

THE DEEF KILLER

by

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EXT - EDGE OF A DESERT CANYON - AFTERNOON

A pursuit car speeds toward us, dust plumes rising behind it. Wing-like solar panels fold into its roof as it glides to a stop, its pitted, angular body high off the ground.

A man steps out wearing camouflage gear. A pistol is strapped to his side. This is FRANK RIDER, mid-forties. He looks older, his face creased by the merciless sun.

He sweeps a small GEIGER COUNTER in an arc before him. The needle on the gage jumps to sporadic CLICKS but doesn't move into the red - only background RADIATION.

He returns the counter to the case on his belt, strides to the canyon's edge, looks down.

Frank is a professional - that aura of detached proficiency - his movements quick and certain, with a lean, economic grace. But his eyes are troubled. There is no joy in this.

INT - THE CAR - A MOMENT LATER

Frank leans in, picks up a rifle with a telescopic sight. On the floor are an open box of micro-cassettes and a belt holding a small video recorder attached to a headband, on which is a lens.

He takes a cassette, grabs the rifle, recorder and headband.

EXT - OUTSIDE THE CAR - A MOMENT LATER

Frank snaps the cassette into the recorder, fastens the headband with the lens on his forehead, attaches the recorder to his belt, activates it.

FRANK

This is Rider. Sector 17,
quadrant nine.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - FLOOR OF THE CANYON - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Frank squats by a shallow stream, scoops water, sniffs it, turns away in disgust. He studies the canyon wall, then...

FRANK

There's a cave. Could be a
nest.

EXT - ENTRANCE TO THE CAVE - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank stops to examine a stick with a burnt end. Climbs the remaining few yards to the low, narrow entrance to the cave.

FRANK
Can't tell from here. I'm
going in.

IN THE CAVE

A flashlight beam bounces jerkily over the floor and walls of the passage.

FRANK (O.S.)
Looks deserted.

He crawls into a higher section of the cave. Behind him the dim outline of a ledge. He swings the beam to a circle of stones and a few burnt sticks.

FRANK
Wait a minute.

He swings the beam deeper, to a pile of branches.

FRANK
It is a nest.

The beam holds on the branches, on the hint of something fleshy beneath. He walks toward it.

Carefully pulls a few branches aside, revealing a WOMAN, half naked, her face withered.

A THIRD ARM hangs from her chest. She stares up lifelessly, her mouth open, as if caught in a last, shrill cry.

FRANK
Looks like a mother - maybe
12 or 13.

He lifts more branches and we see two CHILDREN, one with NO HANDS, the other with only HALF AN EYE. Neither moves.

FRANK
Christ!

The SHUFFLE of FEET. A flashlight beam explodes on his face.

ERIC (O.S.)
Colonel?

FRANK
Turn that off!

The beam swerves away. Behind it is ERIC BRADEN, early thirties, also in camouflage gear. His pistol drawn.

FRANK

You don't need the gun.

Eric's beam finds the branches, plays over the bodies.

FRANK

They're dead, Eric.

Frank deactivates the recorder on his belt. Eric moves closer to the bodies, studies them.

ERIC

Three? That's good hunting.

FRANK

They were dead when I got here.
(then)
Why're you in my sector?

ERIC

No action in mine. I thought
I'd help.

FRANK

Next time, don't. Let's go.

Eric crawls under the ledge, toward the passage. Frank bends to follow. As he does...

A FIGURE LEAPS from the ledge, CRASHING onto his shoulders. He's knocked to the ground, the flashlight spinning beside him.

In the strobic beam we see a small woman - naked, holding a rock above her head. She CHARGES, HISSING.

Frank raises his arm. She SLASHES it. Heaves the rock. He twists away, grabbing at the flashlight, as she disappears into the passage.

ERIC (O.S.)

What the...

GUNSHOTS

EXT - THE CAVE ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Eric crawls out holding his pistol, fiercely looking left and right. Frank crawls out behind him as...

BELOW, the little woman scrambles down the rocks.

ERIC

It's an Auntie.

He grabs Frank's rifle, aims it. Then he hands it to Frank.

ERIC

She's your kill, Colonel.

Frank brings the rifle to his shoulder. Peers through the scope. Cross hairs on the woman's back as she scrambles down. Down.

ERIC

She'll get away!

Blood dripping from Frank's arm. Finally he FIRES.

BELOW

The woman falls, her body twitching as it slides along the rocks. Then it's still.

ERIC

(watching Frank)
Does your arm hurt? I thought
you'd never pull the trigger.

FRANK

I've pulled the trigger, Eric.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - THE CAVE ENTRANCE - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank is alone. He takes a knife from its scabbard in his boot, cuts away his bloody sleeve, rubs salve on his arm, wraps it in gauze.

Then he leans back, watching the rim of the canyon as the last arc of sun drops away, leaving it in shadow.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - FRANK'S STATION - TWILIGHT

Frank's car glides to a stop before a tiny, cinder-block square with more of the wing-like solar panels on its roof and a tall antenna beside it.

INT - FRANK'S STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Bare concrete walls, a kitchen in one corner, a cot, chair and open closet in another, a toilet in the third. In the fourth are a TV, electronic equipment, and a VCR.

Frank strides in, snaps a cassette from the recorder, drops the rifle, pistol belt, recorder and headband to the floor.

He inserts the cassette in the video player, turns the volume to "OFF", pushes the "SEND" button.

He strides to a cabinet, opens it. Looks at a disordered array of plastic food containers as...

ON THE TV

His finding the bodies in the cave, recorded through the lens he wore on his forehead, plays silently.

Then a speaker CRACKLES. We hear the young voice of...

PRIVATE SMALLS

Colonel Rider? It's me, Sir
- Private Smalls. Did you get
my message? They want you to
come in.

FRANK

Yes.

PRIVATE SMALLS

I counted three Deefs in the
cave. That's good hunting.

(then)

That was three, Sir?

Frank sits on the cot. Stares numbly ahead.

FRANK

Yes, Smalls. Three.

PRIVATE SMALLS

Really good hunting.

A moment.

PRIVATE SMALLS

Is something wrong, Colonel.

FRANK

What could be wrong, Smalls?

The tape ends. The TV goes blank.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - FRANK'S CAR - A DESERT HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

Sparse patches of mesquite and dwarfed, misshapen yucca. Frank speeds along the sand-swept highway, dodging cracks and potholes.

He spoons lumps of gray gelatin to his mouth as he passes the rusty hulks of cars, trucks, vans, and occasional buses sprawled by the side.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - FRANK'S CAR - THE DESERT - SUNSET

Frank picks his way through a snarl of rusted-out vehicles on what was a suburban freeway. Around it we see the detritus of an abandoned civilization - decaying shops and houses, broken windows, collapsed roofs, power lines snaked across the ground.

IN THE DISTANCE

The tops of tall buildings.

INT - FRANK'S CAR - EARLY EVENING

Frank drives toward a chain-link fence topped with razor wire, spotted with guard towers. It's a half mile wide, two miles long, enclosing the closest buildings. On his right, the desolate remains of an airport.

Two hundred yards inside the fence, paralleling it, is a 30-foot black wall dotted with solar panels. Between the wall and the fence are cultivated fields, the closest with dry corn stalks.

Frank approaches the fence gate. A GUARD rolls it back. Inside, a police van is parked, its lights blinking. A TRUCK WITH DARK WINDOWS passes, leaving the enclosure as...

FRANK

What's the problem?

GUARD #1

A climber returned. We're tracking him now.

EXT - INSIDE THE FENCE - MOMENTS LATER

The CLIMBER, a man in his thirties, SPRINTS through the corn stalks toward the wall. THREE GUARDS race behind him.

The Climber breaks out, finds himself on a road - leaps aside as Frank's car SKIDS to a stop.

The Climber sprints away. The guards close, SLAM him to the ground. Guard #2 kneels on his back, cuffing him as...

GUARD #2

What'd you expect to find out there?

GUARD #3
 Couldn't resist that Deef pussy,
 right?

GUARD #4
 That's disgusting!

They pull the Climber to his feet. His desperate eyes settle on Frank, who is walking toward him.

CLIMBER
 There's greenspace outside!

GUARD #2
 Yeah, and I'm a fairy princess.

Guards #3 and #4 drag the Climber away. His eyes still on Frank.

CLIMBER
 Find Valiant!

GUARD #2
 (to the guards)
 He's contaminated. Hit the
 showers when you're through.

FRANK
 What's this about greenspace?

GUARD #2
 You tell me. You're the only
 guys out there.
 (beat)
 We get these climbers now and
 then. Probably on drugs. Or
 crazy.

FRANK
 What'll happen to him?

GUARD #2
 Who knows?

Frank returns to his car. The guard begins speaking into a recorder as Frank's car speeds past him toward the wall.

INT - FRANK'S CAR - INSIDE THE WALL - MOMENTS LATER

A bottom section of the wall closes behind Frank as he slows, then drives into...

LAS VEGAS - although a squalid facsimile of the splendor it was.

We're on Las Vegas Boulevard, crossing Hacienda. Virtually everything is dark. Sand brushes the street and grounds.

The only lights come from the bottom floor of the Luxor, and from the bottom floors of some hotels farther down. Many windows, particularly on the upper floors, are broken out.

Frank turns in at the Luxor. Three pursuit cars are parked near a line of farm trucks, utility vans and tractors, next to a vehicle repair yard built in the remains of the pyramid.

A sleek, powerful car parked near the entrance, by police vans.

Frank pulls in by the pursuit cars, glancing at the sleek one as he walks toward the entrance.

INT - THE SCAN ROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

A tiny room in the basement. Frank is naked, standing between a pair of large metal plates suspended from the ceiling, his feet spread, his arms wide.

A SCAN TECH, in his late twenties, sits behind him, studying a computer screen.

FRANK

Isn't it a little late for this?

SCAN TECH

Defects can show up any time, Colonel.

FRANK

So we're told. How many have you found?

SCAN TECH

Not many.

(then)

I just work here - okay?

Frank nods. The Scan Tech taps a key. On the screen we see Frank's naked image. Beneath it: FRANCIS JAMES RIDER. COLONEL, DEFECTIVE CONTROL.

Then "COMMENCING" blinks and a second, identical image appears by the first. Beneath it: FRANCIS JAMES RIDER. IB455-098467-2046-M.

"TESTING" blinks over the two images as the second merges slowly into the first, points on the merged image FLASHING, then fading as it resolves from skin and hair to musculature, to organs, and finally to a skeleton.

Then Frank's naked body reappears - "DEFORMITIES WITHIN NORM" blinking below it.

SCAN TECH

You're clean.

EXT - LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank walks beneath lengths of torn awning stretched on shaky poles. Past MEN standing, leaning, sitting in the buildings' shadowy darkness. One of them jogs to him, pulls out a small plastic bag.

METH DEALER

A little something for the pain, Colonel?

Frank stares at him.

A police van pulls out of the Luxor parking lot. The dealer darts away as other men retreat into the shadows.

Frank continues on, crossing Tropicana. We hear men CHEERING, BOOING.

A few shops and the bottom floors of some hotels here are dimly lighted.

The CHEERS and BOOS are louder - from speakers outside the MGM. On a big screen in front we see a vicious kickboxing match.

On the street, VENDORS hawk food, garments and jumbles of small electrical devices, weaving among knots of RESTLESS, SULLEN MEN in mismatched clothes. They move aside as Frank passes.

POLICE swoop in, break up a fight as Frank strides by the EATSEE, where, inside, men sit on stools, spooning food into their mouths as images of scantily clothed women shine on a screen.

He walks on, past CREMES, with its displays of oils, ointments, and latex female bodies.

INT - FRANK'S ROOM IN THE ALADDIN - MOMENTS LATER

Frank enters the small, dusty room, removes his boots - the right one with the knife in its scabbard - strides to the bathroom.

Turns on the faucet. A HISS, a trickle of brown water. He splashes his face, rubs his chest and arms with a wet cloth.

INT - THE LUXOR - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank enters. It's a POLICE STATION. A CLERK turns from his computer screen.

FRANK
 Senator Armonds?

POLICE CLERK
 Through there.

INT - LEN CATRELL'S OFFICE - A SHORT TIME LATER

Small and shoddy, with a few chairs, a desk with a computer well, a monitor and keyboard. An open briefcase, stacks of papers on one side.

SENATOR TED ARMONDS, early fifties, sits behind the desk. A bit heavy, balding, with a cherubic face. But his eyes are piercing. A man used to getting his way.

At a window, looking out, is another man - slender, wearing a cap, loose-fitting trousers and a jacket.

Standing just behind Armonds is LEN CATRELL, early forties, pale, small-boned and wiry.

A KNOCK at the door. Armonds rises. A well-rehearsed smile.

ARMONDS
 Come in, Colonel.

Frank enters, strides to the desk.

ARMONDS
 Ted Armonds.

They shake - Frank stiffly. Then...

ARMONDS
 Your grandfather...

FRANK
 That's right.

A sharp look. Armonds gestures toward Len.

ARMONDS
 My assistants, Len Catrell,
 and...

He gestures toward the man at the window. The man turns - and it's not a man. JEAN DAUTON, mid-thirties, stunning, no make-up, removes her cap as she strolls to Frank. Takes his unoffered hand. A hint of mockery in her smile.

JEAN
 The great Frank Rider. I'm
 honored.

FRANK

(gawking)

What's a Breeder doing here?

She only smiles at him.

ARMONDS

Please have a seat.

He does. Can't take his eyes off Jean.

FRANK

What's this about?

ARMONDS

I'm putting together a new team - a strike force - to eliminate the Deefs once and for all. I'd like you to lead it.

FRANK

The Deefs are dying on their own.

ARMONDS

Their defective genes remain a threat, as you know very well. And there's radiation everywhere. We can't leave the cities until the Deefs are gone.

Finally Frank turns to him. Suspicious. It shows.

FRANK

The Deefs are scattered, mostly in the canyons. Hunting them in groups makes no sense.

ARMONDS

Oh, but it does, Frank. Because if we move to the outside before the land is clean, as repulsive as it sounds, some men would have sex with the more normal-looking of those creatures, and we'd be right back where we started.

(beat)

In fact a Climber returned not two hours ago.

FRANK

I saw him. He said something about greenspace. And somebody named 'Valiant'.

A quick look between Jean and Len.

ARMONDS

There's no greenspace, Frank.
Who would know better than you?
And who's this 'Valiant'? Have
you heard that name before?

Frank shakes his head.

ARMONDS

A figment - an apparition.
(then)
How about my strike force?
Can I count on you?

FRANK

I told you. It makes no sense.

ARMONDS

(smiles)
Sometimes, governing is just
showing that you care.

FRANK

Why me?

ARMONDS

Your name has a certain cachet.
And you're a hell of a killer,
I understand.

FRANK

I do my job.

ARMONDS

So do I.
(then)
There'd be perquisites, of
course.

FRANK

Such as?

JEAN

Maybe I could help you with
that.

Frank looks at her. At her faintly-mocking smile. Then...

FRANK

No.

ARMONDS
That's it? That's your answer?

FRANK
Yeah.

All eyes on him as he strides to the door. Then he's gone.

ARMONDS
I drove a hundred miles for
this? Who does he think he
is!?

JEAN
He's a loner - lived outside
most of his life.

LEN
He didn't buy the strike force.

JEAN
I wouldn't either.
(to Armonds)
Maybe you'd like to explain it.

Armonds ignores her. Angrily gathers his papers.

LEN
Rider's dangerous.

ARMONDS
I want his name on this.

JEAN
I can persuade him.

ARMONDS
(a little smile)
I'm sure you can.
(beat)
You want protection?

JEAN
(shakes her head, then)
When're you going back?

ARMONDS
In the morning. I want Rider
on board, Jean.

She nods, quickly exits.

LEN

The men are edgy. We're
standing on dynamite.

Armonds stacks papers in his briefcase.

ARMONDS

How's your life, Leonard? Do
you like what you have - your
place in the world?

LEN

Yes, of course.

ARMONDS

You know that if our population
could leave the cities - if they
could live outside - there'd be
adjustments for you and me.

LEN

Yes, I...

ARMONDS

(interrupts him)
Things would be learned -
information shared. A way of
life would disappear.

LEN

Senator...

ARMONDS

Our way of life!

He BANGS the briefcase closed. Rivets Len with a stare.

ARMONDS

I need believers, Leonard.

Their eyes lock.

LEN

You have one, Senator.

INT - THE POLICE STATION - SAME TIME

Frank strides to the desk.

FRANK

A prisoner was brought in
earlier. A climber. I'd
like to see him.

POLICE CLERK
We don't have him.

FRANK
You've got to.

POLICE CLERK
Just the usual thieves, drunks
and druggies. See for yourself.

He turns the screen to Frank. He looks at it. Strides toward the door.

POLICE CLERK
Bag a Deef for me, Colonel.

EXT - LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD - MOMENTS LATER

Frank walks toward Tropicana Ave. The Meth Dealer glides toward him. A flicker of recognition. He fades into the shadows.

From farther on we hear the CHEERS and BOOS, then...

MAN #1 (O.S.)
I told you that's a woman!

JEAN (O.S.)
I'm warning you!

Frank stops, peers into the darkness. Jean is backed against the wall of an alcove by three men.

MAN #2
What'd you do - sneak out of
your Breeder cell?

MAN #3
Looking for the real thing,
Honey? You found it.

He reaches for her. Her left hand FLIES up, the butt landing beneath his nose. His head SNAPS back. He drops to his knees, grabs for her legs. The other two close in as...

Jean's right hand slides under her jacket. Then...

FRANK (O.S.)
Leave her alone.

Frank is behind the men. They whirl, the one on the ground dripping blood.

MAN #1
You're inside now, Colonel.
This is our territory.

In an instant Frank is on him, his KNIFE FLASHING from his boot to the man's throat.

FRANK
Is it?

The other men back off. Frank pushes Man #1 toward them.

MAN #1
You haven't heard the last
of this!

They shuffle away, cursing over their shoulders.

FRANK
You shouldn't be out here.

JEAN
I need to talk to you.

FRANK
Yeah? Why?

JEAN
(smiles)
Len says you're dangerous.

FRANK
Is that what you're looking
for - a little danger?

JEAN
Could be.

Jean's hand drops to her side. She's holding a SEMI-AUTOMATIC.

FRANK
Can you use that?

She nods.

FRANK
Next time, do.

JEAN
Then who would save me?

A moment. Frank watches her.

FRANK

I don't know what your game is, and I don't like your friends. But if you're smart you'll get back to them.

He strides away. Jean slips the semi-automatic into its holster, staring at Frank until he disappears among the men.

EXT - LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD - A SHORT TIME LATER

A police van leads Armonds' car to the front of the MGM.

INT - ELEVATOR IN THE MGM - MOMENTS LATER

Armonds and Len stand uneasily in the elevator as it GRINDS upward.

ARMONDS

I don't trust this thing.

LEN

It's the last one operating. I'll have it checked before your speech.

INT - THE BROADCAST STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

A small room at the top of the MGM.

Through windows we see those parts of the city enclosed by the wall - a quarter mile on both sides of Las Vegas Boulevard from Hacienda Avenue to just beyond the Flamingo Hilton.

To the left of the door is a podium in front of a large color photo of Las Vegas, circa late 20th century. To the right, three technicians sit before their equipment.

They stand as Armonds breezes in, smiling, followed by Len.

INT - THE LUXOR - POLICE HOLDING AREA - A SHORT TIME LATER

Prisoners in cells, watch numbly as the Climber is led past by two policemen. He stumbles, slips something into his mouth.

INT - THE INTERROGATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bare concrete, a battered table and two chairs, a large mirror in one wall.

The INTERROGATOR hurries in, lays a metal case on the table, removes a mesh cap with multiple electrodes. A wire connects it to the case, in which we see a knob and several buttons.

The interrogator draws fluid into a syringe as the policemen bring the Climber in. They shackle him to a chair and leave. The interrogator injects the Climber, then...

INTERROGATOR

Let me put your mind at ease.
I'm only here to help you find
the truth.

CLIMBER

I told them everything I know.

INTERROGATOR

My superiors disagree.

He puts the mesh cap on the Climber's head.

INTERROGATOR

What's your name?

CLIMBER

Carter.

INTERROGATOR

I have a simple rule, Carter.
Whenever there's disagreement,
my superiors are right. That
rule's been good to me.

(then)

How do you feel?

CLIMBER

Dizzy.

INTERROGATOR

It'll pass.

(beat)

Tell me about Valiant.

INT - VIEWING ROOM - SAME TIME

The POLICE CHIEF, mid-forties, turns as Armonds and Len enter. They walk to the one-way glass, look into the interrogation room.

LEN

Anything yet?

POLICE CHIEF

We're just starting.

ARMONDS

Can't you move faster?

POLICE CHIEF
Sure. But he'll be a jelly
brain.

IN THE INTERROGATION ROOM

The interrogator turns the knob. Pushes a button. The Climber's
body TWITCHES.

INTERROGATOR
Tell me about Valiant.

Nothing.

The interrogator turns the knob, pushes the button. The
Climber's body CONVULSES, jerking the chair off the ground.

INTERROGATOR
Don't think I enjoy this. I
don't.

The Climber watches him. A stiff, crazy smile. Then...

CLIMBER
Fuck you.

Then he COLLAPSES

IN THE INTERROGATION ROOM

POLICE CHIEF
What the hell...

He sprints out.

IN THE INTERROGATION ROOM

The climber writhes on the floor. The Chief BURSTS IN, followed
by Armonds and Len. They stare as the Climber freezes, every
muscle rigid. Then he goes limp.

The interrogator tests his pulse. Pulls up an eyelid, opens his
mouth, sniffs it.

INTERROGATOR
Strychnine.

ARMONDS
God damn it! We're in the
information business, in case
you didn't know!

POLICE CHIEF
I'm sorry, Senator.

ARMONDS
'Sorry' will get you back on the streets.
(then)
I want this 'Valiant', and I want him soon - understand?

He storms out, followed by Len.

EXT - LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD - MOMENTS LATER

Much the same as we left it, with the vendors and the knots of sullen men - but quieter. The kickboxing is gone from the big screen, the speakers silent.

Frank walks across from the Arcade, toward the BLUE ADOBE, a bar with blue pastel walls and plastic cacti.

At a table inside are GREG and CARLOS, serious, in their late twenties, and PAUL GLYNN, early forties, with prematurely gray hair. All three wear camouflage gear, Paul with a major's insignia.

They look up as Frank strides by. Paul quickly exits.

PAUL
Frank?
(limps to him)
What're you doing here?

FRANK
Armonds called me in. Some stupid idea about the Deefs. How's your leg?

PAUL
Better. Can I buy you a drink?

FRANK
No thanks.

He turns to go.

PAUL
Tomorrow is Adam's birthday. Would you like to come?

Frank stops, his face softening for the first time.

FRANK
Yes, I would. Very much.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD - MORNING

Sunlight filters through torn awnings, painting the street with slashes of light. Frank and Paul walk toward Bally's.

Near the hotel we see more MEN, TALKING, peering through binoculars, some waving signs with their names on them and requests like 'come out' and 'call me'.

Between the men and the hotel is an electrified fence patrolled by guards. Frank and Paul walk to the gate. A GUARD checks their IDs, waves them through.

INT - CHILDREN'S VISITING ROOM IN BALLY'S - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank and Paul sit in a brightly-lighted room. Around them, MEN and their SONS PLAY NOISILY. The boys are no older than ten.

Remains of birthday cakes on tables. Paul rises, smiling, as ATTENDANT #1, in his early twenties, leads ADAM, six, to him.

ATTENDANT #1

This is your father, Paul.
We see him on your birthdays,
remember?

Adam shakes his head 'yes'. Paul hugs him. As he does, Attendant #2 enters carrying a birthday cake with six candles.

PAUL

Happy birthday, Son.

Adam takes a deep breath, blows out the candles. Paul, Frank and the attendants APPLAUD, then...

PAUL

This is my friend, Frank. What
are the names of your friends?

ADAM

Bobby, and Peter, and Philip
- everybody in my cell.

FRANK

You're lucky. You have a lot
of friends.

ADAM

Uh huh.

Paul takes an object wrapped in cloth from his pocket.

PAUL

I brought you a present.

Adam grins. Reaches for it. But the Attendant takes it instead. Frank glares at him. The Attendant walks away, motioning Frank to follow as Paul guides Adam to the play area.

WITH FRANK AND THE ATTENDANT

Frank still glaring.

ATTENDANT #1

(quietly)

We can't let them get too close.
What if Adam becomes defective?

A moment.

FRANK

How long do they have?

ATTENDANT #1

Six hours.

Frank strides back to Paul and Adam.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - THE CHILDREN'S VISITING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Hugs, tears as fathers and sons make their goodbyes. Frank stands by Paul, who kneels in front of Adam. Touches his face.

ADAM

I want to go with you.

PAUL

Maybe you can, some day.

Four GUARDS enter and the fathers begin to leave, separating from their sons as Attendants walk toward them.

PAUL

Say goodbye to Frank?

Adam offers his hand. Frank shakes it, holds it for a moment. Paul hugs Adam. A final touch, then he and Frank walk to the door.

FRANK

I'll take that drink now.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD - LATE AFTERNOON

Just beginning to crank up - the men assembling, the vendors sorting through their goods, the speakers outside the MGM BLARING MUSIC. Frank and Paul walk out of the Blue Adobe.

PAUL

Are you all right?

FRANK

Yeah.

He strides away, passing Cremes (the sex shop), his movements purposeful as always, but a little clumsy. He's drunk.

Suddenly he veers into an alley, stops at a dimly lighted kiosk and opens the door.

INT - THE KIOSK - MOMENTS LATER

Frank settles into a chair, slips his ID disk into a slot by the small screen before him. The screen lights, then...

FROM THE SPEAKER

Do you want to be a father?
Of course you do.

ON THE SCREEN

We see photos of SMILING YOUNG WOMEN as...

FROM THE SPEAKER

Imagine your sperm hygienically combined with an egg from one of our clean young breeders! That's fatherhood, in a safe, rewarding way!

(beat)

But first, let's spend some time with Senator Ted Armonds. Ted?

FRANK

Shit.

Armonds appears on tape, sincere behind a plastic desk.

ARMONDS

Hello. I'm Ted Armonds. For nearly a hundred years our goal has been to cleanse our species of genetic defects created by the last great war, so that some day we can return to a normal life. That goal was, and remains, the

ARMONDS (cont'd)
 foundation of our society. And
 we've had success - although,
 unhappily, flawed conceptions do
 still occur.

(beat)

But we must, and will, prevail.
 Through your participation in the
 breeding program, you will ensure
 not only your own personal legacy,
 but that of humans everywhere.

(beat)

Thank you. And, as always, the
 best of luck.

The screen goes dark. Then we see a smiling MEDIATOR, hands
 folded primly in his lap.

MEDIATOR

Good evening. How may I help
 you in the purchase of an egg?

FRANK

I want to meet the breeder
 first.

MEDIATOR

Of course. We have three on
 call at present.

INT - MEDIATOR'S OFFICE - IN BALLY'S - A MOMENT LATER

A screen shows Frank in the kiosk.

LORI and ALISON, in their twenties, and CATHERINE, in her late
 teens, sit to the side of the mediator. Lori and Alison are at
 ease, WHISPERING, Alison with a quick, mischievous smile.
 Catherine is tense.

The mediator motions to Lori, who moves to a chair by the desk
 and smiles at the camera.

LORI

Hi. I'm Lori.

FRANK

Frank Rider.

ALISON

I've heard of him. He's cute!
 (steps before the camera)
 Hey, Handsome, why don't you
 take me outside and we'll do it
 the old-fashioned way?

MEDIATOR
Alison, please.

She waves and steps back.

FRANK
How many clean births, Lori?

INT - THE KIOSK - A MOMENT LATER

ALISON (O.S.)
How about me, Handsome? I
give discounts.

MEDIATOR
Alison, please!
(then)
The fee is 3,000 remunerations.
Do you have that amount. Or...

FRANK
Yes.

MEDIATOR
I'll simply debit your account.
Your ID number, please.

Frank stares at the smiling Lori, the expectant mediator.

Then he reaches toward the screen.

INT - MEDIATOR'S OFFICE - A MOMENT LATER

ALISON
Hey, wait, Handsome!

The screen goes blank.

ALISON
I liked him.

MEDIATOR
He'll be back. They always
come back.

INT - BREEDER CELL TWELVE - IN BALLY'S - A SHORT TIME LATER

Women aged seventeen to thirty sit on couches and chairs. Others stand at the windows, looking out at the men beyond the fence a few stories below. Alison, Lori and Catherine enter.

BREEDER #1
Anyone exciting?

ALISON
 Oh yeah, that Deefer - the
 Colonel. He's cute! I offered
 him a discount.

BREEDER #2
 Why? We don't get the money.

ALISON
 It's fun to bargain.

BREEDER #1
 So...

LORI
 He stopped.

BREEDER #3
 Uh oh, no one to dream about.

They LAUGH. It subsides quickly when a female BREEDER TECH
 struts in, carrying a clipboard.

BREEDER TECH
 Okay, I need Lori, Alison and
 Catherine.

ALISON
 Can't we skip this for once?

INT - THE EGG ROOM - IN BALLY'S - A SHORT TIME LATER

A line of gynecological tables on which female Breeder Techs
 set up tubes and plastic bags of fluids. Alison, Lori and
 Catherine stand in hospital gowns as other young women undress.

On a table in the center of the room is a stainless steel
 container.

The Breeder Tech walks to them. Smiles.

BREEDER TECH
 All right, Ladies.

INT - REPRODUCTION LAB - BALLY'S BASEMENT - A SHORT TIME LATER

Male REPRO TECHS wearing hoods and masks bend over a line of
 microscopes. They look up as ERNIE, mid-forties, rushes in with
 the stainless steel container.

ERNIE
 Pass them out. I'll be in
 embryos.

INT - THE EMBRYO ROOM - BALLY'S BASEMENT - SAME TIME

Huge and windowless, lighted by dim red bulbs. Tall racks holding transparent plastic bags attached to flexible tubes stand in straight rows, separated by an aisle from front to back.

The silence broken only by the WHISPER of liquids as they flow through the tubes.

GEORGE AMBROSE, early thirties, walks between racks, shining a flashlight beam on the bags. Each bag is marked with an "M" or an "F". Some have round plastic stickers, either yellow or black. Many bag hookups are empty.

George puts on a pair of glasses, bends close to examine a bag marked "F". Inside, floating in clear liquid, we see a HUMAN FEMALE EMBRYO, the nub of a THIRD LEG GROWING FROM HER HIP.

George shakes his head, puts a yellow sticker on the bag. Moves on, shining his light.

ERNIE (O.S.)

George?

GEORGE

Back here.

George bends to study another bag marked "F", this one with a black sticker. In the bag is a FEMALE EMBRYO, a stem growing from her neck. On the stem is a TINY FACE.

GEORGE

Damn it!

Ernie walks to him, pushing a cart.

ERNIE

We're doing the best we can.

GEORGE

Are we?

ERNIE

What the hell does that mean?

GEORGE

Something's wrong.

ERNIE

(watches him)
Like what?

GEORGE

If I knew, I'd tell you.

A moment.

ERNIE
You're tired. Why don't you
take a break?

George looks at him. Then he walks away.

Ernie detaches the bag with the black sticker, knots the tubes, throws the bag into a cart, continues down the row, shining his light.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - ARMONDS' OFFICE IN THE CAPITOL - LATE AFTERNOON

A complete contrast to what we've seen before. The office is large, with plush 20th century carpets. Armonds sits at an oak desk, studying a paper. Len is behind him.

On an interior wall is a map of the world's land-mass, showing clusters of circles located away from major cities. Beside it is an enlarged map of the United States, divided into six regions, each highlighting clusters, also away from major cities.

Outside, enclosed by a high black wall, we see the streets of a modest town - restaurants, shops, a park with trees.

ARMONDS
When can we see this?

LEN
They're ready for us now.

The door opens and ARMONDS' WIFE, early thirties, sticks her head in.

ARMONDS' WIFE
Hi, you two.

She enters, followed by ARMONDS' SON, eight, and his DAUGHTER, five. Behind them are LEN'S WIFE, in her twenties, carrying his two-year-old DAUGHTER.

ARMONDS' WIFE
When did you get back?

ARMONDS
This morning.

Armonds and Len kiss their wives, then Armonds bends, opening his arms to his daughter.

ARMONDS

How's my girl?

ARMONDS' DAUGHTER

Fine, Daddy.

ARMONDS' WIFE

Did you see the man you wanted to?

ARMONDS

Yes.

ARMONDS' WIFE

Oh, good - then you'll be home for dinner.

Armonds nods, checks his watch.

ARMONDS' WIFE

All right, we're going.

As she hustles the others to the door...

ARMONDS' DAUGHTER

Tell him about my you-know-what on Thursday.

ARMONDS' WIFE

He knows about it, Sweetie.

EXT - THE CAPITOL - A SHORT TIME LATER

Len drives an electric car, Armonds at his side. There aren't many people on the street, but those we do see are well dressed, some with children. They acknowledge Armonds, who waves, smiling.

INT - THE CAPITOL LABORATORY - A SHORT TIME LATER

A vast underground space, far larger than one would expect in a small town. It's obvious that biological experiments were once conducted here. But most of the areas have been shut down.

Armonds, Len and a LAB TECH stand at a thick glass window in a lighted corner of the lab. Armonds studies a plastic VIAL.

Through the window we see a concrete room, inside which are five misshapen DEEFS, two of them of normal size. Desperately they search for a way out as...

LAB TECH

When the crystals hit the air, they form a gas. It's as easy

LAB TECH (cont'd)
as that, Senator.

The Lab Tech maneuvers a robot arm to the center of the room, shakes a few black crystals from a vial identical to the one Armonds holds.

Nothing. Then a thin gray VAPOR rises.

The Deefs stop. Sniff. Blink their eyes. COUGH. Horrible, retching WHEEZES.

Then they RACE WILDLY, SCREECHING in despair, colliding with one another, blood flowing from their mouths and nostrils. Then...

One by one they fall - their dead eyes open.

ARMONDS
Excellent!
(the)
What about vegetation?

LAB TECH
It takes longer, but we get
the same results.

Armonds smiles, clasps the Lab Tech's shoulder.

ARMONDS
No one is to know about this.

The Lab Tech nods, moves away as...

LEN
We should find someone else to
lead the strike force, in case
Jean fails with Rider.

ARMONDS
She won't. She's very good
with men.

LEN
Rider's difficult. You saw him.

ARMONDS
I want his name on this. Then
no one will question us.
(thinks for a moment)
But you're right - we should line
up another man. It'll have to be
a Deefer. Our people can't tie
their shoes outside.

LEN

I have someone in mind.

Armonds nods. As they walk toward the door...

ARMONDS

Have you heard from Jean?

LEN

Not yet.

ARMONDS

Call her. There can't be any screw-ups on this.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - LAS VEGAS - FRANK'S ROOM - MORNING

Frank lies on the cot. The covers knotted, his clothes on the floor. A KNOCK. His eyes snap open. He staggers to his feet, opens the door.

PAUL

How's your head?

FRANK

Still there. Barely.

Frank walks to the bathroom. Splashes water on his face, dries it as...

PAUL

You going outside?

FRANK

Yeah. I don't like it here.

PAUL

Neither do I.

(beat)

Frank, what we do out there is wrong.

FRANK

Spare me the lecture, Paul. We do what we have to.

PAUL

Do we have to murder them?

FRANK

We defend our species!

PAUL
They are our species, Frank.
That's why we murder them.

A moment. Frank staring at him.

FRANK
Are you through?

PAUL
I'm just asking you to think
about it.

FRANK
Can you imagine that I don't?

Frank walks to the living room, begins to dress. Paul follows.

PAUL
There're people you should meet.
Some might surprise you.

FRANK
I told you - leave me out of it.

PAUL
You can't be out of it.

FRANK
Yeah? Watch me.

EXT - PARKING LOT IN FRONT OF THE LUXOR - LATER THAT MORNING

The TRUCK WITH DARK WINDOWS passes Frank as he loads supplies
into his car.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - FRANK'S CAR - EARLY AFTERNOON

On the suburban freeway. Frank races toward a tangle of rusted-
out vehicles. Slows. Speeds down an off-ramp.

INT - FRANK'S CAR - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank cruises down a rubble-strewn street, by dark, crumbling
houses. Stops before a house with the skeleton of a child's bike
in the driveway.

INT - LIVING ROOM OF THE HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Signs of a frenzied departure - decayed clothes, a broken lamp on
the floor. Frank appears in the doorway, moves on.

INT - BOYS' BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Frank enters, nudges a broken toy with his foot.

INT - GIRL'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Frank rummages through the closet. Looks under the bed. Pulls out a small plastic box, pries it open with his knife and removes a brittle, folded newspaper. Carefully spreads it on the floor. Inside are little girl's keepsakes - an earring, a small locket, a sea shell, two color photos, faded almost white.

He separates them, moving them apart under a huge headline:
"ATOMIC EXPLOSIONS IN EUROPE, JAPAN"

Below are photos of devastated cities, followed in nearly equally large letters by: "NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION BLAMED"

To the side: "WASHINGTON FEARS NUCLEAR WAR"

He studies the photos. One shows a family in front of the house as it once was, the lawn green, the father holding a "SOLD" sign. The second shows the girl on her birthday, standing by a cake, smiling at her friends.

He picks up the earring. Dangles it between his thumb and finger, watching it sway.

JEAN (O.S.)
You like jewelry, Frank?

He turns, startled. Jean is in the doorway.

JEAN
A little jumpy, aren't we?

FRANK
What're you doing here?

JEAN
I need to talk to you.

FRANK
About what?

JEAN
The Senator's strike force.

Frank pushes the keepsakes to the center of the paper, carefully re-folds it.

FRANK
Fuck the Senator.

He strides out.

EXT - THE STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Jean's car is parked behind Frank's, its solar panels extended. Frank strides from the house. Jean jogs behind. Grabs his arm.

JEAN
What is it - bad breath?

FRANK
I don't like your friends.

JEAN
You don't have to.

He watches her. Pulls away, strides to his car.

FRANK
Ever been outside?

JEAN
Not this far.

FRANK
You'd better think about it.

She watches as he speeds away. Then...

JEAN
I've thought about it, Frank.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - FRANK'S AND JEAN'S CARS - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Frank speeds over the deserted, sand-swept highway - restless, distracted. Sees something on his left. Turns...

Jean pulls along side. A triumphant smile.

He stares at her. Looks ahead. But he can't help smiling. He accelerates.

She pulls up to him. Grins.

They race past the corroded relics, dodging potholes, first one, then the other car inching ahead.

But Frank's is faster. He looks at Jean - her face now knotted in concentration - then he pulls away.

She jams her accelerator. Can't catch him. Ten yards, thirty, fifty - a hundred. She watches, indignant. Then...

Frank hits a heavy patch of sand. Fights the wheel, the car FISHTAILING, tires SQUEALING as it twists across the road and...

CRASHES into a rusty hulk. FLIPS OVER, SKIDS across the concrete on its roof. Stops. Frank is unconscious.

A gray-green liquid oozes from a crack by the accelerator, HISSING, BUBBLING, DISSOLVING plastic and rubber as it works its way toward the seat.

Jean sprints to Frank's car. Leans in. Turns away, covering her mouth and nose. Takes a breath. Tears at the door. It doesn't budge.

Another breath. She squirms inside. Grabs Frank's knife from his boot. Slashes his seat belt. Backs out, COUGHING, blinking in the fumes, pulling Frank with her as...

We hear a METALLIC SNAP, then a gallon of the gray-green liquid SPEWS into the cabin.

Frank awakens. COUGHS, rubs his eyes. Stares as his car's interior is reduced to BUBBLING, SIZZLING goo.

JEAN

Good thing I was here.

FRANK

This wouldn't have happened without you being here.

JEAN

I saved your life!

(then)

Or don't you give a damn?

She picks up his knife, holds it out to him.

JEAN

I just want a chance, okay?

A long moment. He puts the knife in its scabbard. Nods, limps toward her car.

JEAN

(quietly)

God, you're a hard-ass!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - FRANK'S STATION - EARLY EVENING

Frank strides in. He pulls a small bag from under his cot, removes the folded newspaper containing the girl's keepsakes from his pocket, puts it carefully into the bag.

Jean is in the doorway, looking out.

JEAN
It's so desolate. How do they
live?

FRANK
Usually they don't.

She turns as he slides the bag under the bed.

JEAN
What's that?

FRANK
Old stuff. From the past.

JEAN
Do you do that much? Think
about the past?

No answer. He strides to the kitchen, rummages through the
cabinets.

Jean takes the headband and recorder belt from where he last
dropped them on the floor. Studies them as...

JEAN
How does this work?

FRANK
We use it to record the kills.
At night we send them in.

JEAN
Just like that?

FRANK
Like that.

JEAN
How many Deefers are there?

FRANK
Around here? About ten.

JEAN
All like you - alone?

FRANK
That's right.

A moment.

JEAN
You were heros, once. Brave
men who risked the radiation
to save our species.

FRANK
Yeah? What are we now?

No answer. She turns again, looking out.

JEAN
Ever seen greenspace, Frank?

EXT - FRANK'S STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Jean walks from the station. Frank catches her.

FRANK
What's this about greenspace?

JEAN
We hear stories. I wondered
if you'd seen it, that's all.

FRANK
That's what the Climber said.

JEAN
Do you believe him?

FRANK
Should I?

JEAN
Just a question.
(then)
Why'd you become a Deefer?

FRANK
My father was.

JEAN
And your grandfather built the
first walls. I guess you're a
true believer.

FRANK
I don't know what I am.

A few steps. Then...

FRANK
Why aren't you in a Breeder
cell?

JEAN
Not all women are Breeders.
I can't tell you any more.

FRANK
Can't - or won't?

Nothing from Jean.

JEAN
Do you have a child?

FRANK
No.

JEAN
Do you want one?

FRANK
It's the most important thing
we do. What about you?

She looks away. Turns toward the station.

JEAN
Coming?

FRANK
In a while.

INT - FRANK'S STATION - A MOMENT LATER

Jean enters, takes off her jacket, holster and gun. Takes the
gun in her hand. Stares at it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - FRANK'S STATION - EARLY EVENING

Frank enters to find Jean sitting on the cot, unlacing her boots.
She tugs at the blankets.

JEAN
How long since you've changed
these?

FRANK
Maid's year off.
(beat)
The bed's mine.

JEAN
I thought...

FRANK

You thought what?

She walks toward him with her faintly-mocking smile.

JEAN

Have you had a woman, Frank?

(beat)

Of course not. How could you?

She reaches to him. He brushes her hand aside.

FRANK

I told you. I don't like
your friends.

He strides to the cot, begins to undress. She's watching him.

JEAN

Is there something warm for
me?

He points to a pile of gear in the corner. Strips to his shorts as she digs through it and extracts a sleeping bag. Spreads it on the floor.

JEAN

How gallant.

She crawls inside, folds her jacket for a pillow. Then...

JEAN

Ever been to the Toxic Zone?

FRANK

I've crossed some hot spots,
yeah.

JEAN

I mean the big one.

FRANK

Why would I? Besides, no one's
allowed there.

JEAN

Is that what you do, Frank?
What you're allowed to?
(closes her eyes)
That's nice.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - FRANK'S STATION - NIGHT

Jean sleeps, her face turned away from the lighted TV, from which we hear QUIET CONVERSATION. Frank lies on his cot, staring dully at a grainy tape.

ON THE SCREEN

We see the inside of small, bare room, crowded with jostling reporters and cameramen, circa early 21st century.

In the front are two uneasy men, one an INTERVIEWER, the other Frank's GRANDFATHER, Thomas, in his early forties.

INTERVIEWER

We're with Doctor Thomas Rider, who was head of medical genetics at UCLA. Doctor, is it true that if we don't eliminate the mutant genes, the human species as we know it won't survive?

THOMAS RIDER

I'm not the only one to have reached that conclusion.

REPORTER #1

But you're the only one who's advocating these - enclosures.

THOMAS RIDER

To protect those who can still have healthy children. Do you know a better way?

REPORTER #2

It's only been ten years since the radiation was at its peak. How do you know the walls are necessary?

THOMAS RIDER

The rate of defective births is 38%, and rising. You tell me.

REPORTER #3

The defectives are everywhere, Doctor. What can we do about them?

THOMAS RIDER

I'll leave that to you. I...

The tape goes FUZZY, the sound CRACKLING, then... A different scene, the image a better quality. We see..

FRANK, age six, flanked by an Attendant, sitting in a visiting room filled with other fathers and sons as his FATHER, Douglas, early thirties, walks toward him, carrying a cake with lighted candles.

ATTENDANT

Frank, this is your father.
His name is Douglas. We saw him
on your last birthday. Will you
say hello to him?

DOUGLAS RIDER

Happy birthday, Son. Remember
me?

Frank nods. Douglas hugs him.

DOUGLAS

How's my boy?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - A CAMP IN THE DESERT - MORNING

A line of tents and trucks, the trucks with their solar panels folded out, charging in the sun.

Several crates nearby, two of them open. In one are automatic weapons. Ten YOUNG MEN in olive drab uniforms cluster around, examining them.

In the other crate are stacks of round, flat CANISTERS.

A hundred yards away, another ten soldiers gather by a tall tripod to which one of the canisters has been secured.

Armonds' sleek car is parked by the tents. Walking toward it is... ERIC BRADEN. (We met him in the cave where Frank found the dead Deefs). Armonds and Len await him.

LEN

Senator - Captain Eric Braden.

They shake hands, then...

ARMONDS

I'll get to the point, Captain.
Someone using the name 'Valiant'
has been organizing escapes from
the cities. Men have returned
with stories of greenspace.

ERIC
Greenspace? I thought...

ARMONDS
(interrupts him)
It's unlikely, of course. But the stories create a problem, because the men hear them and think the promised land is just over the horizon. They want to go there. And who could blame them? But we're not ready yet, Captain. We're not nearly ready.

Len gets two small RED BOXES from the back of the car as...

ARMONDS (continuing)
I want you to investigate these tales, and on the remote chance that you find any land where we could live, I want you to clear it of Deefs. What do you say?

ERIC
Of course, Senator.
(beat)
But...

ARMONDS
You know what? This sounds crazy, but I'd look around the Toxic Zone.

Eric's face shows his surprize and concern.

ARMONDS
Just a thought.
(then)
Let's see what we've got.

Eric signals to the soldiers by the tripod. They run for cover, lie on the ground, hands over their ears.

ON THE CANISTER, a small GREEN LIGHT BLINKS.

Eric pulls a detonator from his pocket, touches a button. A similar GREEN LIGHT BLINKS. He presses another button, and...

The cannister EXPLODES, bits of plastic WHISTLING over the heads of the soldiers as the BLAST ECHOES over the desert.

ARMONDS
Excellent.

Len removes a VIAL identical to the one we saw in the laboratory from one of TWO small RED BOXES, hands the vial to Eric.

LEN

You'll insert one of these in each cannister. The effective range is more than a mile.

ERIC

(examines the vial)
What is it?

LEN

A chemical - to disable them. Then you round them up and...

He cocks his thumb over his pointed finger, snaps it down.

LEN

It's simple. Be careful with the vials, though.
(beat)
Questions?

ERIC

These men are pretty young.

ARMONDS

And I know you an lead them, Captain. Now, if you'd like to introduce me...

Eric nods, hands the vial to Len, jogs toward the soldiers.

LEN

Shouldn't we tell them the truth about the gas?

ARMONDS

(stares at Len as if he were insane)
If they knew the truth, Leonard, they wouldn't use it.

EXT - FRANK'S STATION - SAME TIME

Frank hasn't slept much. He strides to the driver's side of Jean's car as she gets in on the other side.

JEAN

What're you afraid of?

FRANK

I don't like company, that's all.

JEAN

I won't hurt you, Frank.

He glares at her, finally gets in. Speeds away from the station, the tires kicking up dust plumes as they race across the desert.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - JEAN'S CAR - THE DESERT - LATE AFTERNOON

Frank drives, squinting ahead. Stops, leans out the window, looking through binoculars.

JEAN

What is it?

He tosses the binoculars into the back, grabs his rifle and recording gear on the way out.

FRANK

Stay here.

EXT - THE TOP OF A KNOLL - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank walks to the top of the knoll, looks back...

As a TINY WOMAN plods to him, carrying a bundle wrapped in bark and leaves. Her long, matted, hair hangs over her chest.

FRANK

What do you want, little Deef?
Why're you following me?

She kneels before him, lays the bundle on the ground.

FRANK

Aren't you afraid of me? You should be.

She opens the bundle. A NEWBORN gapes silently, waving the STUBS that would be his hands and feet.

The woman looks at Frank, her eyes searching his.

FRANK

I am death. What could you want from me?

A moment. Then, with the barrel of his pistol he parts the hair hanging over her chest.

SHE HAS NO BREASTS

FRANK

Damn you!

He seizes her hair, bends her head back, the muzzle of the pistol under her chin.

FRANK

What do you want from me?

Her eyes fixed on his.

FRANK

WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME!?

She watches him. An eternity.

He jams the gun into its holster, picks up his rifle, strides away. Stops, looks at her. Turns. Continues walking.

EXT - ON THE DESERT - NEARBY

Jean stares through the binoculars. Drops them to her side.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - FRANK'S STATION - LATE AFTERNOON

Frank's rifle, pistol belt, recorder and headband are on the floor. Frank and Jean sit at the table, picking from a container of gelatinous food.

JEAN

I saw what you did today.

FRANK

Did you?

JEAN

What'll happen to them?

FRANK

You know what'll happen.

A moment.

JEAN

How far is the Toxic Zone?

FRANK

About a day.

JEAN

I'd like to see it.

FRANK

What is it with you? That was the dumping ground for every particle of noxious waste in the region. Only a fool would go there.

(beat)

Or maybe you're the one with the death wish.

JEAN

(watches him)

There're things you don't know, Frank. Things I could tell you.

FRANK

Yeah? Why don't you?

She takes his hand, studies it.

JEAN

So many scars.
(traces a line)
This one's new.

FRANK

An Auntie, defending a nest.

JEAN

Do they always fight?

Nothing from Frank. Then...

FRANK

Why're you here, Jean? What do you really want?

JEAN

Everything. Before it's too late.

FRANK

Maybe it already is.

He strides from the room.

INT - THE REPRODUCTION LAB - SAME TIME

The Repro Techs bend over their microscopes. Ernie stands by REPRO TECH #1, a man of Frank's age, who looks vaguely like him. George enters from the embryo room.

GEORGE
Bathroom, Ernie?

Ernie waves him on. George exits into the bathroom. Ernie bends over Repro Tech #1's microscope.

ERNIE
Okay, what've you got?

INT - THE REPRODUCTION LAB - A SHORT TIME LATER

Ernie is still looking through the microscope as George returns from the bathroom, waves in his direction, exits into the embryo room.

Ernie doesn't see him.

In a few seconds the INSPECTOR enters, carrying a clipboard.

INSPECTOR
Okay, Ernie, get them out.

REPRO TECH #1
We just had an inspection.

INSPECTOR
Out.

The Repro Techs exit into the dressing room. The inspector locks the door behind them.

INSPECTOR
That all of them?

ERNIE
There's one in the bathroom.

INSPECTOR
(locks the bathroom door)
Let's do it.

INT - THE EMBRYO ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM

George walks between racks, shining his light, bends to examine a bag. His glasses fall from his pocket. He reaches for them under the rack as...

AT THE FRONT

Ernie and the inspector enter, walk down the main aisle, carrying flashlights.

IN THE BACK

MUFFLED VOICES. George turns off his flashlight.

IN THE MAIN AISLE

Ernie and the inspector turn in to a row between racks. A moment, then George walks quietly toward the voices.

ERNIE

How many?

INSPECTOR

Thirty-three.

ERNIE

Fresh ones?

INSPECTOR

No, let's hit the yellows.

The inspector takes a case from his pocket, removes a syringe and needle. He selects a bag marked "F", with a yellow sticker, inserts the needle into the tube above it, taps the plunger.

ERNIE

Not so much. You'll kill her.

INSPECTOR

I'm not new at this.

BEHIND THEM

George stares through a maze of tubes as the inspector withdraws the needle, grabs the tube of a bag marked "M", also with a yellow sticker.

ERNIE

That's a male.

INSPECTOR

Jesus, Ernie. We can't do all females or it won't look right.

He slides the needle into the tube, taps the plunger. Then...

A SCUFFING NOISE. The inspector's head whips toward it.

INSPECTOR
What was that?

ERNIE
I didn't hear anything.

The inspector runs to the main aisle, looks around, walks toward...

GEORGE, lying on the floor, staring up. The inspector stops, peers through the red shadows.

Doesn't see him. Returns to Ernie.

ERNIE
Why're you so jumpy?

INSPECTOR
This isn't a tea party, you know.

He walks on, shining his light on the bags.

ERNIE
Can we stop early?

INSPECTOR
Why? You got a date?

ERNIE
Very funny.
(then)
I put money on Martinez. I want a good seat for the match tonight.

INSPECTOR
Yamaguchi'll kill him.

ERNIE
Fifty remu's says he won't.

INSPECTOR
You're on. But these have to be finished.

ERNIE
Leave the juice. I'll do it another time.

INSPECTOR
Okay, but we do twenty now. And you owe me.

ERNIE

Deal.

They walk on, their flashlight beams piercing the crimson darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - FRANK'S STATION - MORNING

Frank lies on his cot, his eyes closed, the covers tangled.

Then his eyes snap open to see Jean quietly gathering food containers from a cabinet.

FRANK

Where're you going?

JEAN

To the Toxic Zone.

He strides to her, his face inches away.

FRANK

Why?

JEAN

Do you care?

FRANK

This is bullshit!

He turns, walks away.

JEAN

Okay, so now we know.

FRANK

What?

JEAN

What you're afraid of.

He whirls. Glares at her.

FRANK

This is your specialty, right?

JEAN

What is?

FRANK

Pissing people off!

JEAN
Why won't you listen? There's
nothing toxic here.

FRANK
There has to be.

JEAN
Shit!
(beat)
You are a true believer.

He watches her. Then...

FRANK
We're going back.

She shakes her head, retreats. He strides toward her.

FRANK
You had to come here. Fine.
You've seen it. Let's go.

She fights him as he pulls her toward the car. Then she stops -
staring over her shoulder.

JEAN
Frank, look!
(beat)
For once in your life stop
and look. Please!

His eyes follow hers to the horizon, where...

Floating, mirage-like in the simmering heat, is a hint of GREEN.

EXT - THE TOXIC ZONE - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank and Jean leap from the car, panting in the clumsy suits.
They run to...

PATCHES OF GRASS. In the distance we see STUNTED TREES - beyond
them more GREEN, richer, fuller.

Frank clutches at the grass. Stares into the distance. Looks at
Jean...

Who is watching him triumphantly. She yanks the Geiger counter
from his belt, sweeps it before her, holds it to Frank's face.

JEAN
It's normal, Frank.

She pulls off her hood. Breathes deeply. Frank removes his.

Then she grabs his arm.

JEAN

Frank!

A hundred yards away, a SMALL FIGURE in a gleaming silver helmet plods deeper into the Zone. Jean tears at her suit.

JEAN

Hurry!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - TOP OF A SMALL HILL - LATE AFTERNOON

Frank and Jean follow as the figure plods up a hill, rounds it and disappears.

They reach the top of the hill. And stop...

ASTOUNDED

Below them is a VILLAGE. Huts made of saplings, covered with bark, thatched with leaves and branches.

Beyond it a dense FOREST.

EXT - THE VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Frank and Jean follow the figure to the center of the village. It seems deserted.

The figure turns. Looks at them.

For the first time we see it him clearly. It's a man, with a long beard, his loins covered with animal hide. On his head is a bent piece of tin, tied with a rag. At his side a child's sword.

FRANK

A Deef Warrior.

The Warrior turns, treks away.

EXT - CLIFF OVERLOOKING THE OCEAN - SUNSET

The Warrior plods to the edge of the cliff. Stands, shading his eyes, staring out to sea. Frank and Jean are a few yards behind.

The Warrior turns to look at them, turns back. Shuffles his feet. Slowly at first, then faster, faster - in a crude, joyous dance.

Frank watches, transfixed. Then...

JEAN

Frank!

He follows her eyes out to sea. Watches, stunned as...

WHALES SPOUT IN THE DISTANCE, their warm breath condensing in the cool air.

FRANK

My God!

They walk to the edge of the cliff, staring as the great beasts pass.

Frank turns, looking for the Warrior. But he's gone.

EXT - THE DESERT CAMP - SAME TIME

The CRACK-CRACK-CRACK of automatic weapons. Eric supervises the young soldiers, who practice on a makeshift firing range.

EXT - THE VILLAGE - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank and Jean walk silently from the direction of the cliff.

Then they stop, staring as...

Older MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN, wearing animal skins and tattered cloth, emerge from the huts.

They appear normal, but something about them tells us they never lived in the cities.

One of the women is very pregnant.

Whispered bewilderment. Finally a few boys approach Frank and Jean, hesitantly touching them, retreating, returning, exploring their feet, their legs, their hands.

Some girls come near. Jean reaches to one, gently stroking her face. A smile. The girl returns the gesture.

The other girls smile, stroke Jean's face, feel her hair.

JEAN

Who are they?

Then...

The children scurry away as an OLD MAN with a walking stick pushes his way to Frank and Jean. Circles them, frowning. Finally...

OLD MAN
Go-on you. Goway.

FRANK
We won't harm you.

OLD MAN
Goway!
(raises the stick)
Goway!!

Then...

FOOTSTEPS, COMING FAST.

Frank and Jean turn as...

Adult MEN armed with bows and arrows sprint toward them. Behind them, others carry a wild pig on a pole. The men halt, staring.

FRANK
They're Deefs!

JEAN
They can't be.

From among the men...

EDGAR
Canbe.

EDGAR, early forties, tall and stately, walks to Frank. Looks at his clothes, his gun. INTO HIS EYES.

EDGAR
Deefkiller.

Frank nods.

EDGAR
Truestories then.

Frank nods again. Instantly the men fix arrows to their strings, raise their bows. Edgar signals them to stop.

EDGAR
Nameis?

FRANK
Frank Rider.

EDGAR
Nameis Edgar.

JEAN
We're not here to hurt you.

EDGAR
Whythen?

FRANK
We followed a little warrior.
Up there.

Edgar smiles, as do many others. Edgar taps his temple.

EDGAR
Fargone. Whalewatcher.

JEAN
We're told the seas are dead.

EDGAR
Onetime.
(motions to Frank and Jean)
Come.

But the old man steps in front of them, his stick above his head.

OLD MAN
Go-on you! Goway!

EDGAR
No!
(beat)
Come.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - A HUT IN THE VILLAGE - EARLY EVENING

Frank, Jean, Edgar and other villagers sit around a fire. Children crowd the doorway, peering in, smiling at Frank and Jean, but especially at Jean, who smiles in return.

FRANK
You've been here the whole
time?

Edgar nods.

FRANK
What about the toxins?

EDGAR
(shakes his head)
Neverwere.

JEAN
But you're not...

EDGAR
Defective? Not somuch, any
more.

A YOUNG MAN stares at Frank.

YOUNG MAN
Killers.

FRANK
Not all of us.

YOUNG MAN
You?

Frank looks at him. Tries to speak. But he can't.

INT - THE HUT - LATER THAT NIGHT

The fire is lower. Frank and Jean lie on a bed of leaves.

FRANK
Did you know about this?

JEAN
Only stories. I told you.
(then)
They're so frightened.

FRANK
Technology almost destroyed
them. They want nothing to
do with it - or us.

A moment.

JEAN
Frank, you said the Deefs are
dying on their own - right?

FRANK
That's right.

JEAN
Then where are the new ones
coming from?

INT - THE HUT - STILL LATER

The fire is glowing embers. Frank and Jean lie on the bed, Jean sleeping. Frank's eyes are open - staring ahead.

Soft FOOTSTEPS. A RUSTLE by the doorway.

Frank leaps to his feet. Peers outside, into the moonlight. Reaches for his gun belt. Doesn't take it.

EXT - FRANK'S HUT - A MOMENT LATER

Frank emerges, cautious, alert. A movement in the shadows. Edgar steps toward him.

EDGAR

Come.

EXT - THE CLIFF OVERLOOKING THE OCEAN - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank and Edgar stand, looking out.

EDGAR

We goway, Frank.

FRANK

We wouldn't hurt you.

EDGAR

Can't help it.

FRANK

No! We'll find another place, if...

EDGAR

If...

FRANK

If we can.
(then)
Where would you go?

EDGAR

Fardeep. Away.
(watching him)
You must try, Frank.

From the village, a WOMAN'S SCREAM. Frank and Edgar sprint away.

EXT - THE VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Jean runs toward a group of men and women clustered outside a hut. Works her way inside.

IN THE HUT

The pregnant woman lies on a mat, her face covered in sweat, other women kneeling around her. The Old Man stands with a younger man, both watching uneasily from a corner.

Jean kneels beside the pregnant woman, looks into her eyes, looks into the eyes of the others. Finally one responds.

MIDWIFE

Wrongway.

A contraction. Jean stares, helpless. Then the midwife guides her hands to the woman's abdomen, moves them in a circular motion.

JEAN

Turn it. Yes. We've got to turn it.

The woman GROANS. Jean and the midwife gently probe her abdomen.

JEAN

I feel the head!

The midwife smiles, nods. She and Jean begin to turn the baby. The woman GROANS again. Jean is focused, her hands trembling, her eyes wide. Another contraction.

JEAN

Please. There we go. Oh, God! Please.

OUTSIDE

Men, women, children mill around. Somber faces as Frank and Edgar run to them. Edgar looks anxiously over their shoulders. Then...

FROM INSIDE

A BABY CRIES. The others retreat as the Old Man emerges, carrying the newborn wrapped in an animal skin.

Silence. Edgar parts the skin, studies the baby.

Then he GRINS.

The villagers CHEER as the Old Man takes the infant and holds it aloft, leading them through the village.

IN THE HUT

Women bustle. The father strokes the new mother's face. Frank and Edgar enter. Jean looks up - exhausted, exhilarated.

EDGAR
You see, Frank! You see!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - THE VILLAGE - THE NEXT MORNING

Edgar leads Frank, Jean and the villagers, including the couple with their new baby, to the bottom of the hill.

EDGAR
Never find us, Frank.

Frank nods.

EDGAR
Truth.

FRANK
Truth.

The couple with the baby stand ceremoniously before Jean. The mother takes a bead necklace from around her neck, puts it around Jean's.

A quick hug, then she and Frank wave to the villagers as they walk up the hill. Jean touches the necklace.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - FRANK'S STATION - AFTERNOON

Frank and Jean enter. He tosses his gun belt by the door, strides to the radio.

JEAN
What're you doing?

FRANK
I've got to tell them about
the greenspace.

JEAN
Armonds?

FRANK
Our government - yeah. I have
to.

He turns to the radio, flips switches. The dial lights.

She picks up her jacket. When she drops it, her SEMI-AUTOMATIC is pointed at his back.

JEAN

Turn it off.

He turns. Studies her. Flips switches and the dial goes dark.
He walks toward her.

FRANK

What is it?

JEAN

Armonds - the others... You
don't know how they live.

FRANK

Who don't you tell me?

JEAN

I can't. Not now.

She's staring - hard - her finger on the trigger. But her hands
are shaking.

FRANK

(moves closer)
Tell me.

JEAN

I can't!

FRANK

Tell me, Jean.

JEAN

(SCREAMS)
You don't know what they do
to people!

SUDDENLY he's on her, twisting the gun from her hand. He tosses
it by the door, grabs her shoulders.

FRANK

Level with me for once!

JEAN

It's rotten! Armonds, Len
- all of them!

FRANK

Where do you fit in?

JEAN

We've got to change things -
that's all.

FRANK

To what?

(beat)

No one wants the cities. You think I do? But how else can we stop the defective births?

She's watching him.

FRANK

How else, Jean?

She takes a tiny step, leans into him. Her face against his chest.

JEAN

I don't know.

(then)

Sorry about the gun.

FRANK

Why didn't you use it?

Nothing.

FRANK

The strike force is a phony. What's Armonds really got in mind?

JEAN

He hasn't shared that with me.

(beat)

Frank, he can't learn what we found.

He's watching her.

JEAN

There're others. You'll meet them.

(then)

I'm so tired.

A long moment. Then...

Ever so gently, he kisses her. She clings to him as he carries her to the cot.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - THE DESERT CAMP - MORNING

Eric watches as the soldiers practice setting up the tall tripods, attaching the explosive canisters.

By the trucks we see stacks of supplies - among them crates of canisters and the TWO RED BOXES of VIALS. Eric pulls out a vial, studies it as...

SOLDIER #1

We'll be ready whenever to go
whenever we're notified, Sir.

EXT - FRANK'S STATION - SAME TIME

Frank and Jean walk to her car, Jean in her baggy men's clothes. He's watching her.

JEAN

What're you thinking?

FRANK

About the village - to Edgar
and his people. We could live
there.

JEAN

Maybe we will, someday.

A moment.

FRANK

Don't go back to Armonds.

JEAN

I'm the only one of us who's
close to him.

(holds him)

I'll be okay.

A little smile, meant to be reassuring, then she walks to the passenger side.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - JEAN'S CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

They're approaching Las Vegas, Frank still driving.

FRANK

When will I meet the others?

JEAN

Tonight.

She pulls her hair up, puts on her cap.

FRANK
That doesn't really work, you
-- know.

She pats his hand, scrunches down in the seat.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - THE BLUE ADOBE - EVENING

Dim and mostly empty. Little activity on the Boulevard outside.

Jean, Paul, Greg and Carlos sit at a table in the corner, speaking quietly but animatedly. (We met Greg and Carlos in the Blue Adobe with Paul earlier). With them are RICK, mid-forties, and two other men in work clothes.

Frank strides to them. Nods of acknowledgement from Paul, Greg and Carlos, then...

FRANK
(to Jean)
Have you told them?

She shakes her head.

FRANK
We found greenspace. And
people in a village.

They lean forward, wide-eyed.

FRANK
Armonds is planning something.
We...

George (from the Repro Lab) darts to the table, followed by REPRO TECH #1. George is hysterical. Looks warily at Frank.

PAUL
It's all right.

GEORGE
They're poisoning the babies!
I saw them!

They're stunned.

RICK
But why? Why would they do
such a thing?

ong moment.

PAUL

To control us.

(beat)

The defective genes are gone.
We're clean.

CARLOS

We can have families? Raise
our children?

JEAN

I knew it!

GREG

(starts to rise)

Bastards!

A few men glance over. Paul and Carlos hold Greg down. Jean watches Frank, who stares, trance-like, straight ahead.

FRANK

What if you're wrong?

GEORGE

No. They had needles and...

FRANK

(interrupts him)

What if you're wrong?

REPRO TECH #1

I saw the puncture marks.

A moment.

FRANK

(to George)

Can you get me into the Repro
Lab?

EXT - OUTSIDE BALLY'S - A SHORT TIME LATER

Men mill around outside the fence, waving their signs. George and Frank - Frank now dressed in Repro Tech #1's clothes - show their IDs to the guards, are waved through the gate.

INT - HALL OUTSIDE THE REPRODUCTION LAB - A SHORT TIME LATER

George inserts his ID disk into a slot by an unmarked door. The door slides back. George enters, Frank striding beside him.

INT - THE REPRODUCTION LAB - MOMENTS LATER

Empty. Frank and George enter, wearing hoods and masks.

INT - THE EMBRYO ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

George and Frank walk by a row of racks. George shines his flashlight beam on a bag marked "F", with a yellow sticker.

GEORGE

Here.

Frank bends close. Stares, horrified.

In the bag, a female embryo floats, TWO ARMS PROTRUDING from her left side, a STUB growing from her right.

George bends one of the attached tubes. Squeezes it. Liquid squirts from a tiny hole. Frank's eyes flat and hard.

They move on. George finds another bag marked "F", this one with a black sticker. Squeezes one of its tubes. Again liquid squirts from a tiny hole.

Frank bends close. Looks at a female embryo - HER FACE SPLIT BELOW THE EYES. Then...

BEHIND THEM...

ERNIE (O.S)

Who the fuck are you?

Ernie's white flashlight beam EXPLODES on Frank's face. Frank turns, hand covering his eyes. Ernie rushes to him.

ERNIE

I said who are you?

He RIPS Frank's mask off.

Frank LUNGES at him. Ernie backs into the main aisle. Frank follows, the beam still in his eyes.

FRANK

You son of a bitch!

He lunges again. Ernie CLUBS him in the head and he sinks to his knees. George charges Ernie, is SMASHED in the face. He drops, unconscious.

Ernie stands over Frank, swinging the flashlight.

ERNIE

You want a fight? Huh? You like a fight? Huh? Huh?

Frank fends off the blows, seizes Ernie's legs, throws him to the ground.

The SYRINGE CASE bounces from Ernie's pocket. The SYRINGE rolls out beside it.

Ernie grabs it. Straddles Frank. Shoves the needle at his throat.

One of Frank's hands is pinned under him. Frantically he pushes at Ernie's arm with the other. Ernie leans hard.

A DROP on the needle's tip. It falls, runs down Frank's cheek. The needle closer, closer, touching his skin. Then...

Frank frees his arm. Turns Ernie's hand with both of his. A long, silent struggle, the men face to face. Then...

Frank DRIVES THE NEEDLE into Ernie's EYE.

JAMS down the plunger.

Ernie flails, WRITHING on the floor, TEARING at the syringe as the POISON courses through his brain.

Then he stiffens, every muscle rigid. A final spasm and he's still.

Frank leans over his body, glaring into his face, blood dripping from the wound on his scalp.

INT - THE REPRODUCTION LAB DRESSING ROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

A shower stall with a plastic curtain partially pulled back, open lockers containing Repro Tech uniforms.

Frank carries George to a bench. His face is swollen, badly lacerated. He opens his eyes. Frank starts to help him up. Then...

VOICES outside.

INT - THE REPRODUCTION LAB DRESSING ROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

Several Repro Techs dress in the white uniforms. The shower curtain is pulled shut.

INSIDE THE SHOWER

Frank props the shaking George against the wall. A tendril of blood slides across Frank's cheek.

INT - A STAIRWAY IN BALLY'S - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank helps George up the stairs, stops at a landing, cracks the door, peers into the hall. A group of Attendants stand talking.

Frank and George move to another landing. Frank cracks the door, looks, helps George through.

They stagger down the hall, Frank frantically trying doors, finding them locked. Then one opens.

INT - BREEDER CELL TWELVE - A MOMENT LATER

The women read, talk, pace. Then they freeze, incredulous, as Frank and George stumble into the room.

ALISON

It's you!

INT - ALISON'S ROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

Tiny, with a bed, bookshelf, a few worn books. Frank and George seated on the bed. Women pack the room. Breathless silence.

Frank stares ahead, his eyes fierce. Catherine parts Frank's hair as Alison stitches his scalp with a sewing needle.

ALISON

This isn't my strong suit,
Handsome.

Lori pushes her way in, holding a small object wrapped in cloth. Inside is a woman's compact. Reverently she opens it. We see a brush, a thin line of powder around the bottom.

LORI

The last.

Most of the women watch proudly as Lori covers George's lacerations. Breeders #3 and #4 seem concerned.

Alison knots the tread, snips it, wipes the blood from Frank's face. As Lori finishes with George...

BREEDER #1

(quietly)
He's kind of cute.

BREEDER #2

Maybe they could stay awhile.

Suppressed LAUGHTER. Frank helps George up.

FRANK

Any mention of this, and we're
dead.

ALISON

What can we do?

FRANK

Check the hall and stairway.

The women pour from the room. Frank, George, Alison, Lori and Catherine follow. George still wobbly.

EXT - OUTSIDE BALLY'S - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank and George show their IDs at the gate. A guard looks suspiciously at George, but Frank hurries him along.

EXT - LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD - MOMENTS LATER

Frank and George walk. Paul steps from the shadows, followed by Greg and Carlos.

FRANK

We need to get him outside.

Frank studies the Boulevard - rapidly filling with men.

CARLOS

We could go through the Club.

PAUL

Too dangerous.

FRANK

Stay together. Be a little drunk.

They close in around George and move on, past the remains of Caesar's Palace.

INT - BREEDER CELL TWELVE - SAME TIME

The women talk excitedly... "What did they do?" "They're Deefers - couldn't you tell!?" "What if they come back?" Then...

BREEDER #3

I think we should report them.

ALISON

(from across the room)
What?

BREEDER #4

So do I.

Instant silence. Alison strides to them, followed by Lori and Catherine.

BREEDER #3
 We helped them. When they're
 caught, we'll be blamed.

A moment.

ALISON
 Do you like your life?

BREEDER #3
 Not really.

ALISON
 What if they could change it?

BREEDER #4
 What if they're just crooks?

ALISON
 Don't you know who that was?

Breeder #4 shakes her head.

ALISON
 Frank Rider, for Christ sake!
 (beat)
 You want to go on making babies
 you never see? Be given to some
 low-life official when you're
 old? Maybe you do, but not me.
 If these guys have a way out -
 any way - I'll take my chances.

Nods of agreement from the other women. All eyes on Breeders #3
 and #4.

ALISON
 You keep your mouths shut -
 understand?

The two Breeders look at one another. The conversation picks up
 again as Alison takes Lori and Catherine aside. Then...

ALISON
 Watch them.

EXT - LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD - A SHORT TIME LATER

A police van passes, its WAILING SIREN mixing with CHEERS and
 BOOS from the speakers as Frank, George, Paul, Greg and Carlos
 approach the MGM.

ON THE BIG SCREEN

A boxer goes down but the men hardly notice. Frank and the others push their way through the crowd. Then...

Several men step in front of them - staring, belligerent. Among them the men who assaulted Jean.

MAN #1

I said you hadn't heard the last of it. Remember?

PAUL

We don't want any trouble.

MAN #2

Trouble's here, Pal.

Frank glares at Man #1.

FRANK

Let the others go. We'll settle it between you and me.

PAUL

Frank, no!

MAN #3

(points to Frank)
He's got a knife.

MAN #1

So have I.

The men pull out knives, chains, clubs. Frank glances at George.

FRANK

(to Paul)
Get him out of here.

But too late. The men circle the Deefers - then ATTACK.

The Deefers fend them off as...

Other men run to the fight, hot-eyed, SCREAMING for blood. Paul drops Man #2, is cut on the arm. Greg is hit from behind, falls, drops the man with a kick to the groin.

Carlos takes out another man. Men #1 and #2 are on Frank, one FLAILING with a chain - then...

The WAIL of sirens. The men scatter as two vans race to them, disgorging helmeted, club-wielding police.

They grab Greg, Carlos, several of the fighters, drag them to the vans. They grab George. Frank tries to intervene, is shoved aside. -

Paul pushes Frank to the shadows, from where they watch the WAILING vans pull away. Then he and Frank sprint after them.

EXT - THE LUXOR PARKING LOT - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank and Paul watch in the dim moonlight as police herd Greg, Carlos and other men inside the Luxor. Finally George appears, shoved ahead by the last police.

PAUL

What if he talks?

They turn as the TRUCK WITH DARK WINDOWS WHINES past, on its way to the wall. Frank and Paul stare at it, then...

They sprint to Paul's car.

INT - THE REPRODUCTION LAB DRESSING ROOM - SAME TIME

A policeman interviews two Repro Techs. Another ZIPS a body bag, drags the body toward the door. Stops to hand Ernie's syringe and needle to a POLICE SERGEANT.

POLICE SERGEANT

What is this stuff?

The policeman shrugs.

INT - THE EMBRYO ROOM - SAME TIME

Repro Techs walk among the racks shining their flashlights as a policeman scrapes blood from the floor into small plastic bags.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - THE DESERT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Paul's car parks near edge of a canyon. Frank and Paul emerge, Frank carrying binoculars. He walks to the edge, looks into the canyon. And STAGGERS.

THROUGH THE BINOCULARS

We see the TRUCK WITH DARK WINDOWS. From the back, men with shafts herd naked DEEFS of all sizes onto the ground. They stand, looking dully at their surroundings.

Frank hands the binoculars to Paul. Turns away. Walks numbly toward the car. Paul looks into the canyon. Then...

PAUL

My God!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - FRANK'S ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Frank enters, stumbles to the bathroom, flicks on the light. Bends over the sink - and VOMITS. Hard, wretched heaves. He runs the beige water, splashes his face, in his mouth. Then...

A hand on his back.

JEAN

You okay?

He whirls, in a crouch. Straightens. Stares at her.

FRANK

The lab supervisor's dead.
The police have George.

He staggers into the living room. Jean follows, watches as he throws gear into a bag.

FRANK

Can you get me into the Capitol?

JEAN

Possibly. Why?

Nothing.

JEAN

Why, Frank?

He turns, his face set in stone.

FRANK

I'm going to kill Armonds.

JEAN

We can't beat them in the
cities. You said so.

FRANK

Forget what I said.

JEAN

We need you. People listen
to you.

He stares at her. Then he stumbles toward the door.

JEAN

No!

Three quick strides... and she TACKLES him. He falls to the floor. Instantly she's on him.

They wrestle, THUMPING on the dirty worn carpet, Jean struggling, using her knees.

But she's no match for him. He pins her, glaring, a lifetime of torment in one look. Unconsciously he reaches for his knife.

Then he stops - rolls to his back. She crawls to him.

JEAN

We need you, Frank. We need
your guts. We need your mind.
We need your heart.

(beat)

I need you.

Their eyes locked. Then...

FRANK

You wondered where the little
Deefs come from. Let me tell
you. They make them - here -
in the Repro Lab.

His eyes close. When he opens them they're full of tears.

FRANK

I've been killing them all my
life.

She holds him. Neither of them says a word.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - THE LUXOR PARKING LOT - EARLY MORNING

Frank and Paul stand by Jean's car. She hurries to them.

JEAN

They'll release Carlos and
Greg this morning. They claim
to have no record of George.

Frank and Paul exchange looks. Jean gets into her car.

FRANK

Let me take you to my station.
You'll be safe there.

JEAN
 (shakes her head)
 -- Armonds gives his speech in two
 days.

A moment.

FRANK
 What're you going to do?

She smiles, squeezes his hand. Pulls away, toward the wall.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - THE CAPITOL - JEAN'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Bright and pleasant. Jean stands by the bed, near an open travel bag, from which she removes a gun belt, mottled trousers and a shirt - the camouflage gear worn by Deefers.

She takes out a Deeper headband - the kind used to record their kills. Stares at it, begins to undress.

INT - JEAN'S CAR - IN THE CAPITOL - A SHORT TIME LATER

Jean, wearing the Deeper clothes, turns in at a stately home.

INT - ARMONDS' BEDROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

Armonds struggles into a clown costume, helped by Len, who is dressed as a rabbit. Jean stands nearby in the Deeper clothes, now with a gun belt and recorder and headband.

ARMONDS
 Rider still turned me down?

JEAN
 (nods)
 He's difficult.

Len ZIPS the back of the costume while Armonds pulls at the front, making room. Then...

ARMONDS
 (to Len)
 Contact the Captain. Tell him
 to proceed.

Len nods, quickly exits. Armonds puts on a clown's wig and a round, red nose.

ARMONDS
 When were you going back to
 Vegas?

JEAN

In the morning.

ARMONDS

Good. On the way you can work with Len. I like his concept for the speech, but it's got to be punched up. Make it bigger. More dramatic.

(then)

How do I look?

JEAN

Perfect.

ARMONDS

I love birthdays.

A KNOCK at the door, then Armonds' wife sticks her head in. She's dressed as a princess.

ARMONDS' WIFE

Time for you-know-what.

Armonds nods. His wife withdraws, closes the door. Jean starts toward it...

But Armonds grabs her arm. Pulls her to him.

Kisses her, his tongue dancing on her lips. Then...

ARMONDS

Tonight?

JEAN

Yes, of course, Senator.

A smile. He walks to the door. Glances at Jean's gun.

ARMONDS

That's not loaded, is it?

INT - THE ARMONDS' LIVING ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Bright and spacious - unlike anything we've seen - with a lavish buffet in back.

Men, women and children COSTUMED AS ANIMALS, ARISTOCRATS, MILITARY AND FAIRY TALE CHARACTERS stand in groups, the adults CHATTING, the children LAUGHING as ex-Breeder, dressed plainly, serve drinks and food.

Armonds and Jean enter. His daughter, a ballerina, dashes to him.

ARMONDS' DAUGHTER
Where're my presents, Daddy?

ARMONDS
In a while, Sweetheart.
The daughter races to a group of girls. Armonds heads for the buffet. Jean is approached by a man dressed as a deer.

DEER-MAN
How're you doing? Ready for Ted's speech?

JEAN
Right on target.

From the other side of the room...

ARMONDS' WIFE
Okay, everybody!

Armonds' wife directs the guests into a loose circle, the children in the middle.

Armonds, his wife and daughter take the very center as servants bring stacks of brightly wrapped presents, then a huge cake with five lighted candles. In a moment...

ARMONDS
One, two, three...

ALL
(singing)
Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday dear Stacie. Happy birthday to you.

Armonds' daughter blows out the candles, children SQUEALING, adults APPLAUDING as she turns to her father, arms wide.

ARMONDS
That's my girl.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - ARMONDS' OFFICE - NIGHT

Dark. The lock CLICKS, the door opens, closes quickly. A figure rushes to Armonds' desk, kneels behind it.

The beam of a tiny flashlight plays on the desk lock. In the glow we see that the figure is Jean.

She inserts a thin tool into the lock, maneuvers it, raises the cover of the computer well, pulls up the monitor and keyboard, flicks on the monitor. It lights as she kneels before it.

She inserts her ID disk into a slot below the monitor. On the screen we see: "DAUTON, JEAN. F17993462, CLEARANCE B3". Then, blinking: ACCESS CODE? She types. "CB35." A prompt appears.

Jean types: "GREENSPACE". On the screen: "NO SUCH FILE".

JEAN

You're lying.

She types: "OUTSIDE". Response: "DEEFS? DEEFERS"?

She shakes her head, types: "ARMONDS". Response: "ACCESS DENIED".

She types: "EMERGENCY OVERRIDE". Response: "WHAT EMERGENCY"?

Then, FROM THE HALL...

Running FOOTSTEPS. Loud male VOICES.

A CRASH against the door.

Jean's hands poised over the keyboard, her eyes fixed on the door.

Then we hear MEN LAUGHING. Their voices trail away. Jean looks at her shaking hands. A deep breath.

On the screen, as before: "EMERGENCY OVERRIDE" and "WHAT EMERGENCY"?

She types: "REPRODUCTION LABORATORY". Response: "ACCESS DENIED".

JEAN

Come on, Senator. What do you fear the most?

A long moment. She types: "INFORMATION LEAK", then: "ARMONDS, THEODORE, S40375188. CLEARANCE A".

A little smile as a window opens on the screen. She types: "GREENSPACE". Then she stares wide-eyed as...

"FIRST FILE ENTRY: MAY 8, 2077. LAST ENTRY SEPTEMBER 14, 2103". Then: "BEGIN?"

JEAN

He knew about the greenspace!
He always knew!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - THE LUXOR POLICE STATION - MORNING

Len and Jean (in baggy men's clothes) pass policemen in the hall as they walk to the Chief's office.

INT - POLICE CHIEF'S OFFICE - A MOMENT LATER

The chief stands as Len and Jean enter.

LEN

He'll arrive at three. The speech and ceremony should take less than an hour.

POLICE CHIEF

We're prepared, Mr. Catrell. You can be sure of that.

A POLICEMAN enters, carrying a file.

POLICEMAN

We have prelims on the blood from the Repro Lab.

POLICE CHIEF

Go ahead.

POLICEMAN

One match for the supervisor, a second for the missing Tech. But there's a third man. His identity's unknown.

POLICE CHIEF

Keep me informed.

The policeman exits.

LEN

Trouble in the Repro Lab?

POLICE CHIEF

The supervisor was killed.

LEN

Why?

POLICE CHIEF

A fight. But the lab wasn't damaged. I assumed it was personal.

POLICE CHIEF (cont'd)

(beat)

You think there's more to it?

LEN

I think unknowns are perilous.
Find that missing Tech.

(beat)

Anything on Valiant?

POLICE CHIEF

Not yet. I have informants
everywhere.

LEN

Don't disappoint us, Chief.
It'd be a shame to see you
back on the streets.

He exits, Jean behind him. After the door closes...

POLICE CHIEF

Asshole!

INT - HALL IN THE POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Len and Jean walk.

JEAN

Valiant bothers you, doesn't
he?

LEN

A little.

(then)

We'll get him. We have the
advantage.

CUT TO:

INT - FRANK'S ROOM IN THE ALADDIN - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank opens the door, closes it as Jean enters.

JEAN

The strike force is outside.
Armonds got someone else to
lead it.

FRANK

Did you find out what he...

JEAN
 (interrupts him)
 He knows about the greenspace.
 He always knew.

A moment.

FRANK
 They'll find the village!

He bends to pick up his gear. She grabs his arm.

JEAN
 Maybe I can get something out
 of Len.

FRANK
 (checks his watch)
 An hour - no more.

She nods, quickly exits. He throws the gear into a dusty bag.

INT - LEN'S OFFICE - A SHORT TIME LATER

Len at his desk, scanning papers. Jean paces before it.

LEN
 Not bad. But it needs more
 drama. Something special.

JEAN
 It'd make my job easier if I
 knew the truth.

He looks at her.

JEAN
 About the strike force.

LEN
 If the senator wanted to tell
 you, he would have.

JEAN
 Sounds ominous.

LEN
 Does it?

JEAN
 It's just that I spent some
 time with Rider, and...

He's staring at her.

LEN

Whose side are you on?

Their eyes lock. She struggles to hide the hate in hers.
Then...

The intercom CRACKLES.

POLICE CHIEF'S VOICE

Mr. Catrell?

LEN

Yes?

POLICE CHIEF'S VOICE

We have the missing Tech in
custody.

A stricken look from Jean. Len gathers his papers. Walks to the
door, turns.

LEN

Get your priorities straight,
Jean. There're other pretty
mutants around.

He exits. Jean fights her fear and anger. Then she rushes from
the room.

INT - FRANK'S ROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank, Paul, Greg and Carlos stand by their packed gear. Jean
hurries in.

JEAN

They know about George.

Paul nods to Greg and Carlos - they exit with their gear. Jean
holds Frank, her face against his chest, her eyes closed.

FRANK

Come with me.

JEAN

I can't.
(then)
Be careful, Frank.

He nods, picks up his gear. She watches as he strides away.

CUT TO:

EXT - THE DESERT - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank and Paul stand by Paul's car. Greg and Carlos pull up in theirs.

FRANK
Remember - no radios.

Greg and Carlos nod, speed into the desert. Frank and Paul hurry into Paul's car.

INT - THE VIEWING ROOM - SAME TIME

Len and the police chief look through one-way glass into the interrogation room. George is shackled to a chair, the cap with multiple electrodes on his head.

IN THE INTERROGATION ROOM

The interrogator's case is on the table, his hand on a knob, his finger on the button.

INTERROGATOR
Who was with you in the Repro
Lab?

GEORGE
No one.

The interrogator pushes the button. George SHUDDERS.

INTERROGATOR
Help me to help you.

GEORGE
I fought with Ernie, that's
all.

The interrogator turns the knob, pushes the button. George's body SPASMS. His eyes glaze.

INTERROGATOR
Don't think I enjoy this. I
don't.

Nothing from George. The interrogator turns the knob, pushes the button. George CONVULSES.

INTERROGATOR
Help me to help you.

GEORGE
Bastards!

INTERROGATOR
Yes, that's it.

He presses the button. George CONVULSES again. Then he SCREAMS, pink slobber flying from his mouth.

GEORGE
They poisoned them!

INTERROGATOR
Poisoned who?

GEORGE
Vile slimy things, that eat
the babies and crawl through
the wall! Oh, he knows!

INTERROGATOR
Who knows, George?

GEORGE
God knows, you bastards! Just
wait 'til he gets his hands on
you!

IN THE VIEWING ROOM

POLICE CHIEF
I warned you.

LEN
Get rid of him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - BOTTOM OF A DESERT CANYON - NIGHT

Clouds race under the moon, dappling the ground in light and shadow. Eric and two soldiers study one of the trucks.

SOLDIER #1
They weren't built for this,
Captain.

Other soldiers sit near the middle of the line of trucks - tense, glancing up at every sound. Soldiers #2 and #3 stand as guards on top of the first and last trucks.

SOLDIER #4
I wish we had lights.

SOLDIER #5
We can't. The Deefs would
know we're here.

AT ERIC'S TRUCK - THE FRONT OF THE LINE

Soldier #2 stares into the darkness.

FOOTSTEPS

He whirls, points his weapon... At Paul.

PAUL
How're you doing?

SOLDIER #2
Who're...

FRANK IS ON HIM, pulling him to the ground, his knife at the soldier's throat.

FRANK
Not a whisper!

Paul tapes the soldier's mouth, hands and feet as Frank unleashes the cover at the back of the truck.

IN THE TRUCK

Frank's and Paul's flashlight beams pass over cases of the explosive cannisters. Frank takes out a cannister, then a detonator. Studies them.

He depresses a switch on the canister and a small GREEN LIGHT BLINKS. He touches a button on the detonator. We see a matching GREEN LIGHT as...

Paul pulls a VIAL from a SMALL RED BOX. Studies it, hands it to Frank.

EXT - THE CANYON - A SHORT TIME LATER

The soldiers talk quietly. Eric jogs to them.

ERIC
I told you to be quiet. We
have a mission to perform!

FRANK (O.S.)
With these?

The soldiers leap to their feet as Frank strides toward them, a cannister in one hand, a vial in the other. He holds up the vial, watching Eric, his eyes hard and flat.

FRANK
What is it?

Nothing. Frank shoves the vial under Eric's nose.

FRANK
I asked you what it is.

ERIC
It makes a gas, to disable
the Deefs.

FRANK
That's all? How tough can it
be to shoot cripples?

ERIC
Why don't you tell us, Colonel?

A long moment, all watching Frank. Then...

ON THE LAST TRUCK

Soldier #3 raises his weapon. Through the Cross hairs we see Frank's blurred image. The scope adjusts, the image clearing as...

WITH FRANK

FRANK
The strike force is a fake.

Quickly the soldiers look at Eric.

ERIC
He's a traitor. Shoot him.

Several soldiers reach for their weapons. Frank jams the vial into the canister.

FRANK
I wouldn't. Somewhere in the
dark my friend's watching - with
the detonator for this.

ERIC
You're lying.

FRANK
Try me.

All eyes on Frank. They shift to Eric.

ERIC
Shoot him!

Frank doesn't move.

FRANK
(to the soldiers)
We need your help.

The soldiers hesitate, exchanging glances.

ON TOP OF THE LAST TRUCK

Soldier #3's finger tightens on the trigger. Then...

The barrel of a pistol pushes against his jaw.

PAUL
Think about it.

WITH FRANK

The soldiers stares as...

ERIC
You've gone soft, Frank. You
used to be the best.

FRANK
I used to be you.

Eric draws his pistol. Levels it.

Then he drops it. Frank kicks it into the darkness.

FRANK
On the ground! All of you!

The soldiers look at Eric, who still glares. Finally he gets down. The soldiers follow.

All eyes on Frank. They shift to Paul, who pushes Soldier #3 before him. He tosses an automatic weapon to Frank, slings the others into the shadows.

Frank pulls the vial from the cannister.

FRANK
We're taking these with us.
Your mission's over.

EXT - BY THE LINE OF TRUCKS - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank and Paul drop the soldiers' radios into a pile on the ground, step back and FIRE into them with the soldiers' automatic weapons. Then...

They SPRINT along the line of trucks, FIRING into their engines.

ERIC hears the SHOTS. Gets to his knees. Soldier #1 pulls him to the ground.

ERIC

They'll get away!

The engines of two trucks HISS, begin to SMOULDER. Frantically Eric crawls in the direction where Paul threw the weapons.

DOWN THE CANYON

Frank and Paul FIRE BURSTS into the air until the automatic weapons are empty, then sprint to Paul's car.

Paul starts the engine, flicks on the lights. In the back we see ONE RED BOX OF VIALS and a few canisters.

WITH ERIC

As the headlights move down the canyon. He gropes for a weapon, can't find one, stares desperately at the retreating light.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - ENTRANCE TO THE CANYON - LATER THAT NIGHT

Frank and Paul stand before the headlights, Paul with a canister and a detonator. Frank examines one of the vials.

PAUL

Why would they do this just to disable Deefs?

FRANK

They wouldn't.

EXT - THE CANYON - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank and Paul walk in protective suits, their flashlight beams searching the canyon wall. Paul finds a cave, motions to Frank.

INT - THE CAVE - MOMENTS LATER

Frank and Paul enter a high-ceilinged cave with scruffy grass. Frank kneels, opens the vial, shakes out a few of the black crystals.

A faint, gray VAPOR rises. Nothing, then...

Frank and Paul watch, horrified, as BATS fall from the ceiling, SHRIEKING FAINTLY, writhing, spitting blood as they curl into soft, dark balls of death.

FRANK
Armonds!

PAUL
He'll try again, Frank.

FRANK
If we let him.

He strides away.

EXT - ENTRANCE TO THE CANYON - A SHORT TIME LATER

Frank and Paul sit, leaning against Paul's car. The clouds have vanished. Only the moon above them, and a sky heavy with stars. Frank has a dry twig in his hand.

FRANK
I've been so stupid.

PAUL
We all have.

FRANK
You believe in something, think it's right. Maybe it was, once. But you don't question. And it changes. Little by little, it changes. And it's not what you believed in at all.

The twig SNAPS.

PAUL
What're our chances?

FRANK
Lousy.

PAUL
If I don't make it, promise me you'll take care of Adam.

FRANK
You'll make it.

PAUL
We go back a long way, Frank. Promise me you'll take care of my son.

Frank looks at him. Nods. Then...

PAUL
So now we wait.

FRANK
We wait.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - ENTRANCE TO THE CANYON - DAWN

Paul's car speeds into the desert.

EXT - DEEPER IN THE CANYON - SAME TIME

Soldiers sort through equipment, gear and food scattered on the ground. Two trucks are blackened, still smouldering. The hoods of the others are up, soldiers working under them.

Soldiers #1 and #2 stack the crates of canisters. They stop as Soldier #1 pushes a crate aside...

And pulls a RED BOX OF VIALS from beneath it.

SOLDIER #1
Captain?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - THE DESERT - LATE AFTERNOON

Greg, Carlos and six other Deefers stand before their pursuit cars, staring at dust plumes in the distance.

EXT - THE DESERT - A SHORT TIME LATER

Paul's car stops in front of the Deefers - Paul and Frank emerge. Frank leaps to the hood of Paul's car.

FRANK
Do you know what we're up
against?

They nod, walking closer. Then...

DEEFER #1
Colonel, what if we fail?

FRANK
You'll never be with a woman,
or she with you. You'll never
see your children. We'll live
in this misery for another 100
years. Is that what you want?

They shake their heads 'no'.

--

FRANK
Listen carefully.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - ENTRANCE TO THE MGM - SUNSET

A police van leads Armonds' sleek car to Len and Jean, who wait as Armonds emerges. As they walk to the door...

ARMONDS
How're the men?

LEN
Restless. We had to close
the bars.

ARMONDS
Excellent. They'll be ready
for our little diversion.

EXT - THE DESERT HIGHWAY - SAME TIME

The tops of the buildings are just visible as four Deeper pursuit cars streak toward Las Vegas.

INT - PAUL'S CAR - SAME TIME

Paul drives. Frank pulls the clip from his gun, checks to see that it's fully loaded.

PAUL
Where do we meet Jean?

FRANK
At the Luxor.

He CLICKS a round into the chamber.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - BROADCAST STUDIO - TOP OF THE MGM - EARLY EVENING

Armonds, Len and Jean watch the technicians prepare for a broadcast.

ARMONDS
There's enough power to reach
all the cities in my region?

LEN
For a short time.

As they walk to the door...

LEN
 (into his hand radio)
 We're coming down.

INT - THE MGM ARENA - SAME TIME

Packed with TENSE, EDGY men. POLICE are everywhere, lining the north and south ramps leading to the stage in the center, in the aisles, among the men, breaking up FIGHTS.

A fixed TV camera at the front of the stage. Above it, big screens. Music BLASTS from the speakers.

The police chief arrives, confers with subordinates.

INT - LUXOR PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

The four pursuit cars speed in, park by the farm trucks. Frank and the others Deefers emerge. Rick and the two workmen we met in Blue Adobe run to them from the shadows.

RICK
 All set.

FRANK
 (to the Deefers)
 The police will be focused on Armonds, so move fast, but try not to attract attention.

The Deefers sprint from the lot, slow down, walk onto the dim Boulevard in groups of two and three.

INT - THE MGM - HOLDING AREA BESIDE THE ARENA - SAME TIME

ALISON, LORI and CATHERINE, dressed in bright new clothes - long skirts, puffy blouses - stand at the bottom of a ramp Troubled glances as...

Behind them, frightened, misshapen DEEFS of all sizes are herded together by handlers with metal staffs.

A pretty young woman, also in bright new clothes - a blouse and very long skirt - stands silently to the side. Her eyes are wide - and vacant.

INT - LIVING ROOM OF BREEDER CELL TWELVE - SAME TIME

The other women of the cell watch the TV screen.

BREEDER #1

Where's this big announcement
they're supposed to make?

BREEDER #2

Probably the same old crap.

CUT TO:

INT - THE MGM ARENA - A SHORT TIME LATER

On the stage and on the screens above we see Armonds and Len walk up from the south ramp, Len with a microphone. He raises his arms for quiet. Then...

LEN

Ted Armonds needs no introduction. You all know the fabulous job he's done for us here in the Southwest. Today he has an announcement that could change our lives. Senator?

Armonds takes the microphone. Confidently waits. Then...

ARMONDS

Sometimes we forget the reason we're here - the reason we've sacrificed, and continue to sacrifice, so much. Sometimes we forget the threat to our species - to our very existence as human beings - that remains outside.

(beat)

I refer to the Deefs. And let me assure you that threat is real. They're out there, breeding, passing on defects that one day could overwhelm us.

(beat)

I won't let that happen. A few days ago we began a new operation - Operation Final Resolve - led by one of our most distinguished Deef killers, which will eliminate the Deefs and the threat they present to us once and for all.

He waits for applause. Gets impatient MUTTERING.

ARMONDS

Sometimes we get complacent. We live behind our walls, safe and secure, and forget why they're necessary. Let me show you why.

He signals toward the north ramp.

EXT - BALLY'S - SAME TIME

Deserted. The police are in a kiosk, watching Armonds on TV. Frank and the Deefers sprint to the gate, disarm them, race to the hotel entrance.

INT - THE MGM ARENA - MOMENTS LATER

Armonds on the stage, the men JOSTLING NOISILY below. Then they grow quiet...

And STARE, unbelieving, as Alison, Lori and Catherine walk up the north ramp.

ARMONDS

Ladies.

The women hesitate. Walk onto the stage. Two thousand men CHEER.

Armonds reaches for Alison's hand. She withdraws. He grabs her hand, puts his mouth to her ear.

ARMONDS

You don't want to spoil this.
Trust me.

He steps back, smiling. This time she doesn't resist.

He leads her around the stage, Lori and Catherine behind. One circuit, then Armonds steps to the center as the women continue walking.

ARMONDS

Ladies.

They glance at one another. Begin unbuttoning their blouses.

INT - BALLY'S - MOMENTS LATER

Frank and the Deefers sprint down a hall, splitting up at an intersection.

INT - THE MGM ARENA - SAME TIME

Alison, Lori and Catherine circle the stage, their blouses unbuttoned. Awkwardly they remove them. Continue to circle, naked above the waist. Terrified.

The men are CLAPPING, HOOTING. Armonds can barely be heard.

ARMONDS

Lovely, aren't they?

CHEERS

ARMONDS
You'd like them, wouldn't you?

HOWLS

"Let them go!" "Over here, Honey!" Men try to get to the stage
- are shoved back by police.

INT - LIVING ROOM OF BREEDER CELL TWELVE - SAME TIME

Frank and Greg rush in. The women leap to their feet.

INT - BOY'S CELL NINE - SAME TIME

Paul and Carlos enter, Carlos hiding his gun. Instantly the room
is still. Carlos strides to the attendants.

CARLOS
Not a word.

The children surround Paul as he bends to Adam.

ADAM
(smiles)
Hi.

PAUL
We're going to live outside,
in a place with animals, and
streams and trees. Would you
like to go with us?

BOY #1
The Deefs would get him.

PAUL
No, they won't hurt you.

BOY #2
But they're ugly.

PAUL
To some they are.
(to Adam)
Would you come with me?

ADAM
Okay!

BOY #3
Can I go?

PAUL
Who else wants to go?

INT - THE MGM ARENA - SAME TIME

Alison, Lori and Catherine continue, the SCREAMING men trying to reach them, thrown back by police.

INT - HALL IN BALLY'S - MOMENTS LATER

Frank, Greg, the women of cell twelve are running. Behind them, Deefers open other doors as women sprint into the hall.

INT - ANOTHER HALL IN BALLY'S - SAME TIME

Paul and Carlos lead Adam and the other boys of cell nine. Behind them, Deefers lead the boys and girls of other cells into the hall.

INT - THE POWER STATION - SAME TIME

A faint HUM as Rick and the two workmen enter, Rick with a key in his hand. The station is empty. Rick sits at a keyboard, checks his watch, begins to type.

INT - THE MGM ARENA - SAME TIME

Alison, Lori and Catherine leave the stage, covering themselves with their blouses. The men BOO, shove, trying to reach them.

ARMONDS
Gentlemen! Gentlemen! Calm
yourselves. It's time for the
piece de resistance!

He signals to the handlers.

INT - PLAY ROOM OF CHILDREN'S CELL NINE - MOMENTS LATER

An attendant breaks free of his bonds, runs from the room.

EXT - BALLY'S - SAME TIME

Frank and the Deefers rush the women and children from the hotel.

INT - THE MGM ARENA - SAME TIME

The men's BOOS turn to APPLAUSE as the pretty young woman in the new blouse and very long skirt appears on the north ramp.

ON THE SOUTH RAMP

Len, Jean (in cap and baggy clothes) and the police chief watch.

A policeman runs to the chief, hands him a piece of paper. He reads it, turns to Len.

POLICE CHIEF

The third man in the Repro Lab? Frank Rider.

LEN

I never trusted him.

POLICE CHIEF

There's more. Some Deefers took the children from one of their cells.

A moment.

LEN

It's Rider!

(then)

Get down there - now!

The chief barks into his radio, signals to his men. Some follow him off the ramp as...

LEN

(to Jean)

Go to the studio. Stop the transmission if anything looks wrong. Anything.

She nods, jogs away as...

ON THE STAGE

Armonds leads the young woman in a circle. She limps slightly, but the CHEERING men don't notice.

ARMONDS

Gorgeous, isn't she?

He moves to the center, watching the men as the woman circles, now unbuttoning her blouse.

More WHISTLES. APPLAUSE. "Yeah, that's it!" "Let's see them, honey!"

She continues, limping slightly.

Removes the blouse.

She's beautiful. Perfect.

She stops, gazing vacantly over a sea of RAUCOUS CHEERS. Tries to smile.

ARMONDS
You like her?

MORE CHEERS

ARMONDS
You like her?

LOUDER

ARMONDS
You want her?

The men are on their feet, SCREAMING.

Armonds GRABS THE BACK OF HER LONG SKIRT.

ARMONDS
You want her?

LOUDER

He RIPS OFF THE SKIRT...

Exposing her HAIRY, GOAT-LIKE LEGS.

Every sound in the arena dies.

Armonds' piercing eyes sweep the stunned faces. Then...

ARMONDS
(whispering)
That's why we have body scans.

He signals to the handlers.

ARMONDS
That's why we have controlled
breeding.

The handlers push the MISSHAPEN DEEFS up the ramp.

ARMONDS
That's why we have the walls.

UTTER SILENCE. The men frozen in place. Only the SHUFFLE of the Deefs' footsteps on the stage.

INT - THE BROADCAST STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Jean enters, her gun drawn. She pulls a cassette from her pocket.

JEAN
There's been a change in programming.

EXT - LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD - SAME TIME

Frank and the Deefers lead the women and children along the near-deserted street. Then...

POLICE SIRENS, coming toward them.

FRANK
They know.

Quickly they rush into shadowy doorways. The police vans pass, SIRENS WAILING.

Frank and Paul edge to the sidewalk, check the street. Frank glances at the big screens by the MGM.

And stops in his tracks.

ON THE SCREEN

We see Jean in the broadcast studio.

JEAN
My name is Jean Dauton. I work for Senator Armonds.

FRANK
What's she doing!?

PAUL
Buying us time.
(grabs Frank's arm)
Come on!

INT - THE MGM ARENA - SAME TIME

The frightened Deefs mill around the stage. The men frozen in place, now staring at Jean on the screens.

Armonds and Len stand the south ramp, looking at the screens, ASTONISHED, as...

JEAN (continuing)
Like you, for much of my life I believed the cities and the breeding program were necessary. I was wrong.

Armonds and Len hurry down the ramp, accompanied by many of the police as...

JEAN (continuing)

The defective genes are gone.
The creatures you see before you,
and those outside, are your own
children - turned into Deefs to
keep you within these walls so
the senator and his friends can
live the way they do.

(beat)

How do they live? I'll show
you. The senator has told you
lies. Now you'll see the truth.
Don't let the lies continue.

Then...

A TAPE OF ARMONDS' BIRTHDAY PARTY, recorded by Jean when she wore the Deefers headband, begins to play.

We enter the bright, spacious living room with the buffet in back, see the costumed men and women, the children romping, LAUGHING. Then...

ARMONDS' DAUGHTER

Where're my presents, Daddy?

ARMONDS

In a while, Sweetheart.

The men in a trance. Still frozen.

INT - HALL IN THE MGM - SAME TIME

Armonds and Len rush toward the entrance with their police escort.

ARMONDS

Get her!

A sergeant and three policemen break away.

EXT - BEHIND LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD - MOMENTS LATER

Frank and the Deefers rush the women and children along the edge of what was the Mirage golf course. It's now a shanty town, many of the shacks made of panes from the Luxor's pyramid.

An eerie glow from the fires inside - a place of drunks and druggies.

GREG
Colonel, are sure about this?

FRANK
We have no choice.

Men stagger out, dazzled, staring in the moonlight. Then...

DRUNKEN MAN
Hey! Women!

More men stagger out. The Deefers draw their weapons, fend them off as...

A hundred yards behind them, the chief and ten police run onto the grounds. Sprint toward the commotion.

Frank leads his people among the shacks.

The police follow, flashlight beams slicing the dark. Frank's group stops, women panting as they quiet the children, Deefers crouched in front.

The beams move closer. Splaying off the filthy glass. Closer.

A boy COUGHS....

And the police FIRE.

Bullets CRASH through panes - shards of glass and plastic BUZZ through the air.

Some Deefers FIRE back as Frank, Paul, Greg and Carlos rush the women and children away. Then...

A FIREFIGHT in the shanty town, the drunks ducking, staring in amazement as panes SHATTER, faces, arms and legs are nicked.

But the Deefers are overmatched. Frank leads them toward Las Vegas Boulevard.

INT - THE MGM ARENA - SAME TIME

ON THE SCREENS

We see the end of the birthday party - the guests in a circle, the presents, the cake and...

ALL
(singing)
Happy birthday, dear Stacie.
Happy birthday to you.

Armonds' daughter blows out the candles. The children SQUEAL, adults APPLAUD as she turns to her father, arms wide.

ARMONDS
That's my girl.

The tape ends - the screens go dark.

Utter silence. Then...

A DEEP, GUTTURAL ROAR fills the arena.

INT - THE POWER STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Rick taps a computer key. He and the two workmen sprint from the room as the lights brighten, the hands of dials move toward red.

INT - A HALL IN THE MGM - MOMENTS LATER

A door SLAMS open. Jean enters, runs. A moment, then...
A policeman follows, gun drawn, barking into his radio.

Desperately Jean tries doors. They're locked. The sergeant and two policemen appear from the stairway in front of her.

She FIRES. The police FIRE back, bullets CLIPPING walls, GLANCING off floors.

The police close. A bullet nicks Jean's arm. A policeman is hit in the shoulder.

She's out of ammo. Throws the gun as the policemen charge.

INT - ARMONDS' CAR - IN FRONT OF THE LUXOR - MOMENTS LATER

The police van leads Armond's speeding car to the entrance, passing POLICE IN RIOT GEAR as they run toward the Boulevard.

Len presses his radio to his ear. Then...

LEN
We have Jean.

EXT - LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD - MOMENTS LATER

The street grows brighter by the second.

A few bulbs in the old signs light - others SPARK as Frank leads his group toward the street, Paul with the women and children, Greg, Carlos and the other Deefers crouching behind.

The Deefers FIRE, dodging in and out of doorways. The chief and his police are behind them, FIRING in return.

The Deefers, women and children sprint to the street...

Then they stop.

Racing toward them are the riot police from the Luxor.

The Deefers herd the women and children into doorways, take up defensive positions as...

Police race toward them from both sides.

They're trapped.

The police close. Then...

The old signs begin to SPARK. HISS. SPUTTER. Then they IGNITE, bathing the street in an unearthly glow.

We hear an ENORMOUS ROAR as...

MEN SPRINT into the street from the MGM.

The riot police turn, FIRE. Are engulfed, fighting hand-to-hand.

The chief and his men melt into the side streets.

EXT - ANOTHER SIDE STREET - A MOMENT LATER

Frank leads his group into the shadows.

FRANK

(to Paul)

Take them through the back.
I've got to get Jean.

GREG

I'll go with you.

Paul nods, leads the others away as Frank and Greg run toward the Boulevard.

EXT - LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD - MOMENTS LATER

PANDEMONIUM

BULBS EXPLODE, raining SPARKS on the melee of rock and bottle throwing men, club-swinging, FIRING police.

A police van races toward the Luxor, KNOCKING men aside as Frank and Greg push their way toward the MGM.

EXT - LUXOR PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

Deserted. Flashes of light from down the street. Rick and the workmen run to the line of farm trucks.

INT - THE MGM ARENA - A SHORT TIME LATER

A few Deefs scurry among the seats - otherwise it's empty. Frank and Greg sprint in, guns drawn.

They sprint to the stage, run down the north ramp.

INT - HOLDING AREA IN THE ARENA - MOMENTS LATER

Alison, Lori and Catherine huddle together. Four Deef handlers who walk toward them.

The door FLIES open. Frank and Greg burst in.

The handlers sprint away. Alison watches Frank. A little smile, then...

ALISON

Hi, Handsome.

EXT - LUXOR PARKING LOT - A SHORT TIME LATER

Rick and the workmen wait anxiously by the trucks, run to the women and children as they're led in from the back by Paul, Carlos and the other Deefers.

PAUL

Frank?

Rick shakes his head. Then...

Quick smiles as Frank, Greg, Alison, Lori and Catherine run to them. A moment.

FRANK

Jean?

RICK

They took her inside.

FRANK

(to Paul)

Get them out of here.

PAUL

Frank, what if she's...

FRANK

(interrupts him)

Go!

The Deefers and workers help the women and children into the trucks. Frank runs toward the Luxor.

INT - THE POLICE STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Deserted except for the clerk. Frank sprints in. The clerk fumbles for his gun. Frank's is leveled at his chest.

FRANK
Where's the woman?
(then)
Where is she!

INT - POLICE HOLDING AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Prisoners stare as Frank runs through the hall. He tosses the clerk's keys into the cell. The prisoners scramble for them.

INT - THE INTERROGATION ROOM - SAME TIME

Jean is strapped to the chair, the metal cap with electrodes on her head. Armonds and Len watch as the interrogator draws fluid onto his syringe, brings the needle to Jean's arm. Then...

GUNSHOTS

The LOCK SPLINTERS from the door. Frank kicks it open, rushes in. The interrogator steps back, Len and Armonds staring in disbelief.

FRANK
You son of a bitch.
(to the interrogator)
Cut her loose.

A moment. The interrogator turns to Jean, then...

WHIRLS, THROWS THE SYRINGE at Frank. Frank knocks it aside as Armonds and Len run from the room.

The interrogator charges. Frank FIRES and he drops.

Jean is struggling against her bonds.

JEAN
Armonds!

Frank rushes to the doorway.

IN THE HALL

The hall is full of dazed prisoners, pushing, rushing by.

Frank sprints in, gun leveled, his eyes darting among the men.
No Armonds.

Man #1 works his way toward Frank, stops as their eyes meet. He
nods. Melts into the crowd.

IN THE INTERROGATION ROOM

Frank hurries to Jean.

JEAN

Did you see him!?

He shakes his head. Starts cutting her bonds.

She's watching him with a grateful, yet strangely fearful,
questioning look.

FRANK

Did you think I'd leave without
you?

She's free. He jerks the metal cap from her head, pulls her up.

FRANK

Hurry!

EXT - LUXOR PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

The women, children, Deefers and workmen are gone, the last truck
pulling onto the street. Frank and Jean sprint from the Luxor...

To find Paul waiting by his car, Adam in his arms.

FRANK

You should have gone with
the others.

PAUL

Uh huh.

They jump into the car.

EXT - GATE OUTSIDE THE WALL - A SHORT TIME LATER

Paul's car leads the convoy past the abandoned gate and guard
towers onto the highway as...

Behind them...

The LIGHTS of Las Vegas BLOW OUT in a MASS OF HISSING SPARKS.

Silence. Then...

A ROAR FILLS THE CITY

INT - PAUL'S CAR - A SHORT TIME LATER

Paul drives, Frank on his right. Jean and Adam are in back.

ADAM
Is it far, Jean?

JEAN
Yes. Far from here.

A moment.

PAUL
(to Frank)
I said there were people in
this that would surprise you
- remember?

FRANK
I've had enough surprises.

PAUL
Frank, meet Valiant.

Frank follows Paul's eyes to Jean.

FRANK
You?

A little smile from Jean.

FRANK
Why didn't you tell me?

JEAN
It didn't seem to matter.

FRANK
This gets better all the time.

JEAN
I hope so. I certainly hope
so.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - FRANK'S STATION - NIGHT

The convoy of trucks parked in the moonlight. Women make fires, watch the children, men unload food and blankets.

Alison stands by Greg, holding a girl.

ALISON
You could be mine.

GREG
Maybe she is.
(to the girl)
Would you like a mom?

The girl nods. Alison hugs her. Then...

ALISON
When did you become a Deefer?

GREG
When I was nineteen.

ALISON
How old are you now?

GREG
Twenty-four.

ALISON
That's a good age.

GREG
When did you become a breeder?

ALISON
Seventeen.
(beat)
I'm twenty-two.

A moment.

ALISON
Have you thought about this
for long?

GREG
No.

ALISON
I have.

EXT - FRANK'S STATION - A SHORT TIME LATER

Men, women and children gather around fires, cooking, preparing beds with the blankets. Frank walks among them - looks up as Jean walks to him with that hesitant, fearful look we saw before.

They walk to the side.

JEAN

Remember when I asked if you wanted a child, and you said it's the most important thing we do? And you asked why I wasn't a Breeder?

He nods. She looks away.

JEAN

I was in an experiment when I was very young. They tried to make designer people. Some of us survived.

A long moment.

JEAN

I can't have your children, Frank.

She watches him, tears welling. Turns to go.

But he draws her close.

FRANK

They're all ours, Jean.

Relief floods her face. The tears finally come as she presses her cheek to his chest.

INT - ARMONDS' CAR - ON THE SAND-SWEPT HIGHWAY - SAME TIME

The Chief and another policeman in front, Armonds in back. Len beside him, in a trance. Then...

The car hits a patch of sand. FISHTAILS across the road.

The policeman fights it to a SQUEALING stop.

EXT - ARMONDS' CAR - A MOMENT LATER

Armonds and the policemen leap out. A RUSH OF AIR from the engine. Then...

A massive GLUG, as the gray/green liquid oozes from it. Armonds SLAMS his fist into the fender.

In the distance, the pin-point flicker of ON-COMING HEADLIGHTS.

Armonds turns, the seed of panic in his eyes.

But it disappears as three salvaged STRIKE FORCE TRUCKS race toward him.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - FRANK'S STATION - MORNING

Frank, Jean, Paul and Rick examine piles of clothes, tools, seeds, pots and pans - the trappings of a new life.

RICK

I'm not sure what's here. We stole everything we could lay our hands on.

Two Deefer cars race to them. Greg and Carlos jump out.

GREG

All clear. And nothing on the radio.

FRANK

(to all the Deefers)
When we're finished here, go back to your stations and get anything we can use. We'll meet you at the village.

GREG

When're you leaving?

FRANK

In a couple of hours.

Greg and Carlos join the others at breakfast as...

RICK

I hope we got the right things.

FRANK

I'm not a farmer. We'll have to learn how to use them.

PAUL

(big smile)
We will.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - THE HILL ABOVE THE VILLAGE - AFTERNOON

Paul's car leads the trucks to a stop. Frank, Jean, Paul and Adam jump out as others pour from the trucks, gazing in wonder at the green, tree-filled land. Alison runs to Frank.

ALISON

This is it? We're home?

He nods. She sprints to the trucks, her arms wide.

ALISON
We're home! We're home!

Jean is looking at the empty village.

JEAN
Will we see them again?

FRANK
I don't know.

They start down the hill, the others following in awe.

EXT - THE VILLAGE - A SHORT TIME LATER

They enter the village, Frank, Jean and Paul in front, everyone smiling, children LAUGHING, dashing into and out of the huts.

Then they STOP as...

Frank and Paul sprint to a TRIPOD. On its top is a CANISTER.

Frank hurls the tripod to the ground, rips off the canister. A VIAL of the TOXIC CRYSTALS is in place.

PAUL
There must have been more.
I missed them.
(then)
Jesus, Frank!

The others run toward them. Frank takes Jean aside.

FRANK
We can't stay here.

JEAN
Can't we disarm it?

FRANK
He had crates of them. They
could be anywhere.

Very quiet. The kids have stopped exploring, held by the men and women, everyone watching Frank. The faint sound of WAVES as they break below the cliff. Then...

FRANK
Don't explain. Just tell them
they have to leave for awhile.

Jean nods, turns to go. Stops to touch his hand.

FRANK
Hurry!

Then...

From beyond the hill, the sound of HEAVY ENGINES.

PAUL
Those aren't Deeper cars!

Quick glances between them.

FRANK
(to Paul)
Get everyone to the cliff.
Jean can show you. There's a
way around from there.

PAUL
What about you?

FRANK
I'll divert them.

PAUL
Frank, I...

FRANK
Take care of your son!

Paul races to the others.

FRANK
(to Jean)
Go with them.

JEAN
No!

FRANK
They need you, Jean.

She squeezes his hand, runs to the others.

EXT - HILL ABOVE THE VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The three salvaged strike force trucks drive to the top. The last is Eric's.

Seven of the VILLAGERS, including the new mother, LIE BOUND IN THE TRUCK BED.

INT - ERIC'S TRUCK - SAME TIME

Eric and the driver in front. In the back seat are ARMONDS and LEN. Len is frantic.

ERIC

I don't understand, Senator.
These aren't Deefs. They're
people, like us. Why do we
need to test the gas?

ARMONDS

You have your orders, Captain.
If that's a problem...

He stares as soldiers pour from the two trucks ahead, cautiously approach Frank's empty convoy.

EXT - ERIC'S TRUCK - A MOMENT LATER

The truck has barely halted when Armonds and Len bolt from it, their eyes fixed on the convoy. Then...

ARMONDS

Rider!

CUT TO:

EXT - THE FOREST - MOMENTS LATER

EDGAR and the other VILLAGERS crouch, staring at the hill.

On the hill, Eric leads the soldiers in a skirmish line. Behind them are Armonds, Len, the Chief, the policemen and the bound villagers.

The Old Man leads the elders, women and children away. Edgar and the younger men remain, trading uneasy glances.

Some of the elders and women return and pull at them. Edgar waves them off. The Old Man seizes a few of the men's bows, throws them to the ground. He reaches for Edgar's.

But Edgar withdraws it. Shakes his head. The elders pull the Old Man back. Looks of farewell, then the elders guide the women and children deeper into the forest.

EXT - OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The soldiers approach the village. Soldier #3 has one of the radios shot up by Frank and Paul. He pushes its buttons as...

SOLDIER #2

Why's the senator out here?

SOLDIER #3

Beats me.
 (shakes his head)
 Still doesn't work.

EXT - THE VILLAGE - SAME TIME

Frank darts to a hut, watching the line of soldiers. Draws his pistol. Then...

FOOTSTEPS BEHIND HIM

He whirls, levels the gun...

At JEAN. She crouches beside him.

JEAN

I'm with you.

A long look. Gently he kisses her. Then he turns, watches as...
 The soldiers approach, covering one another.

FRANK

Ready?

Jean nods. Follows as he dashes to another hut, FIRING into the air. The soldiers hit the dirt.

ARMONDS (O.S.)

I want them alive! Alive!

JEAN

Armonds got away!

Frank reloads his gun. Intense. Pure concentration.

JEAN

Frank no! You don't have a chance!

He watches her. Then...

The SHUFFLE of boots, CLATTER of gear.

Frank and Jean her sprint to a hut near the forest. Make their way around it...

Into the pointed guns of the soldiers.

EXT - THE VILLAGE - A SHORT TIME LATER

The TRIPOD has been reassembled, the canister on top, its GREEN LIGHT BLINKING. The captured villagers tied nearby.

Soldiers push Frank and Jean to the sneering Armonds.

ARMONDS

The great Frank Rider. And
look who's with him. Our own
little mutant.

He grabs Jean's throat. SLUGS her in the abdomen.

She doubles over as Frank lunges at Armonds. Is held by the
soldiers. They push him down, tie his hands and feet, then
Jean's.

Eric is watching this uneasily.

ERIC

Senator...

ARMONDS

(to Frank)
Where're the others?

Nothing.

LEN

We'll take them back. We'll
make it right again.

ARMONDS

Where are they, Frank?

FRANK

You'll never find them.

ARMONDS

We won't have to.
(to Eric)
The detonator, Captain?

Eric pulls it from under his jacket.

FRANK

No!
(to Eric)
The gas is lethal!

ARMONDS

He's lying.

FRANK

(to Eric)
He'll kill us - the people
here - everything!

Armonds reaches for the detonator.

ARMONDS
Captain?

But Eric withdraws it. Watches Armonds. His world teetering.

ARMONDS
We'll be leaving, now.

Eric returns the detonator, signals to the soldiers. They head toward the edge of the village.

Len, the Chief and policemen follow. Len increasingly deranged. Armonds stays, his face a mask of scorn.

FRANK
Don't do this! It's insane!

ARMONDS
What do you know about power, Frank? Sure, things got a little out of hand. But look where we started. Look how far we've come.
(beat)
Could you have run the cities? Could she? No. It's people like me. We do the work. We make the decisions you don't have the guts to make. We're the ones who do what's necessary.

They stare at him.

ARMONDS
Goodbye, Frank.

He walks away, jogging a few steps to catch the others.

Frank struggles. Kicks the tripod. It doesn't move.

EXT - THE VILLAGE - MOMENTS LATER

The soldiers start up the hill, followed by Armonds, Len, Eric, the Chief and policemen. Then...

THE WHINE OF RACING ENGINES

Then...

Deefer pursuit cars FLY over the top of the hill, SPEEDING toward them. The soldiers raise their weapons.

But the cars are on them. The soldiers jump aside.

The cars turn, kicking clumps of dirt as again they RACE through them, toward the top of the hill. Eric's mouth is open. But he makes no sound.

ARMONDS

Shoot them! Shoot them!

The soldiers OPEN FIRE with their automatic weapons, SHATTERING WINDSHIELDS, RIPPING METAL. The Deefers scramble to take cover, returning FIRE with their rifles and pistols.

Armonds and Len frantically crawl away as Deefer bullets slam through the Chief's head. The policeman falls, clutching his chest.

Eric is HIT in the gut. CRUMPLES. Soldiers #1 and #2 drag him away as the others take assault positions.

The Deefers crouch, ducking, the soldier's bullets TEARING into the cars. Three Deefers are wounded.

CARLOS

We can't stop them!

GREG

(looks at his pistol)

Not with these.

EXT - THE VILLAGE - SAME TIME

Paul sprints to Frank and Jean from the direction of the cliff. Cuts their bonds, begins cutting the bonds of the captured villagers.

Frank throws the tripod down, rips the canister from it. Tries to get the vial, but it's locked in. He grabs Paul's gun, aims it.

PAUL

Frank, the gas!

Frank stops. POUNDS the canister with the butt of the gun - once, twice, three times.

The GREEN LIGHT goes off. He SLAMS the canister against the ground. It bounces into the doorway of a hut.

Jean sees Armonds and Len run into the forest. The two soldiers follow, helping Eric.

JEAN

Frank!

EXT - THE BOTTOM OF THE HILL - MOMENTS LATER

The soldiers advance up the hill, FIRING. Bullets PING around the Deefers. Carlos is hit in the arm. A bullet clips Greg's cheek.

Then, from the forest...

A FLIGHT OF ARROWS WHISTLES down on the soldiers. They're HIT in the legs, the arms. Arrows bounce off their helmets.

Another flight. The soldiers squirm for cover.

Above them, the Deefers scramble away from their pulverized cars.

Then...

The soldiers look up as Eric's truck appears, driven backwards. Just behind and outside it come the other two salvaged trucks, also backwards. The Deefers walk in the center.

EXT - THE FOREST - SAME TIME

Armonds and Len stumble into a clearing. The soldiers follow with Eric, helping him to the ground, his back against a tree.

ERIC

I should be...with my men.

On the other side of the clearing...

Len sways, a crazed half-smile on his vacant face.

LEN

We'll make it right again,
won't we, Ted?

EXT - THE VILLAGE - SAME TIME

The canister lies where it was, in the doorway of a hut.

The GREEN LIGHT FLICKERS

GOES ON

EXT - THE FOREST - SAME TIME

Frank, Jean and Paul sprint.

EXT - THE HILL BY THE VILLAGE - SAME TIME

The soldiers lie on the ground, some wounded. The trucks are moving toward them. Then they stop.

Deefers take up positions behind them.

The soldiers look at one another. A few raise their weapons. But no one fires.

Greg peers over a fender.

GREG

You want to talk about it?

EXT - THE FOREST CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

Len lies on his back, eyes closed. Armonds sits beside him.

SOLDIER #1

The firing's stopped.

A moment. Then...

A FLURRY of FOOTSTEPS

The soldiers turn to see...

Frank, Paul and Jean behind them.

Soldier #1 levels his pistol. Frank knocks it across the clearing.

Paul holds his pistol on Soldier #2, disarms him. Frank cracks Soldier #1's jaw. He drops as...

ACROSS THE CLEARING

Armonds frantically searches under the leaves.

WITH JEAN

Sprinting toward Armonds. Frank striding behind her, devastation in his eyes.

WITH ARMONDS

As Jean dives to the ground. For an instant they're face to face, both searching. Then...

ARMONDS pulls out the GUN.

Jean grabs for it. He slams her in the temple and she falls.

Frank is almost on him.

Armonds turns, FIRES, the gun JUMPING in his hand.

Frank is HIT in the side. Goes down.

Bullets CHIP the tree by Paul. Soldier #2 takes two in the back. Paul crouches, FIRING.

Is HIT in the CHEST. He falls.

Silence.

Armonds turns the gun on Frank.

Frank stares at him. Blood flowing from his side.

FRANK

You can't win.

ARMONDS

There're other regions, Frank.
All I have to do is get there.

Len has crawled to Eric. He opens Eric's jacket. Finds the detonator.

ARMONDS

Don't do that, Leonard.

Eric grabs Len's hand. With the last of his strength he wrestles the detonator away.

LEN

You have orders, Captain.

Eric glares at him. Feebly throws the detonator. Len scrambles for it, searching in the leaves as...

ARMONDS

First we have to get away.
(then)
Leonard!

Armonds rushes toward him.

Len has the detonator. Wildly pushes buttons. It FLASHES GREEN.

LEN

We'll make things right.

Frank watches in horror. Len's thumb hovering.

ARMONDS

Leonard, no!

A demented grin. Len raises the detonator...

Then his mouth opens in shocked surprize as...

AN ARROW PIERCES HIS THROAT

He crumples to the ground, the detonator FLASHING beside him.

ON JEAN

Standing among the trees, a bow in her hand. Behind her, Edgar and the younger men.

Armonds whirls to look at her. Pure hatred. Then...

A flash of metal.

Armonds turns...

To see Frank standing before him.

FRANK'S KNIFE IS IN HIS HEART

Armonds looks at him, perplexed. Frank watches him, eyes burning, staring into his.

T Armonds looks down, clutches the handle, his knuckles white. Looks at Frank in disbelief. Then he falls.

Jean rushes to Paul as Frank staggers to the detonator. SLAMS it against a tree - the green light fades away.

WITH PAUL

Jean kneeling beside him. Frank staggers to them as Edgar and the younger men surround them.

Paul takes Frank's hand. The men's eyes locked.

PAUL

We'll do better this time,
won't we?

FRANK

Yes.

A moment.

PAUL

Love him for me.

Frank nods. His eyes never leave Paul's.

Jean touches Paul's face.

Frank holds his hand as he dies.

Then...

As quietly as they came, the young men vanish. Only Edgar remains.

EDGAR
Never find us, Frank.

A small shake of Frank's head.

A nod from Edgar.

He disappears into the forest.

EXT - THE HILL BY THE VILLAGE - A SHORT TIME LATER

The Deefers crouch behind the trucks, half way down. The soldiers on the ground, weapons poised.

Then...

Frank and Jean emerge from the forest, his arm across her shoulders.

FRANK
Armonds is dead. It's over.

A few soldiers stand. A few Deefers. They all turn as...

The WOMEN and CHILDREN walk toward them from the village.

The remaining soldiers stand, throw down their weapons. The Deefers drop theirs, walk down the hill.

WITH FRANK AND JEAN

As he staggers and she steadies him. The soldiers, Deefers, women and children surround them.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - THE VILLAGE - SUNSET

Wounds are tended, dinners cook around fires, the men and women TALKING, LAUGHING, as SQUEALING children streak by.

EXT - THE CLIFF OVERLOOKING THE OCEAN - SAME TIME

Frank sits, staring out. His side is side bandaged.

Jean and Adam appear, sit beside him. Adam has been crying.

A moment, then...

ADAM
What are you looking for?

FRANK
Whales.

ADAM
I don't see anything.

FRANK
You will, someday.

A moment.

ADAM
Did my father like whales?

FRANK
(puts his arm around him)
Yes, I'm sure he did.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - THE VILLAGE - DAWN

Tendrils from the night's fires rise in the windless sky.

Frank, Jean, Adam, Greg, Alison, Lori, Catherine, Carlos, Rick - the other women, children, Deefers, workmen and soldiers sleep peacefully.

EXT - THE CLIFF OVERLOOKING THE OCEAN - SAME TIME

Outlined in the newly-risen sun, the Deef Warrior, wearing his tin helmet and plastic sword, stands gazing out to sea.

THE END