER ONE peering out into the stillness, then signaling NEW SOLDIER TWO who's hiding nearby.

As the two NEW SOLDIERS step out from their sheltered positions, they're joined by NEW SOLDIER THREE. Exchanging hand signals, the three of them advance, spreading out cautiously.

NEW SOLDIER THREE has moved about thirty yards away when suddenly he "disappears."

EXT. INSIDE A CATCHER TRENCH

SPLASH! SOLDIER THREE has tumbled into a flooded trench.

He struggles to his feet, can't figure out where he is. He pulls a flashlight from his waist and shines it down the trench in both directions.

The flashlight beam reveals a steep-walled trench knee-deep in water and littered with rusting junk.

NEW SOLDIER THREE splashes along the trench, looking for a way out.

His light reveals a piece of a derrick mast leaning against the trench, a perfect ladder.

He's slogging toward it when he whirls suddenly and splays his beam down the trench behind him.

NEW SOLDIER THREE'S POV of the flooded trench. Junk and water.

ANGLE ON NEW SOLDIER THREE, turning back and approaching the ladder. Just as he reaches the ladder he whirls again.

Again his light illuminates the spooky trench. Again, nothing but water and junk.

Relieved, he's just about to switch off his light when...

TODD rises out of the water only five feet away like a demon.

Before NEW SOLDIER THREE can cry out, TODD lunges at him.

EXT. JUNK TERRAIN

As he creeps cautiously through the gloom, NEW SOLDIER ONE stiffens. Was that a stifled CRY? Or not?

NEW SOLDIER ONE signals NEW SOLDIER TWO and the two of them turn and move cautiously toward where NEW SOLDIER THREE was.

EXT. INSIDE THE TRENCH

TODD'S light reveals NEW SOLDIER THREE slumped in the water, his head askew, neck broken, eyes vacant. TODD is hastily rummaging through the soldier's equipment, looking for something.

He finds it.

EXT. JUNK TERRAIN

NEW SOLDIERS ONE and TWO are approaching the trench when suddenly a flare bursts above them.

The NEW SOLDIERS react with amazement as the flare exposes them in a brightly illuminated landscape. Before they can take cover...

BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA. Flashes of fire from the lip of the trench.

NEW SOLDIER ONE drops dead, NEW SOLDIER TWO is down and writhing on the ground, SCREAMING.

ANGLE ON CRAWLER ONE veering sharply toward the trench, accelerating, FIRING ROCKETS, CANONS, MACHINE GUNS... .

ANGLE ON THE OTHER NEW SOLDIERS, prone, firing toward the trench.

EXT. INSIDE THE TRENCH

Tracers whizzing over the top of the trench illuminate TODD as he races down the trench, running for his life.

EXT. JUNK TERRAIN

Still firing, CRAWLER ONE grinds up to the lip of the trench.

ANGLE ON NEW SOLDIERS charging toward the trench behind the CRAWLER.

CLOSE ON CRAWLER ONE'S HOOD where a small trap opens and a nozzle pops out like a little penis and...SQUIRTS a stream of liquid! The liquid stream arcs fifty yards along the trench and diminishes backward like a man pissing...

INT. INSIDE THE TRENCH

TODD looks back just before he rounds a corner in the trench, sees the liquid hitting the water in the trench.

Sheltered from their view by the turn in the trench, TODD tries to scale the steep wall of the trench.

WHOOOOOOOOOSE! The surface of the water-filled trench bursts into flame. A fiery river of flammable liquid.

ANGLE ON NEW SOLDIERS reacting to something!

NEW SOLDIERS' POV of TODD, visible in the firelight as he rolls over the lip of the trench fifty yards from them.

ANGLE ON THE NEW SOLDIERS firing as they move toward TODD. They've got him now!

ANGLE ON TODD bellying toward a rusting turbine, disappearing from view.

ANGLE ON CRAWLER ONE, separated from TODD'S hideout by the trench, pouring heavy FIRE on the spot where TODD disappeared.

ANGLE ON NEW SOLDIERS communicating by hand signals as they move to surround TODD.

EXT. BEHIND THE TURBINE

As rockets and canon shells SLAM into the turbine, TODD hastily attends to a nasty wound in the flesh his thigh, bandaging it skillfully, quickly.

EXT. JUNK TERRAIN

While CRAWLER ONE keeps TODD pinned down, NEW SOLDIERS move to outflank him.

EXT. BEHIND THE TURBINE

As TODD completes dressing his thigh, the CRAWLER stops firing.

Silence.

TODD peers out, assessing the situation.

TODD'S POV of the terrain. Vague glimpses of NEW SOLDIERS slipping from cover to cover, never exposing themselves enough for a shot.

ANGLE ON TODD. He seems to know he's in a tight spot. He's preparing to fight off an attack, laying out weapons, grenades, when...he freezes. Listens.

Behind the stillness he can hear the faint WHISTLE that precedes the wind.

Hastily TODD yanks his belt off.

EXT. TERRAIN

NEW SOLDIER FOUR sticks his head up from behind an old boiler and signals NEW SOLDIER FIVE.

ANGLE ON NEW SOLDIER FIVE acknowledging from the mouth of an old storage tank where he's positioned.

ANGLE ON NEW SOLDIER SIX bellying toward TODD'S position.

EXT. BEHIND THE TURBINE

Using his belt and a carabiner as a safety line, TODD attaches himself to the heavy turbine...and gathers up his weapons. He can HEAR the very low WHISTLING building ever so slightly.

EXT. TERRAIN

The WIND SIGHS and a faint breeze stirs. Then a tin can skitters by in a light puff of wind as the NEW SOLDIERS take turns moving closer to TODD, flanking him from safe vantage points.

NEW SOLDIER FOUR stands to wave the next man forward when...

WHOOOOOOOOOOOSH! THE WIND ERUPTS, ROARS, BELLOWS...

NEW SOLDIER FOUR is lifted into the air and carried away.

NEW SOLDIER FIVE is trying to stay on his feet as the wind SLAMS him into one piece of junk after another.

INT./EXT. CRAWLER

As the wind HOWLS and shakes the CRAWLER, the DRIVER and the GUNNER stare with amazement as NEW SOLDIER FIVE slams into their windshield, neck broken, and stares at them with lifeless eyes.

They see NEW SOLDIERS SIX and SEVEN tumble and somersault past.

As NEW SOLDIER SIX disappears, blown off into the night, NEW SOLDIER SEVEN manages to grab hold of the walking wire.

Gripping the wire for his life, he turns just in time to be decapitated by a piece of aluminum housing flying through the air.

EXT. TERRAIN

NEW SOLDIER FOUR, badly battered, is down on his belly trying to stay "under the wind," when he sees something terrible!

HIS POV of a massive lathe blowing right toward him along the ground, tumbling, crashing, slamming into things. It looms over him, unavoidable, the end!

ANGLE ON NEW SOLDIER FOUR reacting to the huge lathe about to crush him.

EXT. BEHIND THE TURBINE

Held by his safety belt and protected by the turbine, TODD peers out and watches the wind destroy the footsoldiers.

TODD'S POV OF NEW SOLDIER FIVE's lifeless body being blown along the ground like a leaf.

ANGLE ON TODD, reacting. He's seen something important.

[...] It's pay of CRAWLER ONE moving again, rounding the far end of [...] and, no longer separated by the trench, turning toward [...] it's position

[...] CRAWLER ONE
 [...] DRIVER steers, the GUNNER peers
 through his scope. .

[...] INFRARED POV of TODD darting behind an overturned vat.

GUNNER
 There!

[...] steers toward where TODD disappeared.

[...] TERRAIN
 [...] junk CLATTERS against CRAWLER
 ONE'S armor plating, [...] flies
 through the bright swaths of the
 headlights, as the [...] grinds toward
 the overturned vat.

[...] CRAWLER ONE coming around the vat, headlights glaring.

[...] CRAWLER ONE
 [...] is peering intently through
 his scope.

[...] POV through his scope: The infrared view with crosshairs
 [...] especially spooky because of the debris blowing eerily
 across [...] landscape as the gun whips back and forth,
 looking vainly for [...] suddenly the sight is yanked hard,
 sweeping violently [...] to pin a moving object...

[...] alarm! Just another piece of blowing junk. No sign of
 [...]

[...] CRAWLER/JUNK TERRAIN
 [...] CRAWLER grinds slowly past a
 huge overturned boiler, its [...] right,
 then left, then right.

[...] CRAWLER ONE
 [...] through the scope as he sweeps
 the terrain, the GUNNER [...] stiffens
 and back-pans to find something...

GUNNER
 Tentative at One.

[...] angles right, aiming for one o'clock.

GUNNER
 That's negative, no target.

[...] swings the wheel back and they continue slowly through
 [...].

In the back seat; two NEW SOLDIERS peer into the night with blank faces. One of them is watching a huge plastic sign cartwheel past in the wind when --

-- he reacts!

-- as TODD's face appears is only inches from his, right against the plexi!

BAM! Before the NEW SOLDIER can do more than look startled, TODD shoots out the window with a pistol and shoves a live grenade through the hole.

NEW SOLDIER

RED! RED! RE --

BAWHOOM! The grenade EXPLODES and...

The DRIVER fights for control of the wheel...

The GUNNER screams and screams and screams like a machine running at high speed while the two NEW SOLDIERS lie open-eyed with death in the back seat.

EXT. CRAWLER

No sign of TODD. Disappeared again.

As the wind ROARS furiously, the damaged CRAWLER limps along.

INT. CRAWLER ONE

The dying GUNNER is making awful noises while the DRIVER, eyes glazed, his face streaming with blood, maneuvers the vehicle slowly and cautiously, looking for the enemy...

But all he sees through the cracked windshield is a shadowy world of wind-tossed debris.

EXT. JUNK TERRAIN

Protected by a hunk of pipe, TODD crouches and watches the CRAWLER, his eyes glittering, his weapon ready. It's clear now that the tables are turned and he is the hunter as we...

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDORS - NIGHT

EXPLOSIONS! SCREAMS! BAWHOOM! Another shell hits, beams splinter, dirt walls collapse.

Eight-year old JOHNNY, alone and terrified, comes in to view around a corner. He's been separated from the others.

JOHNNY

DAD! DAAAAAAD!

No answer.

JOHNNY doesn't know which way to go. The world's falling apart!

WHUMP! The little warren of earthen corridors is shaken by another BLAST.

Desperate, JOHNNY makes a left, away from the last blast and hurries down a collapsing corridor past doorways that reveal rooms with no ceilings where the wind HOWLS. It's obvious the shelling has been going on for a while.

JOHNNY

DAAAAAAD!

Just then, JIMMY PIG pops out of a doorway in front of him and and rushes toward him.

JIMMY PIG

GOTCHA!

BA-WHOOM! Another shell collapses the corridor behind JOHNNY as JIMMY PIG grabs him and hauls him toward the door he emerged from, the Dining Commons.

INT. DINING COMMONS

EMMA is ushering CHILDREN through a trap door in the floor into the root cellar as JIMMY PIG ushers JOHNNY into the room.

JOHNNY

Where's my father? Where's my father?

JOHNNY looks around urgently.

SANDRA is bandaging TOMMY'S arm while ELLEN, NATHAN, and WILL are huddling under a table in the most protected corner of the room.

JIMMY PIG and JUDITH exchange a pained look as JIMMY PIG pushes JOHNNY toward SANDRA and the table.

JIMMY PIG

Johnny, get over under that table with Miss Sandra and Ellen and the others. Miss Judith, you better go on down the root cellar with Emma and help with the ones down there.

JOHNNY

Where's my mother?

BAH-DOOOM! Another fierce CONCUSSION twenty yards away shakes dirt from the ceiling. ELLEN beckons from under the table...

ELLEN

Come on, Johnny.

CUT TO:

EXT. SETTLEMENT - NIGHT

MUZZLE FLASH! FFFWHOOOMP! CRAWLER TWO fires another round.

The vehicle is squatting not thirty yards from the trench garden, pouring round after round into the colony, lighting the night with bright-colored flowery blasts.

Crouched in the wind not far from the vehicle, the two NEW SOLDIERS from the back seat have set up a mortar, and they too are firing away.

INT. CRAWLER TWO/STATIONARY

The GUNNER is looking through his scope, methodically aiming and firing as CAINE 607 at the wheel watches impassively.

KA-FOOMP! Another shot, the vehicle rocks, and, five hundred yards away, fire and dirt fountain thirty feet into the air.

BEEP! BEEP! A light on the dash blinks on. CAINE 607 switches on a radarscope, spots a blip.

The GUNNER takes his eyes off the scope, looks at the blip.

CAINE 607 is already manipulating a spotlight, looking across the GUNNER out the right window.

The spotlight stabs the darkness, finds a moving vehicle a half mile of moving toward them. It's CRAWLER ONE with its lights out.

As CAINE 607 flicks off the spotlight, the GUNNER turns back to the scope and resumes his deadly barrage. CAINE 607 speaks into the radio mike.

CAINE 607

Crawler Two to Crawler One. Come in,
One.

RADIO

One.

CAINE 607

Two to One, take your port to our
nine o'clock and commence firing.

RADIO

Copy, Two. Port to your nine and
commence firing.

FOOOMP! The GUNNER fires again, rocking the vehicle.

CAINE 607 looks at the scope.

The blip continues on directly on its course.

CAINE 607 picks up the mike again.

CAINE 607
Crawler Two to Crawler One. Again;
proceed to port nine...

RADIO
Affirmative, Two.

FOOOMP! The GUNNER fires again as CAINE 607 looks at the screen.

The blip on the screen keeps on straight, doesn't alter course!

CAINE 607
(into the mike) Two to One. You are
still on twelve o'clock. Correct to
nine.

RADIO
Roger, two.

But the blip continues straight, directly at them.

And suddenly CAINE realizes! Dropping the mike he snaps at his GUNNER urgently.

CAINE 607
Gunner, hard to port, target hard to
port!

As the startled GUNNER starts to obey both of them are bathed in sudden blinding white light as CRAWLER ONE suddenly switches on all lights and...

KA-BLAM! KA-BLAM! MUZZLES FLASHES from CRAWLER ONE.

WHUMP! WHUMP! CRAWLER TWO shudders, taking two direct hits.

The GUNNER SCREAMS in pain.

INT. CRAWLER ONE

TODD is at the wheel, speaking into the radio as wind whips at him through the shattered windshield.

TODD
Roger, Two. Affirmative.

BLAM! BLAM! TODD fires as he drives straight ahead toward CRAWLER TWO and the two NEW SOLDIERS pinned in his headlight.

EXT. CRAWLER TWO

As shells slam into CRAWLER TWO, the two NEW SOLDIERS outside try to get clear of the explosions, staggering off into the wind.

INT. CRAWLER ONE

TODD sets his sights on one of the NEW SOLDIERS, cutting him down with rocket fire, then he glances toward the SECOND NEW SOLDIER on the right.

The SECOND NEW SOLDIER, ten yards ahead, stops, turns to fire.

TODD yanks the wheel, swerving toward him.

EXT. CRAWLERS

CRAWLER ONE plows into the NEW SOLDIER, crushing him under the wheels, and continuing to grind toward the crippled CRAWLER TWO.

WHAM! CRAWLER ONE rams CRAWLER TWO and drives it sideways, pushing it ten yards... twenty yards... . thirty yards...until suddenly it sprawls into the mouth of the trench garden, splintering the trellis and wedging itself at a sharply canted angle over the garden, and we...

CUT TO:

INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN/DADDY - NIGHT

Silence. CHURCH is dozing fully clothed on his bunk in a tiny stateroom.

BZZZZT. BZZZZT! A buzzer sounds and a light flashes.

CHURCH opens his eyes, sees the light flashing.

Sitting up in the bunk, he grabs the receiver of a phone and puts it to his ear. As he listens, his eyes widen with incredulity...then they get wider as he hears more.

CHURCH

Whaaaaat?

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDORS/SETTLEMENT - NIGHT

Thick smoke clogs the narrow corridors as RED winds through the maze of corridors, coughing desperately. He can hear VOICES ahead.

INT. DINING COMMONS/SETTLEMENT

RED charges into the commons shouting excitedly.

RED

THEY STOPPED SHOOTING! THEY STOPPED SHOOTING!

He stops abruptly, seeing... a blazing fire, whipped by wind from a shell hole in the ceiling, consuming tables in the far half of the commons... while JIMMY PIG, SLADE and SANDRA struggle with one end of a huge beam that's fallen at an angle on top of a trap door in the floor, the root cellar.

ELLEN, with NATHAN in her arms, TOMMY, WILL, JOHNNY and OTHER CHILDREN hover behind her, staring at... a six inch opening between the floor and the trap door where EMMA, JUDITH and OTHER CHILDREN, unable to squeeze through the six inch gap, peer out with frightened eyes, trapped.

RED

(dampened)

They stopped shooting!

JIMMY PIG

(to Red)

Give us a hand, dammit!

As RED joins the effort. SLADE snaps at him sarcastically as he strains against the heavy beam.

SLADE

You think

(grunt)

That's good they stopped? It means

(grunt)

They're comin' for us! To

(grunt)

Kill us! That's good news, you think?

SANDRA

(looking for hope)

Sergeant Todd

(grunt, cough)

Said...

SLADE

That he's gonna

(grunt)

Stop a whole army? Couldn't if he wanted.

The smoke is getting thicker. EMMA and JUDITH are coughing, looking scared.

SANDRA

He

(grunt)

Knew them! He said --

SLADE

He's dead! If he isn't

(grunt)

Dead, he joined 'em. He don't

(grunt)

Care about us, he's a soldier.

Besides, we threw him out, remember?

SANDRA pushes at the beam with all her strength, fighting back tears of despair.

SANDRA

He's not dead!

The massive beam won't budge! Eyes wide with terror, EMMA and RUTH peer out of their trap.

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT/DADDY - NIGHT

CHURCH is in the cockpit now, hovering behind RUBRICK who's speaking urging into the radio mike.

RUBRICK

This is Daddy, come in, Number Two.
Daddy calling Number two...

CHURCH

What about Number One? Try Number...

RUBRICK

I tried One. I can't get either one
of them.

SLOAN is pacing, looks sick to her stomach with fear.

SLOAN

There was...some kind of... guerrilla
action...

RUBRICK

Then we lost them...

Now CHURCH is pacing back and forth, panicky, ranting...

CHURCH

You should have waked me sooner!
This is bad, very bad. I never should
have let that clown Mekum test his
wonder boy army on me. "If it ain't
broke, don't fix it." Shit! We don't
even know what we're up against. How
many...?

SLOAN

We couldn't get any figures on enemy
troop strength.

RUBRICK

Not even estimates...

CHURCH

We're sitting ducks here! There could
be a couple of divisions! More! We
don't even have the weapons to arm
the old soldiers.

RUBRICK
 (into the mike,
 desperately)
 Hello... Hello, One. This is Daddy...

EXT. ABOVE THE TRENCH GARDEN

The radio in CRAWLER TWO is still SQUAWKING urgently with RUBRICK'S VOICE as the crippled vehicle lies sprawled at a violent angle over the trench garden.

RADIO (V.O.)
 This is Daddy! Come in, Crawler Two,
 come in...

Nearby, A VOICE is crying out in pain in the night.

Limping, TODD keeps his weapon ready as he searches out the sound.

ANGLE ON THE INJURED SOLDIER, the one TODD crushed under the treads of the CRAWLER. He's screaming in pain. Looks up.

TODD looms over the INJURED SOLDIER, weapon pointed. Their eyes meet.

In agony, the INJURED SOLDIER looks into TODD'S eyes, nods ever so slightly.

BLAM! BLAM! TODD fires point blank.

Now the only sound is the ROARING of the WIND and the pathetic sound of RUBRICK continuing his desperate RADIO BABBLE.

EXT. INSIDE THE TRENCH GARDEN

As the RADIO CHATTERS, burning debris from the CRAWLER canted over the garden illuminates the garden...and a BODY sprawled there, fallen from the CRAWLER above.

BAM! KABAM! ROCKET FIRE!

EXT. ABOVE THE TRENCH

TODD FIRES rockets into the damaged CRAWLER...until the RADIO CHATTER stops abruptly. RADIO killed dead.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING COMMONS/SETTLEMENT - NIGHT

The gap between the floor and the trap door has increased to ten inches, enough for EMMA and RUTH to squeeze an INFANT through to SANDRA'S reaching arms.

Soaked with sweat, gasping and coughing in the thickening smoke, JIMMY PIG, SLADE and RED continue to strain at the beam... and it moves. Another inch!

The fire is raging. The INFANT SQUALLS in SANDRA'S arms. SLADE snaps at her as he pushes on the beam.

SLADE

Get them kids
(grunt)
Hid somewhere! There's soldiers
coming.

ELLEN and the CHILDREN look alarmed as SANDRA gathers them and ushers them toward the exit, glancing back toward the trap door as she's leaving.

EMMA and RUTH meet her look with frightened eyes.

Noticing SANDRA'S hesitation, JIMMY PIG reassures her...

JIMMY PIG

Don't worry. Couple more inches and
they're out.

SANDRA and the CHILDREN exit.

And suddenly!!! The beam slips back five inches, almost closing the opening. EMMA and JUDITH SCREAM!

JIMMY PIG, RED and SLADE look alarmed, defeated.

EXT. ABOVE THE TRENCH GARDEN

TODD walks away from the smoking hulk of the CRAWLER canted over the garden and drops into a traveling trench.

EXT. INSIDE A PASSAGE TRENCH

Limping slightly, laden with weapons and still wearing his helmet, TODD starts along the trench in the direction of the settlement.

EXT. INSIDE THE TRENCH GARDEN

In the shadows six feet below the overturned and smoldering CRAWLER TWO, the BODY stirs on the floor of the garden, barely visible in the flickering half light from the flames above.

It's CAINE 607. He groans and stirs again. He's not dead! In fact, he's rolling over, struggling to his knees.

INT. DINING COMMONS

The frightened eyes of EMMA, RUTH and CHILDREN peer from the four inch crack.

Whipped by wind from the hole in the ceiling, the fire is spreading, the smoke is thick. JIMMY PIG, SLADE and RED are gasping with effort and coughing. SLADE gasps to RED.

SLADE

You know where Thomas keeps those
two axes? Go get the axes.

RED takes off at a run.

JIMMY PIG

(so Emma and Ruth
can't hear)

We can't

(cough)

Chop 'em out. We don't have time.

SLADE

Just as good

(gasp)

To die chopping as fighting.

INT. CORRIDOR

RED rushes through a smoky corridor. Wherever shells have
punctured the roof, the WIND whips debris about.

EXT. INSIDE THE GARDEN TRENCH

Sitting up now, using a flashlight, CAINE 607 is examining a
terrible gash in his thigh that reveals tissue and tendon.
The right side of his face is also badly injured, flesh torn,
swollen and distorted.

He pulls the first aid kit from his utility belt, opens it,
focuses the light on the contents.

Selects a couple of pills. Swallows them. Considers. Takes
two more. Pulls out a hypodermic needle, injects his leg.
Takes another needle, stabs his bloody cheek.

His eyes glitter as he feels the rush from the drug. He looks
dangerous again in spite of his condition.

EXT. INSIDE THE PASSAGE TRENCH

TODD reaches the settlement, enters a half collapsed doorway.

INT. SUPPLY ROOM

RED is urgently rummaging through crowbars, coils of rope,
sledge hammers. At last he finds two axes, grabs them and
exits.

INT. CORRIDOR/SETTLEMENT

TODD picks his way among collapsed walls, fallen timbers.

He peers through doorways, sees CORPSES.

Moves on. Searching.

EXT. INSIDE THE PASSAGE TRENCH

Dragging a freshly bandaged leg, CAINE 607 makes his way along the trench toward the settlement. He's using the wall for support...but he seems to be getting stronger rather than weaker. His face is hideous.

INT. JUNCTION OF CORRIDORS

Carrying two axes RED zips around a corner and freezes...

RED'S POV of: A SOLDIER, seen from behind, moving down a smoky corridor, helmeted, heavily armed, dangerous looking, unidentifiable.

ANGLE ON RED, terrified, waiting till the SOLDIER (TODD) has disappeared in the smoke. Then RED hurries on down another damaged corridor, axes in hand.

INT. OTHER DAMAGED CORRIDOR

RED scoots around another corner and... stops short...an armored torso a foot in front of his face.

Looking up, RED looks right into the distorted face of CAINE 607.

Before RED can react, CAINE 607'S hand shoots out and snatches one of the axes.

Astonished, RED backs up a step, and raises the other axe to defend himself.

RED'S POV OF CAINE 607 looming toward him, axe in hand.

ANGLE ON RED, turning and running.

ANGLE ON CAINE 607 limping along, dragging his leg as RED disappears around a corner.

CAINE 607 rounds the corner in pursuit... and see only smoke, no sign of RED.

INT. DINING COMMONS

EMMA and JUDITH peer out from under the heavy metal trap door as JIMMY PIG and SLADE desperately try to move the beam using a piece of metal as a lever.

SLADE

This

(grunt, cough)

Ain't gonna work. Where's them axes?

He musta run into soldiers and got killed.

JIMMY PIG

How do you know there's soldiers coming?

SLADE
 `Cause soldiers
 (gasp)
 Finish what they start -- unless you
 stop 'em. And we're what
 (gasp)
 They started, and we didn't stop
 'em!
 (shouts to Emma)
 WE'RE GONNA GET YOU OUTTA THERE
 SOMEHOW! I SWEAR IT!

Just then RED bursts into the room with a single axe, shouting...

RED
 SOLDIERS! SOLDIERS!

SLADE
 (grabbing the axe)
 Only one axe?

RED
 They took the other one!

SLADE
 (chopping furiously)
 Toldja.

JIMMY PIG
 (to Red)
 How many?

RED
 I... I couldn't... I couldn't...
 count 'em. Four, I think. Maybe five.

SLADE
 (chopping)
 More! Trust me!

JIMMY PIG
 (grabbing the axe)
 Turns.

JIMMY PIG starts chopping furiously.

SLADE picks up a rifle, hands it to RED.

SLADE
 Do what you can.

As RED looks at the rifle, alarmed, SLADE "comforts" him.

SLADE
 They're gonna kill us anyhow. No
 point in surrendering.
 (grabbing the axe)
 Turn!

JIMMY PIG gasps for air as SLADE takes over chopping again.

RED exits, worried.

INT. THE MEETING ROOM

Huddled in a makeshift shelter of overturned furniture, with NATHAN asleep on her lap, SANDRA is reciting to ELLEN, WILL, TOMMY, JOHNNY, ANGIE, eight year old RAMON.

SANDRA

"-- sailed on a river of crystal light into a sea of dew. Where are you going and what do you wish the old moon asked the three. `We've come to fish for herring fish...'"

TOMMY

What's a "moon?"

JOHNNY

I know what a moon is! It's...

SANDRA

(suddenly, urgently)
SHHHHHHH!

SANDRA is reacting to vague movement in the shadows beyond the door...and sounds.

She puts her hand over the mouth of a whimpering CHILD, hushes another.

A timber falls outside the door and SANDRA sees a shadowy shape enter the meeting room, looming in the darkness.

Frightened CHILDREN hold their breath, peer out fearfully.

CRACK! SMASH! The huge shape hurls aside the debris in his way, switches on a flashlight, probes the darkness.

The light wipes the damaged room.

Suddenly, SANDRA gasps.

SANDRA

Oh, my God! It's... it's you!

TODD maneuvers the flashlight beam, sees the frightened CHILDREN.

SANDRA

Are you...all right?

TODD

We should go, sir.

SANDRA

Go?

INT. CORRIDOR

Peering into the smoke, RED reacts.

RED'S POV of CAINE 607, obscured by smoke, crossing the corridor ahead, not seeing RED.

ANGLE ON RED, summoning all his courage, raising his rifle, aiming.

BANG!

ANGLE ON CAINE 607 reacting, looking toward RED.

ANGLE ON RED, scared to death, firing again! And again!

ANGLE ON CAINE 607 wrenching a heavy door from its hinges and holding it in front of him, shielding himself from RED'S continuous shooting, advancing.

ANGLE ON RED, firing again and again...and backing up.

ANGLE ON CAINE 607 holding the door/shield as he advances on RED.

Backing, RED trips, goes down flat on his back.

CAINE 607, only six feet away, hurls the door at him.

RED shoves the door aside, aims his gun up at CAINE 607 as the huge soldier looms over him.

Before RED can pull the trigger, CAINE 607 snatches the rifle barrel and yanks the weapon out of RED'S hands.

RED rolls, scrambles to his feet.

And CAINE 607 clubs him to the ground with the butt of the rifle, crushes his skull with three brutal blows.

INT. MEETING ROOM

TODD'S impassive face somehow reveals the alarm and awkwardness he feels at what's happening to him. TOMMY is seated on his shoulders, he's got NATHAN in one arm and JOHNNY is nervously looking up at him as he clutches at TODD'S huge free hand, and now a little girl, SARAH, clutches at his combat pants as SANDRA instructs her.

SANDRA

Sarah, you hang on to Sergeant Todd.
No matter what happens!

Clutching TODD'S combat pants fiercely, SARAH looks up timidly at the big stonefaced man as SANDRA turns to ELLEN.

SANDRA

Ellen, go to the Commons. Tell Jimmy Pig and Mr. Slade that Sergeant Todd says we have to leave as soon as they get everybody out of the root cellar. Can you do that?

ELLEN

(scared)
Uh, yes, ma'am.

SANDRA

It's all right. The soldiers are gone for now. But be careful where you walk. And if it's too smoky, just come back.

ELLEN

(on her way out)
Yes, ma'am.

SANDRA

(calling after her)
Tell them to bring all the food and clothing they can carry.
(turning to the children)
Do you all understand that Sergeant Todd here is going to help us, and whatever he says to do you must do immediately, as if he was your father or your mother.

SARAH

(tears)
He's not my father!

ANGLE ON TODD'S stone face. Unfamiliar territory.

SANDRA

No... but he's our friend. Our good friend. Do you understand?

Frightened faces look to the awkward "killing machine."

TODD looks like a statue decorated with CHILDREN.

JOHNNY is sobbing as he hangs onto TODD's giant hand obediently.

JOHNNY

I want my father and my mother! Can he find where my father is? I want him to find my father!

SANDRA

No. No, he can't do that, but --

A SCREAM! From the corridor!

SANDRA freezes. TODD is alert, tense...and covered with CHILDREN.

SANDRA turns and runs for the door as TODD starts to put the CHILDREN down. But he's awkward, slow, not his usual graceful self, trying to be gentle like a clumsy man handling breakables.

INT. CORRIDOR

Bursting into the corridor, SANDRA sees ELLEN racing toward her, weaving through broken beams, SCREAMING as CAINE 607 lumbers after her out of the shadows. CAINE 607 doesn't bother to avoid obstacles, shoving beams aside like twigs, dragging his bad leg.

SANDRA
Sergeant Todd!

ELLEN dives into SANDRA's arms and SANDRA turns, only three steps ahead of CAINE 607, and rushes into the meeting room.

INT. MEETING ROOM

TODD is just putting NATHAN gently on the floor when he sees CAINE 607 arrive in the doorway. For half a second their eyes meet, then --

CAINE 607 advances on TODD.

Still encumbered by CHILDREN clutching at him, TODD sees his weapons, but can't get to them. Then it's too late!

The terrified CHILDREN watch as the giant CAINE 607 clubs TODD mercilessly with the rifle butt, then hurls him backwards like a rag doll.

Horrorified, SANDRA sees TODD slam into a wall, slump to the floor.

Dismissing TODD, CAINE 607 turns, looms toward the CHILDREN.

SANDRA
THEY'RE JUST CHILDREN!

CAINE 607 ignores her, heads for ELLEN, dragging his bad leg.

Spotting TODD'S weapons, SANDRA snatches a heavy rocket rifle, brings it up awkwardly, points it, FIRES!

And the kick from the heavy gun sends SANDRA sprawling back, the weapon tumbling from her hands.

But the WHIZZING ROCKET, a near miss, gets CAINE 607's attention. He turns away from ELLEN, toward SANDRA.

ANGLE ON TODD rising to his knees, blinking stupidly, trying to focus as blood pours into his eyes from a gash on his forehead.

TODD'S POV, a-vague, unfocused image of SANDRA, snatching a bayonet from TODD'S gear on the floor and lunging courageously at CAINE 607.

Vaguely, TODD sees CAINE 607 parry her thrust effortlessly and grab her. As she beats at CAINE 607 bravely with her fists, the big man slams her into a wall brutally. As she crumples, he hits her again.

ANGLE ON TODD struggling to his feet, staggering as he shakes his head to clear it.

His eyes go to SANDRA, slumped against the wall, bloody.

Terrified CHILDREN look up at CAINE 607 as he towers over them. Suddenly...

SHTUNK! A knife blade suddenly sticks in CAINE 607's neck.

CAINE 607 only flinches... and, as he yanks the knife from his neck by the handle, he turns to see who threw the blade...

WHAM! TODD slams into him, tackling him, driving his big shoulder deep into the new soldier's waist, slamming the big man hard into a wall.

Air goes out of CAINE 607, the knife drops from his hand.

But that's it for TODD's victory. Six-five, two-sixty, CAINE 607 is bigger and stronger than TODD. His powerful arms rip TODD off him like he's taking off a Band-Aid.

Terrified, wide-eyed CHILDREN watch TODD hurled back across the room.

TODD scrambles to his feet, shakes his head clear.

Here comes CAINE 607, dragging his bad leg.

TODD attacks! Combining a martial arts feint and lunge with a vicious kick!

But CAINE 607 counters expertly, brushing aside the attack!

TODD lunges again employing yet another skilled move.

SMACK! CAINE 607 outmaneuvers TODD again, punishing him brutally.

WHACK! WHAM! SMASH! CRUNCH! This time TODD jolts the bigger man with a terrible combination of moves, smashing him in the Adam's apple, kicking him in the knee, driving an elbow into the jaw.

This time it's CAINE 607 who has to back away to recover. And now he seems to re-consider TODD, revealing for the first time a genuine respect.

As their eyes meet, CAINE 607 seems to be saying "All right then, you're serious, let's do it, fella."

TODD lunges.

SMASH! CAINE 607 creams him.

TODD twists, slams CAINE 607 back.

BASH! A fist to the face!

UMMMMMPH! A knee in a groin!

SLAM! A head against a wall!

VIDEO SCREEN/COCKPIT/DADDY - NIGHT

His face tanned from his Caribbean vacation, his image blurred and distorted by transmission, MEKUM'S VIDEO IMAGE stares incredulously from the snowy video monitor in the cockpit.

MEKUM

You can't be serious! This is some kind of a joke... in poor taste.

As SLOAN and RUBRICK look on uneasily, an indignant CHURCH addresses the image on the screen.

CHURCH

Not only are we apparently out twenty of your fancy new soldiers, your supermen, we're out both crawlers and all the weapons...so we can't arm the old soldiers, the ones you "improved" on, to defend ourselves...

SLOAN

(panicky, blurting at the screen)

We've got to get out of here, Colonel Mekum!

CHURCH flashes a scowl at SLOAN as, on the screen, MEKUM erupts excitedly.

MEKUM

Abort? You want to lose twenty top soldiers to a phantom army and then abort the mission? Do you know what that would look like on my record? Or yours? We'd be explaining it for the next fifty years from some goddam assignment in God knows where, we'd --

CHURCH

(interrupting sharply)

Well, how's it gonna look when we lose the ship too? How's that gonna look on the old record? 'Cause that's what's gonna happen if we don't get our ass outta here. We can't defend ourselves with no weapons and --

MEKUM

(fighting his own panic)

Hold on, hold on there, Captain! At ease! Let's calm down and remember...remember we're soldiers.

CHURCH

(sarcastic)

Good plan, Colonel.

MEKUM

(moving on, improvising)

Now we can't just get the shit kicked out of us by an unknown guerrilla army... But maybe we could...alter...our objective...

CHURCH

Meaning?

MEKUM

Nuke the joint...and get out!

Delighted with his own genius, MEKUM smiles triumphantly from the video screen as RUBRICK, SLOAN, and CHURCH exchange stunned looks and we...

CUT TO:

INT. MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

WHUMP! TODD's bloodied head is slammed to the floor. His eyes are almost swollen shut as he looks up at CAINE 607 kneeling on top of him. Both men are bloody and exhausted, their breath coming in gasps, but it's CAINE 607 who's on top, beating the last bit of resistance out of TODD who struggles desperately one more time...before he slumps unconscious.

Horrified, NATHAN sees CAINE 607 smash the unconscious TODD with the last of his strength, "finishing him off." NATHAN can't stand it.

He toddles toward CAINE 607, who's still on all fours, and attacks, his tiny fists raining blows on the amazed monster's bloody face.

The frightened CHILDREN see CAINE 607 ignore NATHAN's ineffectual blows and struggle with enormous effort to his feet.

Once standing, he looks down at NATHAN beating at his knees. For a moment he's confused. What's this?

Then he sees the frightened CHILDREN and orients himself. When he looks down at NATHAN again, tiny NATHAN is an enemy as good as dead. One blow and...

But just then big hands close around CAINE 607's ankles, tackling him. As the giant topples, TODD lets go of the ankles and crawls on top of the fallen man.

As CAINE 607 looks up into TODD's fierce face, the fight goes out of his eyes. He knows he's beaten, he knows TODD will never quit. He's helpless as TODD grips him in a terrible hold and as TODD puts the pressure on, CAINE 607 whispers...

CAINE 607

It hurts!

TODD

(sympathetic)

I know.

SNAP! TODD breaks CAINE 607's neck and watches the life go out of him.

In the sudden silence as TODD, panting, stares at his defeated enemy, he hears a VOICE...her VOICE...very weak...

SANDRA

Sergeant...

TODD turns and sees SANDRA slumped against the wall where Caine 607 threw her. There's a trickle of blood coming from a nostril, more blood in her hair. Her eyes don't look right.

SANDRA

Nathan!

TODD sees NATHAN looking at his mother with fear in his eyes. Struggling to his feet, TODD picks up NATHAN and puts the boy down close to his mother.

SANDRA reaches out and takes NATHAN's hand. She holds NATHAN's hand toward TODD.

TODD looks confused.

There are tears in SANDRA's eyes as she pushes NATHAN's little hand into TODD's huge left paw.

TODD looks down at the joined hands, then he looks into SANDRA's flooded eyes.

Does TODD understand her gesture? His face is impassive. Maybe he doesn't. Just then a hand touches his shoulder.

TODD turns to see JOHNNY face him, trembling, but valiant, to ask the question the others are fearful of asking.

JOHNNY

S-sir...sir, are you our friend?
 (indicating Sandra)
 Sh-she said you were our friend.

TODD sees all the CHILDREN looking at him, their eyes big with hope and fear as we...

CUT TO:

INT. DINING COMMONS

Blackened with soot, JIMMY PIG still has the axe in his hand as SLADE manages, with a supreme effort, to hold the door of the root cellar up enough to allow EMMA and JUDITH to push the FOUR CHILDREN out of the cellar and then to scramble after them.

Exhausted, SLADE lets the door fall back, picks up his rifle and turns toward the exit. And freezes. Dumbfounded.

Standing in the doorway is TODD, laden with CHILDREN, on his shoulders, in his arms, surrounding him, clutching at his garments.

SLADE

You!

JIMMY PIG

Thank God!

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR/DADDY - NIGHT

CRUDE LETTERS scrawled on the metal skin of the bomb say "LOVE FROM DADDY."

The heavy bomb is being lugged along a long narrow corridor.

SLOAN (O.S.)

Well, Riley, you wanted a weapon,
 right? Now you got one! A real biggee!

We see that RILEY and three other VETERANS -- GREEN, CHESLEY, and MOORE -- are struggling to maneuver the heavy bomb along the narrow corridor and down a ladder hatch as SLOAN follows on their heels and CHURCH and RUBRICK, fretting, follow her.

RUBRICK

What good'll it do just setting it
 outside? We don't know where the
 enemy is.

CHURCH

Doesn't matter. For once Mekum's on
 the hall. This is a very dirty bomb!
 (MORE)

CHURCH (CONT'D)

That wind will churn the radioactivity
around like soap in a washing machine.
This is gonna be one clean place in
a very short time...

CUT TO:

INT. BOWELS OF THE SHIP - NIGHT

THE TIMER on the bomb CLICKS into action, ticking off seconds
and blurring off the tenths.

ANGLE ON SLOAN, punching a code into the device as she
addresses the four VETERANS.

SLOAN

Okay, fellas, take it about a hundred
yards, then get back on the
double...unless you wanna fry.

RILEY, his face impassive, opens a hatch, revealing the
darkness outside where the wind SCREAMS.

As RUBRICK and CHURCH watch the four VETS stagger into the
darkness with the bomb, RUBRICK has to shout to CHURCH to be
heard over the wind outside.

RUBRICK

THIRTY MINUTES IS AWFUL TIGHT! WE
HAVE TO LAUNCH AND GET CLEAR OF THE
ATMOSPHERE.

CHURCH

IT'S ENOUGH. IF WE LEAVE MORE THAN
ENOUGH, THE ENEMY MAY GET CLEAR
SOMEHOW AS WELL.

As SLOAN shuts the hatch, she checks her watch

EXT. SPACESHIP/DADDY

Carrying the heavy bomb in a sling, RILEY, CHESLEY, MOORE,
and GREEN stagger past the work-lights into the darkness
while the wind rages around them. Holding the sling one-
handed, GREEN is illuminating the ground ahead with a
flashlight.

INT. COCKPIT/DADDY

Flick! Flick! Flick! Flick! SLOAN is flicking switches as
RUBRICK reads off a check list and she responds to each item
on the list with "Roger."

CHURCH is punching buttons on the control console, causing
lights to light up reading "Port Power Cluster," "Starboard
Power Cluster," "Vertical Stabilizer Unit," and so on.

EXT. TERRAIN

Darkness! Buffeted by the wind, RILEY and his COMPANIONS lower the bomb to the ground and release it gently. They're just turning to go back, fighting the wind, when RILEY senses something. He takes the light from GREEN and points it.

The four VETERANS are astonished at what they see.

CRAWLER ONE, battered and motionless, is abandoned only ten yards away.

The flashlight beam probes the blown out windshield, the scarred chassis, pans across the back seat...and pans back urgently, glimpsing tiny EYES.

The EYES disappear behind the back seat.

RILEY, CHESLEY, GREEN and MOORE exchange glances.

The light probes again, this time revealing the frightened faces of CHILDREN cowering in the back seat, hiding from the wind.

Suddenly RILEY whirls.

Out of the darkness beside him, TODD looms.

RILEY looks into the face of a man he saw killed!

TODD has a CHILD in each arm and another hanging on to his leg for dear life. He's wearing the scarf Jimmy Pig gave him.

In the shadows behind TODD, JIMMY PIG, SLADE, EMMA, JUDITH and more CHILDREN are watching anxiously.

RILEY's stone face comes as close to expression as it ever will...astonishment!

The other VETERANS stare too, amazed.

Suddenly RILEY gives TODD a smart military salute.

ANGLE ON JIMMY PIG and SLADE exchanging a look of wonder. What's going on here? They haven't a clue! And we...

CUT TO:

INT. COCKPIT/DADDY - NIGHT

The countdown clock is TICKING away, showing ten minutes, as CHURCH, RUBRICK, and SLOAN complete their pre-launch prep.

CHURCH

Right horizontal?

RUBRICK

Roger. Right horizontal checks green.

CHURCH relaxes, looks up at the clock, satisfied.

CHURCH

All right, we're "go." I'm allowing us three minutes to clear the atmosphere and get out of range. That means we can wait seven more minutes.

SLOAN

Fuck 'em! Let's just go!

RUBRICK

She's right! Four more casualties aren't gonna mean anything to anybody, especially when they're already obsolete.

CHURCH considers for a moment, then shrugs.

CHURCH

I guess they wouldn't want to get old anyway.

(to Sloan)

Go ahead, lock the hatch.

(to Rubrick)

Rube, punch up the port power cluster and --

SLOAN

(interrupting urgently)

What was that?

CHURCH

Huh? What was what?

SLOAN

Sssshhhh! Listen!

SLOAN is listening intensely.

All they hear is the HUM of the air system and miscellaneous WHITE NOISE.

CHURCH and RUBRICK exchange a glance and are about to speak when they all hear it...

A sound like a CHILD CRYING somewhere in the ship!

All three of them stare at each other in utter amazement.

RUBRICK

It sounds...

SLOAN

Like a kid!

Just then they hear it again, closer.

CHURCH frowns. What the fuck?

CUT TO:

INT. BUNKS/DADDY - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

EMMA, JUDITH, SLADE and JIMMY PIG are settling most of the CHILDREN in the cramped crew quarters, pulling off hats and coats, when a COMMOTION causes them to look toward the open door to the corridor in time to see... a glimpse of RUBRICK being shoved roughly along the corridor by MOORE, his loud protests clearly audible.

RUBRICK

Are you crazy? You can't do this,
soldier! You're going to be in
trouble.

Then, as RUBRICK is pushed out of view, CHURCH appears, indignant and panicky, as CHESLEY hustles him past.

CHURCH

I'm your superior officer, don't you
understand that?

ANGLE ON THE PIONEERS, exchanging glances.

INT. CORRIDOR/DADDY

As CHESLEY shoves him along, CHURCH continues to protest...

CHURCH

Don't you realize you're violating
the chain of command? I'm giving you
a direct order to...to...to...

CHURCH breaks off, suddenly speechless at the sight ahead of him.

Here comes TODD, laden with more CHILDREN, the tattoo on his check clearly visible. His eyes meet CHURCH'S.

CHURCH

S-sergeant? S-sergeant T-todd? It...
You...! How...? How...?

Weak at the knees, CHURCH is still stammering as CHESLEY shoves him ahead.

And then SLOAN, in the grip of GREEN, is hustled by. She looks wide-eyed at TODD and the CHILDREN.

SLOAN

Sergeant Todd!

CUT TO:

INT. BOWELS OF THE SHIP - NIGHT - SECONDS LATER

RUBRICK, CHURCH, and SLOAN are still protesting as the VETERANS hustle them down the ladder toward the main hatch.

RUBRICK

Listen, you don't understand! That bomb is triggered! It's on a timer!

CHURCH

We have to get out of here! All of us! You need us! You need us to operate the ship...

SLOAN

YOU'RE FUCKING MORONS! CAN'T YOU DIMWITS GRASP THAT YOU'RE KILLING US ALL! YOU'RE KILLING YOURSELVES! THERE'S ONLY A FEW MINUTES LEFT!

RUBRICK

NO! NO! NO!

RUBRICK is shoved out the door into the night!

EXT. SPACESHIP/DADDY - NIGHT

RUBRICK desperately clutches at the hatch entrance as the savage wind tears at him...but he can't hold on.

As SLOAN and CHURCH are shoved out the hatch, they see RUBRICK blown off into the night, screaming.

CHURCH

DOWN! LIE DOWN! FLAT!

And CHURCH dives for the ground as the wind tumbles him.

SLOAN does the same thing as the hatch door slams behind them, shutting them out of the ship.

SLOAN

NO! NO! NO! PLEASE! NO!

INT. COCKPIT/DADDY - NIGHT

The countdown clock shows four minutes and twenty seconds as it CLICKS off the seconds.

Their soldier faces inscrutable, TODD and RUBRICK consider the various lights winking on the control panel.

RILEY points to a row of switches and looks at TODD. Their eyes meet. TODD considers the switches, then nods.

RILEY throws the switches. A row of red lights goes on and the ship seems to hum with life.

Still communicating wordlessly, TODD points to another switch, RILEY throws it!

EXT. SPACESHIP/DADDY

BLAST OFF! Big engines belch fire, illuminating the bleak landscape as the ship rises into the night.

Brightly lit by the ignition, SLOAN, still on her belly, sees the ship taking off.

SLOAN
OH, MY GOD! OH, MY GOD!

CHURCH
THERE IT IS! I SEE IT!

The bomb is clearly visible ten yards away in the dying glow of the takeoff.

CHURCH bumps madly along the ground on his belly.

EXT. SPACESHIP/DADDY

The NAF ship "Daddy" climbs off into space, getting smaller and smaller, the light from the takeoff diminishing.

EXT. THE BOMB/TERRAIN

The countdown timer on the bomb is faintly visible in the dying light. It reads twenty seconds.

CHURCH (V.O.)
Twenty seconds. Hurry.

CHURCH and SLOAN are hunched desperately over the bomb in near darkness, the wind tearing at them. SLOAN tries to punch a code into the keys...

SLOAN
Oh, my God, I can't remember if it's
six-seven or seven-six...

CHURCH
Try one! Try it!

SLOAN punches the keyboard blindly.

SLOAN
There! I did it! Did it stop? Did it --
?

BAHWHOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM! Everything is dazzling, blinding light!

INT. COCKPIT/DADDY

White light from the blast briefly floods the cockpit as TODD and RILEY stare at the video monitor where MEKUM'S VIDEO IMAGE is babbling frantically.

MEKUM

...I need a report, Captain. It's not just my ass, it's yours too! You've got to stand by me on this. I want you to come in right now... right now! Do you understand me? Right now!

RILEY turns to TODD, looking a question at him. TODD meets his look and no words are necessary.

RILEY reaches for the control switch as MEKUM continues babbling.

MEKUM

This is important for all of us, for our careers. There's going to be a Board of Inquiry and --

MEKUM'S IMAGE cuts out mid-babble.

SLADE'S VOICE (O.S.)

That was the boss, huh?

TODD and RILEY turn to see SLADE in the entrance to the cockpit addressing TODD and the VETERANS collectively.

SLADE

Well then, I guess you fellas are all right. I guess I misjudged you some. Where I said you were "a buncha no good killer robots," I mighta just overspoke myself. As of now, till it goes otherwise, you got my sincere approval and support.

With that, SLADE turns and exits.

TODD looks at RILEY, RILEY looks at TODD. What the fuck was that?

INT. CORRIDOR/DADDY - NIGHT

NATHAN wobbles along an empty corridor, stumbles, catches himself on a wall, keeps going.

He passes a doorway, peers in, sees two SOLDIERS working at a console like robots. They don't look up.

NATHAN keeps going, toddling toward a hatchway.

INT. COCKPIT/DADDY

Entering, NATHAN moves among the legs of big men, VETERANS. NATHAN keeps going.

Then, backing against a wall, he looks up and VETERANS loom past him with blank faces. He is alone again.

NATHAN totters onward.

CLOSE ANGLE ON CHARTS, the same ones Church had on Christmas Eve, showing tiny dots in a vast sea of space.

TODD and RILEY are poring over them, their eyes considering dot after dot. Finally, TODD points to a dot and looks a question at RILEY.

RILEY considers the dot for a long moment...then he looks TODD in the eye.

RILEY

Cold.

TODD looks back at the dot, considers it, looks back at RILEY.

TODD

Air?

RILEY nods a yes.

TODD is thoughtful...finally asks the next question.

TODD

Safe?

RILEY

(nodding yes)

But very cold.

TODD considers the dot on the map again, then looks at RILEY.

TODD

That one.

RILEY

Aye, aye, sir.

RILEY turns toward a console, but something makes him look down toward his feet. Then he looks back at TODD.

TODD follows the look.

Tiny NATHAN is looking up at TODD who's towering over him.

TODD looks down without expression, the scarf from Jimmy Pig still wrapped around his neck.

NATHAN puts his arms out to be picked up.

TODD considers the outstretched arms.

RILEY looks from TODD to NATHAN and back to TODD. What's this?

TODD hesitates a half second more, then leans down and picks NATHAN up in his arms, lifting the boy to his chest.

RILEY looks on. Never seen anything like it.

NATHAN is close to TODD's face, looking right into it, trying a little smile, a nervous one, looking for a response.

TODD hesitates, takes a breath, moves the muscles of his face. All he can produce is an awkward grimace, the distortion of a smile, almost comical.

NATHAN reads the intention successfully. His face collapses into a huge friendly grin.

TODD tries again, making a clumsy sort of rubbery wince.

RILEY watches. Totally amazed.

TODD turns, takes NATHAN to a porthole, puts his face up to it.

NATHAN stares out at the darkness punctuated by a billion stars, a sky full of hope.

As NATHAN looks out, TODD works his face again, trying for a smile the way a weak man might try to lift a heavy weight.

NATHAN looks at the stars outside, TODD looks with him and suddenly TODD's face relaxes into an awkward grin, almost by accident.

RILEY watches the two of them for a moment, confounded by what he's seeing. Then he turns to the console and...

THE CLOSING CREDITS ROLL.

THE END