

THE DEMOLISHED MAN



by
Stephen Tolkin

Based Upon the Novel
by
Alfred Bester

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Whatsoever mind I enter, there will
I go for the benefit of man, refraining
from all wrong doing and corruption,
from all intent to harm or to deceive.
I will give no deadly thought to any,
thought it be asked of me. Whatsoever
thoughts I see or hear in the mind of
man which ought not to be made known,
I will keep silence thereon, counting
such things to be as sacred secrets.

--The Esper Pledge,
circa 2100 A.D.

THE DEMOLISHED MAN

FADE IN:

INT. BEAUMONT HOUSE - NIGHT

This PRE-CREDIT SEQUENCE consists of a single, continuous
POV TRACKING SHOT:

We MOVE FORWARD through a candle-lit room toward double doors flanked by liveried footmen in the ornate frock coats of mid-24th century servants. We move at the deliberate pace of a man in a hurry to get where he's going, but afraid to show his impatience -- a man on his way to meet his destiny. We hear MUSIC and LAUGHTER from beyond the doors. We also hear, faintly at first, the man's HEARTBEAT, and his heavy, measured BREATHING. We are that man. It is our heartbeat, our breath.

The footmen swing the doors open for us. We go down a few steps into a grand Roman-style hall. Candles in the wings of crystal angels blaze on tables spread with the remains of an epic feast: lobsters and suckling pigs, caviar in swans of sculpted ice. Beams of pastel light sweep the REVELLERS crowded around the tables, wreathed in smoke, laughing and drinking, dressed in the latest gaudy, flesh-baring fashions. The air is thick with lust and decadence and the heady scent of intolerable wealth.

We push through the dense crowd. FRIENDS smile at us in greeting. Our heartbeat grows gradually faster and louder, our breathing deeper.

A bell tinkles. Everyone looks up. So do we. Standing on a dais under a pastel spotlight is MARIA BEAUMONT, the Manhattan society hostess of the hour. How old Maria is, no one knows, but the high art of pneumatic surgery has transformed her into a venus of bursting curves and plunging cleavages. There are GROANS at the interruption, but Maria keeps ringing her crystal bell until all are silent.

As she speaks we GLIDE along the edge of the crowd, always watching her. And our heart goes on beating and beating and beating, louder and louder.

MARIA
Friends...Lovers...Mortal enemies...
Tonight we're all going to play a
very special game!

CHEERS from the crowd. Maria holds up a four hundred year old book.

CONTINUED:

MARIA(cont'd)

This quaint little tome may have been published in 1949, but let me tell you, it proves that those stuffy old ancients were a lot more modern than we think.

(peers into room)

Whichever one of you naughty anonymous darlings sent this to me...thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

She blows a random kiss with each thank you, then opens the book to a marked page.

MARIA(cont'd)

The book is called "Let's Play Party," and the game we're going to play is called Sardines. Isn't that too fabulous? One player is selected to be the Sardine -- that's me! -- and then -- here's the good part -- all the lights are turned out. The Sardine hides somewhere cozy, and everyone goes looking for him -- I mean me -- but the people who find the Sardine don't tell. Oh no. They hide with the Sardine until everyone's all squeezed into that one cozy place, and the last player -- that's the loser -- is left all alone out in the dark.

(closes book)

And we're all going to feel so sorry for the loser, because we're going to play this funny old game in a delicious new way...like this!

With one gesture, Maria rips off her sequined gown. There is a ROAR from the crowd -- and all the lights go out, and there is only the candlelight. Our heartbeat leaps to a higher tempo. We keep going, as the crowd scatters in an uproar of confusion and delight.

We pass through an archway into another room, where a pack of drunk TEENAGERS shake up magnums of champagne and spray them at a burning Christmas tree, HOWLING and SHRIEKING as they try to put out the flames, but their hilarity seems far away, and only our heartbeat and our breathing, ever deeper and heavier, seem real.

We leave the brightness of the fire and climb a few steps to a long, dark hallway. The game is in full swing. Half clothed figures carrying candles sneak along the walls, jump out from doorways, rush into alcoves. We surprise a NAKED COUPLE standing entwined against the carpeted wall. The man looks up for a moment, his face drugged and blank, and goes on with his lovemaking.

(CONTINUED)

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We turn down another corridor, going faster now. A GIRL with a candle comes toward us, reaches out, tilts back her head in languid desire -- then reacts in petulant surprise when she gets a better look at us: clearly, we're not buying any.

GIRL

Clever-up, Sardine. Get out
of the can.

We move past her, down a long gallery lined by Old Master paintings. We turn to a door between two vast erotic canvases. We go through the doorway. Up a flight of steps. Two uniformed GUARDS rush to block us. There is a FLASH OF VIOLET LIGHT and then a rain of glittering violet sparkles, and when the sparkles clear we see the guards slumped against the wall, unconscious. We keep going. Our heart beats louder and louder, faster and faster. We race up the stairs into an ornate antique room in the shape of a giant orchid blossom, with walls like curling lavender petals and a floor of polished gold.

A man lies on a silk-covered bed: CRAYE D'COURTNEY, the richest man in the solar system. Frail. Translucent. Sick. He rises at the sight of us, a warm smile of welcome lighting up his ravaged face. He leans forward, beckoning. Then we get closer, and his smile vanishes.

He is talking, pleading with us -- but we can't hear the words for the ROARING in our head, the POUNDING of our heart. We move closer to him. Closer. He shrinks away in terror, too weak to escape. Closer. Closer. We are almost upon him.

Suddenly, we hear FOOTSTEPS. Our POV jerks sharply upward. We catch a quick glimpse of our reflection in a mirrored door -- the face of a handsome ruthless man in his thirties -- before the door swings open and a girl rushes into the orchid suite: BARBARA D'COURTNEY, Craye's daughter, heiress to the treasures of three planets and their moons. 25. Radiant in her panic. Blonde hair flying behind her. Sheer silk robe over her shoulders. A lightning flash of wild beauty.

We STOP TRACKING and ZOOM IN on Barbara's face. The POUNDING of our heart and the ROARING in our ears get louder and louder, as loud as a theater's sound system can handle. The crescendo of terror reaches its deafening peak with the EXPLOSION of a gun going off, and there is only Barbara's SCREAM as a shower of crimson blood -- her father's blood -- sprays onto her silk gown and the mirror behind her and we

CUT TO BLACK

Silence.

As few OPENING TITLES as possible, ending with:

CONTINUED:

NEW YORK CITY

December the Nineteenth

In the Year of Our Lord

2355

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT

The people of the 24th century take the physical details of their world for granted, just like we do. So we won't dwell on physical details. All we need to know is that on a cold December night in a neighborhood of old brick warehouses and torn-up tracks, a police car is prowling through the shadows, its engines humming, its headlights dark.

INT. PATROL CAR

The driver is warm, big-hearted LIEUTENANT MARY NOYES, mother of two, fifteen years on the force. Beside her is SERGEANT IVERS, 21, a serious and dedicated novice. Ivers anxiously surveys the dark doorways they pass, trying to do his job, while in the back, CAPTAIN LINCOLN POWELL, his feet up on the seat in front of him, tells a joke, as relaxed as if this were a drive in the country. Powell and Mary Noyes have worked together for years.

POWELL

So this prospector's been in deep space for about a year, right? Just him and his capsule and a billion stars. And everything's fine till one day he hits a solar storm and it looks like it's all over, but he crash lands on this big space station and it turns out it's an old Skyfac hearse from back in the nineties...

Mary Noyes laughs in anticipation of where this is headed, but Ivers keeps his eyes riveted on the passing streets.

POWELL

So, he gets inside the hearse and there's all these corpses laid out, perfectly preserved, like they were sleeping...and there's this one corpse, a girl about eighteen, perfect, you know? And the prospector goes 'Oh God, have I sunk that low?' But remember, he's been in space for a year, and there's this girl, and he thinks, okay, I'll just see if she's cold, just out of curiosity,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL (cont'd)
and he touches her shoulder, and
she sits up, wham! and says...
(the punchline)
"Hey, mister. I'm just one of the
tourists!"

Of course the 24th century references put this one way over our heads, but Mary thinks it's the funniest thing she's ever heard. She CRACKS UP. Even Ivers loses his studious cool. Powell leans back and sips his coffee with satisfaction.

POWELL
You know, I really ought to get out
of the office more often.

Suddenly, before the cops have stopped laughing, Powell sits up, alert, as though sensing the air with some kind of internal radar. He's all business now. He concentrates for a moment, then points to a building up ahead.

POWELL
He's in there.

Mary cuts the engine. Ivers takes out a gun. Powell is about to step out of the car when a CRIMINAL in a hooded cloak jumps from a first-story window of the building, lands on his feet and dashes into a small red car.

As the car zooms away, Mary, caught off guard, scrambles to get the patrol car, and herself, into gear for the chase.

EXT. THE CITY

The patrol car lurches forward and takes off after the red car, skidding around a corner.

The Criminal leans out of the red car. His hood falls low over his face, hiding him. He fires a silent shattergun at the patrol car.

INT. THE PATROL CAR

The invisible, silent force of the gun hits the patrol car's windshield, which glows white and then shatters. Mary YELLS OUT and falls to the side, covering her face.

EXT. THE PATROL CAR

The car veers out of control, toward a concrete wall.

INT. THE PATROL CAR

Powell throws himself across the seat and grabs the wheel,

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

pulling the car into control, inches from the wall. Ivers fires a shattergun at the red car, now far ahead, through the pulverized windshield.

EXT. THE CITY

The Criminal fires again. This one connects with the patrol car's front tires. The patrol car skids and smashes against a wall, totalled.

The red car tears around another corner, out of sight.

Powell jumps out of the patrol car, running. Mary and Ivers, shaken but unhurt, struggle out of the front seat.

Powell runs around the corner where the red car disappeared and stops. It's a dead end street. There's the red car: empty. A half dozen PEOPLE in hooded cloaks -- the fashion of the day -- leaf through papers and magazines at an all night news kiosk, a bright splash of light in the dark city. Any one of them might be the criminal.

CLOSE ON POWELL

as he surveys the men at the newsstand, concentrating, as though his gaze could penetrate their skulls.

THE SCENE

His gaze can penetrate their skulls. Powell is an Esper -- as in E.S.P. A telepath.

We'll convey telepathic perception and communication in several ways, to be explained as we come to them. In this first effect, which we'll call a FLASH, it's as though some force were literally burning through the surface of visual reality from the truth underneath. The flash starts in the area of the person whose thoughts are being read, bursts out to take over the screen, then dissolves.

Powell concentrates his gaze on an OLD MAN in a thin cloak, hunched over on a bench, feeding a few scraggly pigeons.

A FLASH of the man's thoughts: the same old man in a sunlit green forest, surrounded by a flock of doves, his arms raised like St. Francis.

Powell turns his gaze on a GUY buying a newspaper.

A FLASH of the guy's thoughts: simply the guy's own POV of the paper he's buying, slightly distorted.

Powell looks away and turns to a WOMAN reading a magazine. He doesn't see the Criminal edging back toward the main street.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But Powell doesn't have to see. He senses something and wheels around. The criminal is walking away. He stares at the back of his head.

A FLASH of what's in the criminal's mind: a three year old girl, tied up in a dark place.

Powell concentrates harder.

The FLASH dissolves into a kaleidoscope of images as Powell's telepathic powers rifle through the boiling subcurrents of the man's inner world like fingers in a file drawer: faces, torments, wounds, terrors. Powell stops searching when he finds what he's looking for -- an image of a cluster of explosives and a timer lashed to a steel axle.

The criminal starts running. Powell races after him. Leaps. Tackles him. Wrestles him. Ivers and Mary Noyes run up and help Powell pin him to the ground, howling and kicking. Powell reaches into the criminal's pocket. Finds a set of keys.

Powell yells to the bystanders, pointing out of the dead end.

POWELL

Everybody out to the street.

Nobody moves. Powell pulls a gun and waves it at everyone, including Ivers and Mary.

POWELL(cont'd)

Did you hear me? GET THE FRAB
OUT OF HERE!

The confused bystanders stampede out of the cul de sac. Mary and Ivers hoist the criminal, gripping his arms.

Powell runs to the red car. Fumbles with the keys. Gets the trunk open. Inside is the three year old GIRL, beyond terror. Powell lifts her out, holds her close, and runs.

The car EXPLODES. The blast blows Powell to the ground. He rolls and lands upright, holding the girl, unharmed. A half dozen patrol cars TEAR UP all around him. The girl SOBS. Powell rocks her, comforting her.

POLICE and REPORTERS pour out of the cars and swarm around them. The criminal is herded into one car. The girl's MOTHER and FATHER burst out of another and descend on Powell. The mother takes her baby into her arms, WEEPING with joy. The father seizes Powell's hand.

FATHER

Captain, I don't know how...how
to say how much I...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

You got the wrong guy.
(indicates Mary)
It was all Lieutenant Noyes.

Before Mary can protest, the parents, police and reporters are all over her. She shoots Powell an I'll-get-you-for-this look over everyone's heads, but Powell just gives her a mocking salute and walks off, leaving reporters, cops and tearful sentiment behind him.

Ivers, in the thick of it, watches Powell go, in an agony of hesitation.

MOVING WITH POWELL

as he walks along, hands deep in his pockets, head down. There's a BEEPING sound and Powell takes a pocket V-Phone out of his cloak, about the shape and size of an answering machine beeper.

A POLICE DISPATCHER on the tiny screen is issuing an urgent APB:

DISPATCHER

Possible felony Beaumont House 99
Park East...all emergency units sectors
N through Z to report immediately...
Repeat: Possible felony...

Powell cuts it off, shoves it back in his pocket and walks on.

Ivers catches up with him and tries to get in step. Powell doesn't look up.

IVERS

Captain Powell...

POWELL

Yeah?

IVERS

How does someone know...if
they're an Esper?

POWELL

They go to the Esper Guild and
take a test.

IVERS

(hesitantly)

And if...If they've got the genes,
I mean, the ability...If they can
read minds...The Guild trains them?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

That's right.
 (finally looks
 at Ivers)
 Oh no. Not another starry-eyed
 hopeful.

Ivers nods, embarrassed. Powell stops and looks into his eyes.

POWELL

Okay. I'm broadcasting on the
 TP band, as loud as I can. What
 do I wish I was doing right now?

Ivers concentrates on Powell with all his might.

IVERS

Riding on a train?

POWELL

Close. Drinking a cup of coffee.

Ivers is crestfallen. Powell puts his arm around him. They keep walking.

POWELL

You think it's fun being the latest
 thing in evolution?

He points to the people they pass on the street. One MAN is putting up Christmas decorations.

POWELL(cont'd)

Do you think it's fun knowing what
 that guy'd like to do to his boss?
 Believe me, it isn't. If I thought he
 had the guts to do it, I'd arrest
 him right now. And see that nice lady
 over there, reading in the window?

(shuddering)

The hate she feels for her sister, her
 landlady, her cats, herself...It burns
 to look at her. And I could go on.

He peers into Ivers' mind. Shakes his head.

POWELL(cont'd)

You really buy the whole package,
 don't you...Telepathic powers drawing
 aside the curtain that hides the
 shining human soul!...Well take it from
 me, Ivers. There aren't five peepers
 on the planet who've gone as deep as
 I have. If there was a soul in there,
 I'd have seen it by now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

IVERS

But what about you? The way you
risked your life for that kid?

POWELL

If you were a peeper, you'd know
that the only thing on my mind was
the glory of my sacrifice.

(softly)

If you were a peeper, you wouldn't
have any heroes. Now go on, they're
waiting for you back there.

IVERS

Thanks, sir.

He nods awkwardly, turns, and goes back. Powell watches him
go. Too quietly for him to hear--

POWELL

Drinking a cup of coffee...on a train.
So I lied. So sue me.

He didn't lie about the rest of it, though. He keeps walking.
Turns onto a busier street. Looks up. Opens his mind. We
HEAR what he hears, a chorus of overlapping mental voices,
the collective unsorted brainsounds of the PEOPLE around him.
This is our second Esper effect: the symphony of the subconscious.
We can't make out individual words, just a titanic fugue of
malice, anger, suspicion, fear, growing in density and volume.
Now that Powell has let it in, he can't keep it out. He pulls
his heavy cloak around him, as though that could block it out.
But it can't. He walks faster. Faster. Up the steps of a simple,
centuries-old brownstone.

INT. BROWNSTONE

Powell dashes up a spiral staircase, the sonic onslaught close
at his heels. Opens the door to his apartment, as thick and
heavy as a safe's.

INT. POWELL'S APARTMENT

Bare luminous walls. A bed. A cluttered desk. Powell lives alone.

He slams the door behind him. Relief! The VOICES STOP, and there
is only the distant TRAFFIC and a police radio in the apart-
ment rasping out calls.

RADIO

...suspects uncooperative...additional
units requested 99 Park East...Repeat...
suspects unco--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Powell switches off the radio. Silence at last. He drops a coffee tablet in a waterglass. In the amount of time it takes him to light a cigarette the water boils, turns brown and cools off. Powell leans back against the wall, slides down to the rug. He has almost begun to relax -- when the V-Phone rings. Powell groans, dutifully grabs a remote control clicker and turns on the wall phone.

On the screen is Mary Noyes.

MARY

I want you, Powell. I need you.

POWELL

I keep telling you, Mary. Just give me a time and place.

MARY

How about Maria Beaumont's house. Now.

POWELL

High society brawl? Maria's tiger chewed up another gate crasher?

MARY

Nope. Felony triple A.

Powell jumps to his feet.

POWELL

What!? That's impossible!

Mary steps aside. We see that she's standing in the Orchid room -- with D'Courtney's body behind her, sprawled over the silk bed, covered with blood, the back of his head blown open. DE SANTIS, the man from lab, is hard at work making tests, measuring, prodding. TECHNICIANS swarm around the corpse.

MARY

It's Craye D'Courtney. And it was planned, Powell. It had to be.

POWELL

Doesn't Maria keep any Espers hanging around?

MARY

Yeah. Three social secretaries. And they all swear on their jobs that there wasn't a shred of premeditation anywhere on the premises tonight.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY(cont'd)
But I don't buy it. The set
up was too perfect.

As Powell works the controls on the V-Phone, making
the camera's lens zoom in on D'Courtney and pan up to the
blood covered mirror, Mary goes on.

MARY(cont'd)
Suspect Number One's his daughter,
and she's already hit the road. That's
okay, though, 'cause we got lots more
suspects where she came from. Only
problem is, I don't know how long
I can hold 'em.

POWELL
(grabbing cloak
and keys)
Don't let anyone out of that house.
And don't let De Santis get his
pawprints all over the evidence.

De Santis gives the V-Phone an emphatic up yours.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEAUMONT HOUSE - NIGHT

Andrew Carnegie's opulent mansion on 5th Avenue and 90th
street, now 600 years old. Lights blaze in all the windows.
Police helicopters circle. A patrol car, SIRENS SCREECHING,
pulls up to the front door. Lincoln Powell jumps out and
runs up the steps.

INT. BEAUMONT HOUSE FOYER

Powell strides across the marble floor, nodding at the POLICEMEN
guarding the entrance. He pauses at the open double doors to
the Great Hall, right where the killer paused on the way to
the killing.

Below, all the party guests, more or less clothed now, are
crowded together like a flock of chickens in a slaughteryard,
SQUAWKING and COMPLAINING, surrounded by grim-faced COPS.

On the dais, Maria Beaumont rages at Mary Noyes. They are as
unlike as two women can be. Mary takes it all in stride.

MARIA
I refuse to answer question one
until my guests have been released.
Clearly, Lieutenant, you have no idea
who your prisoners are!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

They're not prisoners, Ma'am. They're witnesses, and just as soon as we get everyone's statements we'll--

MARIA

That's not soon enough. There were laws in this country, the last time I looked.

(airily, to the crowd)

Is there an attorney in the house?

AUGUSTUS TATE steps to the edge of the dais, a small elegant man with piercing eyes and the bearing of a rodent, brilliant and crafty.

AUGUSTUS TATE

At your service, Madame Beaumont.

(to Mary)

She's right, Noyes. You're treading on thin legal ice here.

Powell is shocked to see Tate. He calls out to him telepathically.

POWELL'S THOUGHT

Augustus Tate!

We now come to our third Esper Effect. All at once, everything shifts to the tempo of telepathic communication, which is so fast that everything else seems almost motionless in comparison. We'll call this the Esper Mode. Sound and light change and everyone in the room all but freezes -- except for the Espers. Tate and Mary Noyes wheel around to face Powell, leaving ghost-images of themselves to hold their places in slow motion on the dais.

TATE

The hound sniffs his way to the scene of the crime, eh, Powell?

POWELL

Something like that. What brings you to this den of thieves?

TATE

A client. We were having drinks at the Harvard Club and he asked me along.

(gestures)

Ben Reich.

Powell looks and sees BEN REICH through the crowd. Handsome. Ruthless. Rich. We've seen that face before. It was just a quick glimpse in a mirrored door, but it's not a face you forget.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATE

Watch it, Powell! I won't have you peeping anyone in this room without their consent!

POWELL

Relax, Tate. I'm a law abiding citizen.

(to Mary)

You up for a 10-86?

Mary grins. She's up for it, all right. Powell gives her a thumbs-up, merges with his ghost image and starts down the stairs. We shift out of the Esper Mode: sound and light return to normal, and the crowd goes on roiling and complaining like a penned beast.

MARIA

...did you hear that? Thin legal ice! We'll sue the police department right out of business!

Powell, striding toward the dais, shouts to Mary, furious.

POWELL

Lieutenant Noyes! Is this your idea of the proper way to run an investigation? Herding innocent people together like cattle?

The crowd falls silent. All eyes are on Powell.

MARY

Innocent? This gang of liars? This rotten pack of high society hyenas?

POWELL

How dare you! Apologize right now, or I'll have you back in Health Code Violations so fast you won't know it happened.

Mary takes a deep breath, clenches her fists, and turns to the crowd. In a begrudging mutter--

MARY

My apologies.

POWELL

Now get out of my sight.

She stalks away. Powell slowly lights a cigarette. Blows smoke into the air. His tone as he addresses the crowd is soothing, conspiratorial, fashionably corrupt. Maria watches him, captivated.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

People die by the millions every day...and now simply because someone has had the enterprise to assist old D'Courtney to his demise, the law insists on turning him into an enemy of the people. I think it's idiotic. But please don't quote me. After all...

(takes a long,
slow puff)

I'm just one of the tourists.

It's a gamble, but it pays off. The crowd knows the joke. They go wild. Shrieks of laughter. Applause. Powell has them. When the hubbub dies down...

POWELL

Of course, I know all of you by sight...But as I'm not nearly so illustrious, I'm afraid I'll have to introduce myself.

(with a bow)

Captain Lincoln Powell, Special Investigations. And, uh...Esper First Class.

At this revelation there is an ANXIOUS MURMUR in the crowd.

POWELL(cont'd)

But don't worry. Your secrets are safe. Faced with a collection of such unique, highly individualized psyches as yourselves, my powers of mental penetration simply crumble...

(turns to Maria)

Dear Madame Beaumont, what an exciting climax to your party.

Maria swoons toward him, fluttering.

MARIA

Oh, Captain Powell, I've been so terrified...

POWELL

(kisses her hand)

Ah, but I envy you. You'll make history. Here in your own home, the first successful premeditated murder in seventy nine years! Which doesn't speak well for us Espers. We're rather expected to catch these things before they happen. The murder TP is supposedly unmistakable...Even in a crowded room.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

(cont'd, to the crowd)

If you'll excuse me while our hostess and I drop in on the unfortunate Mr. D'Courtney, the police will be happy to take any statements you might care to make. Telepathic or otherwise.

He bows once more to the adoring crowd. Maria sinks against him, speechless.

The guests mob the cops at the foot of the dais, CLAMORING to have their statements taken.

As Powell and Maria leave the room, we see that Mary has been watching it all from behind a column. She calls to Powell telepathically as he and Maria pass. That's Esper Effect #4: simple voice over.

MARY'S THOUGHT

You dog, you.

POWELL'S THOUGHT

Meet me upstairs. And bring D'Courtney's guards with you.

He walks on, chatting comfortably with Maria, his head almost touching hers. Mary watches him go, in awe of what a smooth guy he is.

INT. THE PICTURE GALLERY.

Maria and Powell walk arm in arm, following the killer's path.

POWELL

And nobody knew D'Courtney was a guest in your house?

MARIA

That's right. Only his guards and I even knew he was in from Mars. And his daughter, of course...Really, Captain. It's clear as a pikestaff. Barbara did the old man in, lost her nerve and ran off to Callisto with one of those young fortune hunters she's always got buzzing around her.

POWELL

Does she stand to inherit?

MARIA

Are you joking? If Barbara D'Courtney beats this rap, she'll be the richest woman between here and the Outer Reaches. She could buy and sell me, and I'm no pauper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

How did she get along with her father?

MARIA

Well! She did the perfect daughter act to a T, but her type doesn't fool me.

POWELL

Madame Beaumont...I'd love to see that perfect daughter act for myself. Would you think me terribly rude if I--

MARIA

Read my mind? I'm an open book, Captain Powell. Read me! Read me!

Powell nods in thanks, then concentrates on Maria. She preens under his gaze.

In a FLASH we enter Maria's mind. On the surface, a kaleidoscope of the day's events: the Sardines game, D'Courtney's corpse, the police. On the next level, Maria seduces Powell on the silk bed in the Orchid Suite, the sheets still drenched in blood.

Powell recoils slightly and concentrates harder.

We bore through a CASCADE OF LUST IMAGES, mostly involving Powell, and finally get to the memory Powell's looking for:

EXT. THE ROOF OF BEAUMONT HOUSE - DAY

The CAMERA IS MARIA'S EYES as she welcomes Barbara and Craye to her home, the day before the murder. Barbara gets out of a flying taxi. Even now, a little tired after the long flight, she is hopelessly, radiantly beautiful. Two bodyguards -- the same guards the killer KO'd with the violet dust -- help Craye D'Courtney down from the taxi as Barbara comes toward camera.

BARBARA

Hello, Maria.

MARIA'S VOICE

Barbara! Dearest! How was the flight?

Barbara comes very close. Kisses the camera's cheek. Steps back. Tears well in her eyes. She glances back at the taxi and whispers to Maria.

BARBARA

The flight was terrible. Everything's terrible. The doctors don't give him much time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Craye GROANS. The guards, with great tenderness, hold the old man, helping him through the pain. Barbara rushes back and helps them get him down the last step, trying to put on a cheerful face. She strokes his head. He smiles, cheered and eased by her attention. It's a very convincing perfect daughter act indeed. The memory dissolves back to

INT. PICTURE GALLERY

Powell is thoughtful for a moment, taking in what he's seen.

POWELL

Could you tell me exactly how
you found the body?

MARIA

We were in the projection room,
right under the guest suite...

A FLASH of Maria's memory takes us to

THE PROJECTION ROOM

Maria's intimate private theater. Bodies packed tight as sardines, writhing, giggling, gasping. A few candles are the only light. Someone opens a door. Everyone SHHH'S everyone else.

REICH'S VOICE

Mariaaaa...Ma-riaaaaa...I do believe
I've found the little fishies...

All are silent. Reich's dark figure comes onto the stage,
in front of the screen.

MARIA'S VOICE

Now we've got him. Lights!

The lights go on. Everyone WHOOPS with pleasure -- then GROANS in disappointment as they see Ben Reich on the stage...fully clothed.

MARIA'S VOICE

Ben, you cheat. You're still dressed.
We've been catching everyone
divinely flagrante.

REICH

Some other time, Maria. I'm
afraid I've got to swindle a
friend first thing in the morning.
Please accept my thanks for--

He breaks off. A red splotch falls on the lace cuff of his shirt. Then another. He looks up. A crimson stain is spreading on the antique acoustical ceiling above him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA'S VOICE

It's blood. Oh my God. Somebody's
bleeding upstairs! Craye! Barbara!!

As she SCREAMS, we go back to

INT. THE PICTURE GALLERY

Maria is sobbing now.

MARIA

We ran upstairs, and there he
was...So terribly dead...

They have reached the jewelled doorway to the orchid suite.
Maria reaches for the handle, but Powell puts his hand on hers.

POWELL

No, Madame Beaumont. I couldn't
possibly make you relive that awful
moment.

MARIA

But--

POWELL

Your guests need you now,
more than I do.

Before she can say more, he steps in, bows, and closes the door.

INT. STAIRCASE TO ORCHID SUITE

Powell shakes the pose off his mind like a dog shaking off
water and starts up the stairs, himself again.

INT. THE ORCHID SUITE

De Santis and his crew still surround D'Courtney, prodding,
photographing. Mary and Powell face D'Courtney's guards,
who have tears in their eyes.

GUARD #1

I swear it, Captain. I'd swear
it on any holy book you'd care to
furnish. We heard a noise, started
down those stairs, and the next thing
I knew Miss Beaumont was screaming
in my face. Somewhere in there we
lost a whole hour.

GUARD #2

I loved Mr. D'Courtney. I've been with
him since I was a boy.

(hopefully)

Did they find Miss D'Courtney yet?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

Not yet, men.

(shakes their hands)

Thanks for your help. You can wait downstairs with the others.

They go. Powell turns to De Santis.

POWELL

So?

De Santis relishes his work, handling the corpse with ease and familiarity, making Mary and Powell a little sick in the process.

DE SANTIS

Entry above the uvula, here.

Exit below the fontanelle. Death instantaneous, and a hole you could jet through.

POWELL

Suicide?

DE SANTIS

No weapon in the room. Just this.

He holds up an old fashioned bullet.

MARY

What is it?

DE SANTIS

Projectile. Combustion propelled.

At least four hundred years old. Which makes it a shade hard to trace. Plus, Maria's weapon sensors only pick up particle rays. Not gunpowder.

MARY

Expensive.

DE SANTIS

Worth it.

Powell looks at the base of the mirror behind D'Courtney, shattered where the bullet struck it. He examines the blood sprayed on the mirrored door -- and notices a 'shadow' of unbloodied mirror in the form of a torso and outstretched arm.

POWELL

Someone was standing here.

He stands back against the shadow, fitting his arm into the outstretched arm, bending his knees to the proper height.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

Someone about this tall.

(to Mary)

Get me Barbara D'Courtney's height.

He opens the door. We follow him down a narrow gilt-mirrored corridor to an ornate boudoir.

An unmade bed. A priceless enamelled gold nightstand in the form of an unfurling orchid. Perfume bottles and combs spread out in front of the mirror.

A bottle of perfume has been knocked over. The perfume is dripping onto the floor. Powell follows the dripping liquid and finds a shoe on the rug: only one. A simple, low-heeled slipper of gold thread with tiny emeralds embroidered above the toe. He holds the shoe. He looks around.

POWELL

I want to talk to Ben Reich.

MARY

Why him?

POWELL

A couple of things to clear up.
First of all, why did he have all
his clothes on at the end of the game?

MARY

(shrugs)

Kind of guy he is. Uptight, you
know? Didn't you ever see him get
interviewed?

POWELL

Yeah? Maybe...Anyway, there's something
else that bugs me. People bring all
kinds of people to Maria's parties.
They bring people they want to impress.
People they want to seduce. They bring
their bookies, their dealers, their pimps.
Maybe even their wives. But there's one
person they don't bring. Ever. And that's
Augustus Tate.

CUT TO:

INT. CORRIDOR BELOW SUITE

Mary holds the jewelled door open for Reich and Augustus Tate. They go in, and Mary follows, mocking Tate's stiff, priggish walk. Tate wheels around, murder in his eyes. Mary smiles innocently. They go in. The door closes.

INT. STAIRCASE - REICH'S POV

The same POV as on the way to the murder. Up the stairs. Into the suite. D'Courtney on the silk bed -- dead. The sound of FOOTSTEPS. The POV shifts upward, just as it did before. Again, the reflection of Reich's face in the mirrored door. Again, the door opens -- but this time it's Lincoln Powell who steps in, smiling in welcome.

POWELL

Hello, Mr. Reich.

He reaches out, right over D'Courtney's shattered head. Reich doesn't flinch. He shakes Powell's hand.

REICH

A pleasure, Captain.

Tate does flinch. He steps back, horrified by the blood.

TATE

I'm warning you, Powell. It is my client's right to be in the presence of an attorney at any and all interrogations.

POWELL

Sure, Gus. Whatever you say. I just thought Mr. Reich might have a more sober point of view than some of Maria's other guests.

He gestures from Reich to D'Courtney, as though making an introduction.

POWELL

Have you two met?

REICH

Never.

POWELL

Really? I'd have thought the galaxy's reigning Kings of Industry would have scads to talk about.

REICH

History doesn't tell us whether Hitler and Churchill ever met for lunch.

POWELL

What happened after you saw the blood dripping on your cuff?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REICH

Maria screamed her head off and we all went tearing up here.

POWELL

There were guards on the stairs... knocked out or something?

REICH

That's right. They looked dead.

POWELL

What did everyone do?

REICH

Ran around like chickens with their heads cut off, looking for the daughter.

POWELL

Barbara, right? I thought nobody knew D'Courtney and his girl were on the planet. Why look for her?

REICH

We didn't know. Maria told us and we looked.

POWELL

Any idea where she went?

REICH

Maria said she'd killed the old man and rocketed.

POWELL

Would you buy that?

REICH

I don't know. The whole thing was crazy. If the girl was lunatic enough to sneak out of the house without a word and go running through the streets in her nightgown, she may have had her father's scalp in her hand.

POWELL

Would you mind if I peeped you on all this?

TATE

He most certainly does mind. As the head of a corporation with galactic interests, my client has a multitude of secrets to protect.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REICH

None of which have the slightest bearing on this case. Peep away, Captain Powell. I'm wide open.

Powell smiles in thanks, then casually concentrates on Reich, his head to one side.

From Reich, a FLASH: Reich's POV, slightly distorted, of Powell standing in front of him. Powell concentrates ever so slightly harder.

The image vibrates. We begin to hear an ADVERTISING JINGLE, painfully insistent and maniacally cheerful, chanted by a CHORUS OF GIRLS.

GIRLS

Nervous? Tired?
Anxious? Wired?
Just got fired?
Karminex!

Worried? Weary?
Drousy? Bleary?
Outlook dreary?
Karminex!

Powell concentrates harder.

In Reich's brain, the layer of thought underneath the surface finally breaks through...and it's just the typed out words of the jingle. We SCAN the printed lyrics as the Girls chant on.

GIRLS

Pressure? Tension?
Apprehension?
Need we mention--
Karminex!

Nervous? Tired?
Anxious? Wired?...
(continues)

A SERIES OF SHOTS

As Reich and Powell stare each other down: Powell concentrating, trying to penetrate the block, trying to hide the effort... Reich smiling sardonically, watching Powell, knowing he's winning...The typed lyrics, black and white, impenetrable... Tate looking from Reich to Powell...and always that jingle, on and on in an endless loop, catchy as the plague.

We come back to Powell. He relaxes his effort, defeated -- for the moment. There's sweat on his forehead. He wipes it casually away and starts WHISTLING the awful chant. Reich is unfazed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REICH

Can't seem to get that damn thing
out of my head. Don't you hate
when that happens?

POWELL

Yeah. Annoying as hell.

(beat)

We're asking all of Maria's guests
not to leave the planet for a few
days. So if you've got any urgent
business on Jupiter--

REICH

My business on Jupiter comes to me,
Powell. I'll be where you can find me.

They shake. Powell bows and leaves with Tate. When they're
gone, Powell lets his exhaustion show. He sinks into an orchid
chair.

Mary comes up behind him. Reaches out to stroke his shoulder.
Hesitates. Goes ahead. Takes the risk. But just as she touches
him, just as she lets the tenderness show on her face, Powell
stands up and starts pacing, completely oblivious, slapping
the gold slipper in the palm of his hand.

It stings: but from the way Mary weathers the blow, from the
way she goes right on with the business at hand, we sense
that this isn't the first time she's faced Powell's unawareness.

MARY

It's a pretty tough shark that
can block Lincoln Powell. I'll bet
there isn't one normal in a billion
who could carry that off.

POWELL

Well sharpen your knife, Mary. Our
Mr. One-in-a-billion is ripe for
demolition.

MARY

What?

POWELL

Didn't you hear that slip?
There's no reason Reich couldn't
guess that the murder would make
Barbara run out of the house -- it's
just logical. But how could he know she
was wearing a nightgown?

Silence: why didn't she think of that? Then--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

Real clever, Linc. 'Cept we don't know she was either. It could still be a guess.

POWELL

I couldn't see what he was hiding, Mary. But I could feel it. The shape of it. Like something under a blanket. Reich's our man.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEAUMONT HOUSE - DAWN

The sky over Central Park is just beginning to pale. The last party guests straggle out, trailing their finery. One group climbs into a horse drawn carriage, another into the gilded gondola of a bright red balloon. The balloonists release their ballast and float away.

Powell and Mary come out. They're about to get into a patrol car when Powell sees an ORGAN GRINDER against the park wall across the street, playing OH LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM on his ancient instrument. A monkey crouches on his shoulder.

Powell hurries across the street. Mary gives his back a 'what now' look and follows.

Under the lamp post, Powell puts a sovereign in the monkey's cup. The organ grinder stares vaguely ahead, crazed, toothless, frightening.

ORGANGRIDER

What are you buying, copper?

POWELL

Just music, old man. You been here all night?

ORGANGRIDER

(indicates house)

I like the lights.

POWELL

But they went out for a while.

ORGANGRINDER

I was here.

POWELL

Were you here when a girl ran out the door? A girl with long yellow hair, all alone?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The organ grinder smiles a horrible crazed smile.

ORGANGRINDER

I was here.

Powell concentrates on the organ grinder.

A FLASH: the organ grinder's POV -- Barbara D'Courtney, in her nightgown and one gold slipper, running out the front door, with Beaumont House dark behind her, looking lost and wild and catastrophically beautiful. The organ grinder's eyes follow her across the street, move toward her. She backs away in fear and runs into the park.

The FLASH fades. Powell grabs Mary's arm.

POWELL

Did you see that? Was she wearing
a nightgown or what?

Powell lets go of Mary and runs along the edge of the park, where Barbara ran. He finds crushed bushes. Footprints in the muddy earth: the tracks of a shoe and a bare foot, side by side, heading into the park. Powell puts the gold slipper into the shoe print. It fits. He follows the tracks until they disappear in the driven snow.

He looks out across the park, where Barbara ran away, only a few hours ago. Mary catches up with him.

POWELL

There's no way we're going to pin
this on Reich without the girl.

We RISE ABOVE Powell and Mary. The park and the city stretch away before us, the old stone facades of Central Park West, seventeen million people waking up on the morning of December 20th...and somewhere out there is Barbara D'Courtney.

POWELL'S VOICE

It's a long way to demolition,
Mary. A long, long way.

CUT TO:

INT. A NIGHTMARE - DREAMER'S POV

We move toward the heavy steel doors of a vault. The doors EXPLODE. We keep going. Through the wreckage and smoke we see stacks of money, gold coins, jewels. We move toward them hungrily -- but suddenly the figure of a man appears in the smoke, steps forward...a figure of dread, black and massive...the ultimate nightmare...A MAN WITH NO FACE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We run down a dark street toward a distant lamp post, our HEART RACING, our BREATH like a saw. We hear ourselves calling "HELP!" in a faint, hoarse whisper. We run faster. There's a policeman under the street light. We get to the light, the pursuing footsteps close behind. The policeman turns. He's The Man With No Face.

It's day now. We run through a rundown working class neighborhood to a wooden gate in an overgrown wall. We tear open the gate and run into the garden of a little white house. We stop at the back door. The screen door opens and a WOMAN leans out. From the way she leans down to face us, we can tell we're a child now. She's flushed, excited, urgent.

WOMAN.

You go and play now. Go on.

The door closes. We turn. An angelic THREE YEAR OLD stands in the sunlight, among the flowers, holding a bright red ball. She throws it to us. We throw it back. She misses it. It rolls on the grass. She runs to get it. It stops at a hedge -- near a man's feet, in black boots. Hands reach down and pick up the girl. The girl doesn't struggle. We look up. It's The Man With No Face. He comes toward us, holding the girl in his huge hands.

We SCREAM.

CLOSE ON BEN REICH

SCREAMING as he wakes up from the horrible nightmare. PULL BACK. We are in Reich's spectacular bedroom, all of translucent jade, the bed a rippling pool of crystal glycerine set into the floor. Reich jerks upright, out of breath. He's been sleeping in the clothes he collapsed in, the blood-stained shirt. He presses a button and a jade panel slides back, revealing a staggering view of sunrise over the city.

He gets up. Splashes water on his face from the basin of a jade fountain. As he strips out of his shirt and begins to put on the clothes neatly laid out on the bureau, his somber VALET comes in, carrying breakfast on a tray. Reich doesn't turn to face him.

REICH

Again?

VALET

Yes, Mr. Reich.

REICH

Loud?

VALET

Very loud, sir.

Reich finishes dressing. Checks himself in a mirror. The night terrors are behind him. He's himself again. In control. He stalks out onto the terrace. The jade wall closes behind him.

EXT. REICH'S PENTHOUSE

A Georgian estate on the pinnacle of a skyscraper -- elm trees, gardens, white columns. Reich leaps into a jumper -- a flying buggie -- and jets away off the terrace.

Mists obscure the city below. On the tops of the skyscrapers is a suburbia in the clouds, a private world of old fashioned mansions, each on its little concrete and steel island. Reich's jumper circles to the top of a tower, where an elegant penthouse sits in a pool ringed by trees.

Reich runs across a bridge and bangs on a glass wall. There's no answer. He smashes calmly through the glass with the side of his arm, as though that were simply the way one dropped in on a friend.

INT. AUGUSTUS TATE'S STUDY

Reich steps through the shattered window. Tate, sitting at a table, barely looks up. He's drinking, and has been for a long time.

TATE

I don't know how you could possibly sleep. You must be more of a monster than I thought.

Reich hits the drink out of his hand. It crashes against a priceless painting.

REICH

You think Powell's having cocktails right now? What are you sitting here for? Why aren't you out tracking down the girl?

TATE

What do you suggest I do? Go door to door?

REICH

How should I know? You're the great peeper. When I buy the best oil man on the planet, I don't have to suggest where he should drill his wells.

TATE

So you've bought me, have you?

REICH

What do you call half a billion K's? Rent!!!

He grabs Tate by the collar. Holds him up.

REICH(cont'd)

HOW COULD YOU NOT FUCKING KNOW
HE HAD HIS DAUGHTER WITH HIM?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATE

I'm as only as good as my sources. Maria's brains are so full of garbage, it's a wonder I got you anything at all.

Reich tightens his grip on Tate's neck.

TATE

Fine...Kill me, Reich...I'll die happy, knowing you'll never know who the man with no face is...

REICH

I know who he is! He's D'Courtney, trying to strangle me!

TATE

But you've killed D'Courtney. And the nightmares haven't stopped, haven't they.

This throws Reich for a moment, but he tightens his grip: this is fresh fuel for his rage.

REICH

I seem to remember that somebody told me they would.

TATE

No. You told yourself they'd stop. I just let you believe what you wanted to. But in fact they'll never stop. Not until you find out who he really is.

Reich lets go of Tate, desperate.

REICH

Do you know?

TATE

Of course I know. I've known from the first minute you came to me with your...proposal, shall we call it?

REICH

Help me, Tate! I'll double the offer! Half my wealth!

Tate goes back to his decanter. Pours himself another drink, as though that were worth more to him than half of Reich's wealth.

TATE

I'm afraid not, Reich. How else are we going to keep our little partnership on an equal basis?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Reich backs off. Tate takes command.

TATE

Now you listen to me. I'll keep my eye on Powell. I'll find out what he knows, what he's guessing, what he can prove. You worry about Barbara D'Courtney. I'm sure you have means of tracking people down. And for God's sake, Reich. Keep your mind block up. Keep it fast and rhythmic, the way I showed you. Don't let it drop for a second. You're slaughtering the poor girl on every wavelength.

Reich staggers backwards, through the broken window. Runs for his jumper. Tate watches him go. His momentary triumph fades. He looks old, drawn. He pours himself another drink and gulps it down.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY OVER CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Reich's jumper streaks across the wintry park, Reich at the controls, grim and furious. As he passes over the black lake he takes out a small silver pistol, five hundred years old, and tosses it overboard.

We FOLLOW the gun down to the water, where it vanishes with a dull plop. Then we pan across the lake and through the bare trees, to where Barbara D'Courtney, in her nightgown and one gold slipper, walks aimlessly through a light snowfall, dazed and lost. She has been walking like this for hours.

As she passes the ancient Alice in Wonderland statue her foot breaks a hidden trip wire, which snaps with a sharp TWANG. Barbara barely notices, just keeps walking.

But the trip wire has sounded someone's alarm. A heap of rags under the bronze caterpillar's giant mushroom stirs, and a man's head appears: a PARK DEMON, twisted and demented, wrapped in an old black cloak. He looks around for the intruder. Sees Barbara walking away in her translucent gown, her golden hair the only warmth in a frozen world. He grins a horrible twisted grin and rises from his bed of leaves.

Barbara hears heavy crunching footsteps behind her. Turns. Sees the Park Demon coming for her. She walks faster, into the trees, with no real sense of the danger she's in, just an unconscious instinct to escape. She stumbles. The Park Demon gains on her. She goes faster. He goes faster. He's almost on her, GRUNTING in excitement. He reaches out--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There's a CRACK and a whip wraps around his neck. He CRIES OUT and falls, clutching at the whip.

Barbara looks up toward her savior, no curiosity on her face.

Towering over her is a white sleigh pulled by two white horses. On the coachman's seat is MAGDA, a tall gaunt henchwoman with bright red eyes. In the sleigh behind her, swathed in scarlet furs, is CHOOKA FROOD, queen of New York's underworld, an aging Caribbean temptress, wily and charismatic.

CHOOKA

Let him go, Magda.

Magda jerks the whip off the Park Demon's neck and cracks it over his head. The Park Demon backs away, whining like a beaten dog.

Chooka looks down at the lost girl.

CHOOKA

Need a ride home?

Barbara just stares. Chooka looks her up and down, and likes what she sees.

MAGDA

She's fish food, Chooka. Leave her to the fish.

CHOOKA

That's the trouble with you, Magda.
You ain't got no compassion.
(smiles at Barbara)
You come home with me, girl. This
is no place for you.

She reaches out of the sleigh. No one in their right mind would accept Chooka's invitation. But Barbara lost her right mind in the orchid suite. She lets herself be helped up onto the sleigh. Chooka wraps her in the fur blankets. Notices the bare foot. A look of real concern crosses her face.

CHOOKA

You poor thing...

She takes off one of her own fur slippers and tries to slip it on Barbara's foot. For the first time, Barbara reacts, CRIES OUT and pushes Chooka away, presses herself back into the seat like a frightened animal. Chooka takes her hand, strokes it.

CHOOKA

You have had a hard time of it,
haven't you. Well don't you worry,
precious. The hard times are over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As Barbara calms down, Chooka looks her over like a prospector gloating over a ten ounce nugget.

CHOOKA

I have such a lovely home, and
so many nice gentlemen come to visit
me there...and these nice gentlemen are
going to think you're the best
Christmas present they ever got in
their whole lives...

Magda cracks the whip and the sleigh takes off across the park, bells jangling.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

We TRACK BACKWARDS as Powell strides toward us through the crowded office. His STAFF surrounds him, hurrying to keep up, rushing away to carry out his orders.

POWELL

Get a photo of Barbara D'Courtney
out to every police officer on the
planet within one hour. The man
who finds her gets jumped five grades.

(hands Maria's game
book to an OFFICER)

Find out where this book came from.
Whoever sent it to Maria scratched out
every game in there except Sardines
with some kind of acid. Damn clever
way of making sure the lights would
be out.

(to another OFFICER)

Have lab find out when that acid
was used.

Powell marches through an archway into a gleaming computer room. Powell barks at a TECHNICIAN.

POWELL

Does Da have all the info yet?

TECHNICIAN

Yes sir...But--

Before he can say more, Powell looks up and stops in his tracks.

ANGLE - THE COMPUTER ROOM

This is the but: MASSLER, the city's Chief Prosecutor, guards the way to Powell's destination. He is a powerful techno-administrator, a slick politician, not a cop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MASSLER
(full of ridicule)
He knew she was wearing a
nightgown?

POWELL
That's right, Massler.

MASSLER
And you expect to get a prosecution
of Ben Reich based on that? Most
women do wear nightgowns at one in
the morning!!!

POWELL
If you'd see it in context...

MASSLER
All I see in context is that you
peeped something out of Reich. And
as long as there's such a thing as
law and order, Esper evidence will
never be admissable in any court
in this galaxy.
(suddenly sweet)
But why argue? We'll ask Da.

A sleek chromium snake's head on a long hinged neck, mounted on
the computer-lined wall, swings across the room to Massler's
side. This is Da, a contraction of the archaic term D.A.:
the eyes and voice of the city's prosecution computer. Da's
neck, as supple as a swan's, moves like the crane and pulley
that hold a dentist's drill. Da is very fond of Massler.

MASSLER
Tell us, Da. Based on what you've
been told this morning, what's the
chance of convicting Ben Reich of
the D'Courtney murder?

DA
(in a natural voice)
Well...The profit motive is intriguing...
For the last six months, D'Courtney
has been gaining on Reich Enterprises
in every field. But that's hardly grounds
for murder...and we're lacking any proof
of method or opportunity.

Da slinks across the room and gives Powell a smug look with
its glowing cobalt eyes.

DA(cont'd)
The chance of a successful prosecution
is...Three point eight percent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MASSLER

And tell us, Da. On a Felony Triple
A, what do we need to go to trial?

DA

Seventy nine percent.

POWELL

(seething)

We've had four hours, Massler.
Give me till Christmas and I'll
give you ninety nine.

MASSLER

Really? I'll bet I could do fifteen
right now. On another suspect.

POWELL

Yeah?

MASSLER

Yeah. Method: who could get that close to
D'Courtney without a struggle?

Only one person. Opportunity: Only
two people knew where D'Courtney was,
and one of them, Maria Beaumont, has
an alibi and 300 witnesses. As do all
her other guests. Motive: only one
person stands to inherit seven hundred
billion K's. That's billion, with a B.

(to Da, lovingly)

Da, could you tell us the odds on...
Barbara D'Courtney?

DA

Right now, with no explanation for her
disappearance...only...seventeen percent.

Massler folds his arms in satisfaction.

MASSLER

I'm so glad you've already put out
the net for her, Powell. I'm sure we'll
have her here for questioning before
the day is out.

CUT TO:

EXT. REICH ENTERPRISES - DAY

A 200 story R that towers over the downtown skyline, which other-
wise hasn't changed at all since it reached maximum density
in the late 20th century. Reich's jumper circles the building
and swoops to the private landing pad at the bottom of the
space created by the letter's upper loop, 100 stories up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Reich hops out. A crowd of REPORTERS is waiting to meet him. Reich strides through the barrage stonefaced, as though there were no one there at all.

REPORTERS

Were you a witness to the D'Courtney killing?...Do you believe Barbara D'Courtney killed her father?...Were you acquainted with...

And so on. Reich pushes through. Gets inside -- where a swarm of OFFICE PEOPLE attack him with a new barrage of questions.

OFFICE PEOPLE

GCO wants an answer on the copper rates...The Saturn office called, it's mega-urgent!...You're going to have to see Castorp today, Mr. Reich. He needs the...

And on and on. Reich strides through, into his office, and slams the door.

REICH'S OFFICE

An entire floor of the R. No furniture, just a black marble desk and a rough-hewn ninth century throne that once belonged to Charlemagne, now mounted on a swivel so that it can turn to face the suspended screens that surround the desk. On the wall behind the desk, a full-length portrait of Reich's mother -- the woman in the little white house in Reich's nightmare. Strong-faced, in her late thirties, someone who's had a hard life and come to terms with it.

Reich barks an order to the air.

REICH

Get me Corporate Planning.

After a moment, Reich's VP CORPORATE PLANNING appears on the screen. He's a bright young man, eager, cheerful and clean-cut. We get the feeling he has scrambled to take his boss's call, and that he's used to scrambling.

VP CORPORATE PLANNING

Yes, Mr. Reich?

Reich knows the answer to the question he asks:

REICH

What's going to happen to the D'Courtney Cartel?

VP CORPORATE PLANNING

They've been getting top heavy. Overcentralized. Without the old man minding the store, it's going to shatter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REICH

What a shame. You just make sure Reich Enterprises is first in line to pick up the pieces.

VP CORPORATE PLANNING

Of course, Mr. Reich. Just this morning I've already--

But Reich cuts him off and barks once again into the air.

REICH

I want PR.

The VP PUBLIC RELATIONS appears on the screen, another bright young executive. Everyone who works for Reich is so bright and cheerful you could puke.

VP PR

Yes, Mr. Reich?

REICH

Set up a new charity. Call it 'Sanctuary.' Reich Enterprises offers aid and comfort to the city's destitute millions in their time of crisis. 'If you're frightened, homeless, if you don't know where to turn...Take Sanctuary.' Throw in something about Christmas. I want an office in every sector by three this afternoon. And send me a photo of every bum that wanders in.

VP PR

What a moving idea, Mr. Reich. It brings tears to my--

Reich cuts him off. To the air--

REICH

Give me a sealed line.

He waits a moment. A red light flashes on a keyboard on his desk. He punches the next call himself.

Massler comes on a screen. When he sees who's calling he looks anxiously at the Technicians behind him.

MASSLER

Hold on a minute.

The screen goes black for a second. When it goes on again, Massler's in another office, alone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MASSLER

What's going on, Ben? Lincoln
Powell's got you pegged for a murder.

REICH

So I hear.

That's all Reich says. He faces Massler patiently, making
him squirm.

MASSLER

Of course it's crazy. The signs all
point to the daughter.

REICH

For the sake of our long friendship,
I hope they keep pointing that way.

Now Massler really starts to sweat. Reich's intent is
unmistakable.

MASSLER

That's still just a theory, Ben.
We, ah...we haven't got any real
evidence to support it.

REICH

You've gone far, Massler. From Junior Clerk
to Chief Prosecutor in one short year.
From where you are now, it's only a
short hop to Mayor. Unless, of course,
the gentlemen of the press should happen
to find out the unusual degree to which
I've contributed to your success.

MASSLER

(quickly)

Of course, we...we've only been on
the case for a few hours. We've
barely started to gather the facts.

REICH

Facts are cheap. I can buy you all the
facts you want. All you have to do
is give me a shopping list.

Massler pulls himself together, squares his shoulders.

MASSLER

Ben, you have my word. I'll do
everything I can to see that justice--

Reich cuts him off. The screen goes black. At Reich Enterprises,
the boss always has the last word. Reich gets up. Stands
facing the portrait of his mother, who gazes off into the
distance, serene, aloof.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REICH
We're almost there, Ma. Almost.

CUT TO:

EXT, THE ESPER GUILD - DAY

The grand old New York Public Library at 5th and 42nd, lions, columns and all, unchanged except for the new letters carved in the marble pediment:

THE ESPER GUILD - FOUNDED 2129 A.D.

INT. ESPER GUILD CORRIDOR

Grand and quiet. SECRETARIES AND STAFF go about their business in silent harmony, carrying on all the work of a busy office telepathically. Powell strides down the hall, through an archway beneath gold letters: OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT. He smiles in greeting to the two SECRETARIES outside the president's big wooden door. With a grin and a wave of his hand he tells them a quick telepathic joke. They explode in LAUGHTER and shake their heads, happily scandalized, as Powell pushes through the door.

INT. THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

President T'SUNG H'SAI, eighty years old, Chinese, widely loved and respected, looks up from his desk and begins talking as though Powell's been in the office all morning.

T'SUNG H'SAI
And now you want to use the grapevine
to help you find Barbara D'Courtney.

POWELL
Well?

T'SUNG H'SAI
Is it so important, Linc?

POWELL
Oh, not really. Just that the D'Courtney Cartel's the only thing that's ever stood between Ben Reich and a teeny bit more power than one seriously unbalanced individual ought to be laying his hands on. If he gets away with this he'll have ten planets, sixteen moons and a few stray asteroids in his pocket by Easter. The girl saw it all happen. She's the only way we're going to crack it.

T'SUNG H'SAI
Of course the case is your only interest here. And all those black thoughts in there, all that worry, those gruesome images of Barbara going hungry, Barbara all alone, Barbara attacked by terrible men on dark streets...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL
Possibilities. Theories.

T'SUNG H'SAI
(tolerantly)
Of course.

POWELL
(defensively)
A cop's got to have theories,
or where does he start from?

T'SUNG H'SAI
Of course.

POWELL
(heating up)
Barbara D'Courtney's a spoiled rich
kid. She's never been more than
ten feet from air conditioning in
her life. A few hard knocks might do
her some good.

T'SUNG H'SAI
Of course.

Powell's about to defend himself again -- but sees it's
useless. He retreats, smoldering.

T'SUNG H'SAI
A peeper as good as you are can
block all the peepers in the world.
But he can't block the peeper who
taught him how to peep...Give me
your pictures, Lincoln.

T'Sung H'Sai closes his eyes to concentrate on the images
Powell sends him. Above and behind him, superimposed, Barbara
silently greets Maria on the roof of Beaumont House.

T'SUNG H'SAI
Too hard to see her face. It
won't carry.

The superimposed image dissolves to Barbara on the steps
of Beaumont House, in her nightgown, fleeing.

T'SUNG H'SAI
Too far away, too dark...is that
all you've got?

Powell nods.

T'SUNG H'SAI
Get me a better picture and the
grapevine's all yours.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

As Powell walks away, Augustus Tate turns from a drawer of files he's been pretending to leaf through and watches him go.

CUT TO:

INT. REICH'S OFFICE

Reich faces Augustus Tate on the screen. Behind Tate, a busy street -- he's calling from a public phone. He looks behind himself anxiously as he talks.

TATE

You've got to hurry. He doesn't have a case yet, but he will, when he finds the girl. Once her picture goes out on the grapevine, you're half way to Demolition.

REICH

Wrong, Tate. We're half way to Demolition.

TATE

Reich! You've got to find her first. Before Powell does. Before he--

He breaks off. He's seen someone he knows on the street. The screen goes blank. Reich sits in his chair, brooding. After a moment, a faint smile comes to his face: that's how long it takes Ben Reich to make a new plan. He looks slyly up at his mother's portrait, as if to say 'watch this.'

REICH

(to the air)

Get me Advertising. Better yet, tell 'em I'm on my way down.

CUT TO:

INT. BEAUMONT HOUSE - DAY

The study: dark, luxurious, Turkish. Maria reclines on a velvet divan, plucking grapes and stroking the Bengal tiger curled at her feet. Powell sits across a brass table set with a mountain of fruits and pastries.

MARIA

I first met Barbara on a visit to Mars in... '46, I think. When she was sixteen... Do you want me to go back that far?

POWELL

Any light you can shed on the suspect's character will be more than helpful, Madame.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA

I'll do my best, Captain Powell.
Where was I? Ah yes. 2346. A
lovely day at Craye's indescribable
estate in New France.

Powell concentrates on Maria. As her VOICE AND IMAGE FADE...

MARIA(cont'd)

It was right after her mother died.
Poor Eleanor...It was her estate, of
course. Craye may have tripled the
family fortune, but every dime of
it came from Eleanor...

...we DISSOLVE to the inner recesses of her mind, to the
maelstrom of stored images of Barbara D'Courtney. The sound
does not match the images, but instead approximates the sonic
cauldron of Maria's subconscious: bits of music, choirs of
whispering memories, echoes of emotions, desires, fears.

Out of a kaleidoscope of images, a few linger: Barbara playing
tennis with a handsome YOUNG GUY far across a lawn...
Barbara telling a story at a kids' birthday party, making
everybody laugh...Barbara and her father walking arm in arm,
deep in conversation...As Barbara moves between rows of beds in
a hospital for very sick children, giving a smile here, a
word of encouragement there, a scrap of Maria's words to
Powell floats to the surface of the sonic cauldron.

MARIA'S VOICE

...all those awful dreary things she
used to do to impress the old man!
Helping refugee children from the
floods on Callisto...who did she think
she was kidding?

More kaleidoscope...then, very clearly, Barbara walking away
from us in a garden...She turns toward us...She hasn't seen
us yet and thinks she's completely alone...She looks
unbelievably beautiful, yet solemn, thoughtful...

THE STUDY

Powell is lost in his reverie on this vision.

MARIA

Captain Powell? Are you all right?

Powell snaps out of it, flushed, a little out of breath.

POWELL

Me? Oh. Yeah. I'm great. Just great.
(getting up)
Madame, you've given me exactly
what I came here for.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA
(crushed)
I have?

CUT TO:

INT. REICH ENTERPRISES - DEPARTMENT OF ADVERTISING

Three BRIGHT YOUNG AD MEN surround Ben Reich, who addresses them with winning paternalism. Behind Reich is a high-gloss ad for the Reich Skyhawk, the flying car Reich came to work in. Nearby is a poster for Karminex tranquilizers -- another Reich product.

REICH
Sales on the Skyhawk are down,
right?

BRIGHT YOUNG MAN #1
Yessir. The two door Windblazer
put out by D'Courtney Transport
passed us in--

REICH
(interrupts)
That's history! It's gone! Forget
it! What's the first rule of
advertising, men?

ALL THREE BRIGHT YOUNG MEN
You don't sell the steak, you
sell the sizzle!

REICH
(slaps picture
of Skyhawk)
We've been selling the Goddamn
steak for too long. Let's find a
girl and vote her the Skyhawk Jumper
Girl. When a man buys a Skyhawk, he's
buying the girl. When he turns one on,
it's her fire he's stoking. When he
jams in that transmission key...

BRIGHT YOUNG MAN #2
Check, Mr. Reich. Check and double
check!

BRIGHT YOUNG MEN #1 AND #3
Watch out, Windblazer!

REICH
I want the girl to be about 25...

One of the Ad Men jumps to an image processor. As he types Reich's stats on the keyboard, a fully resolved image of a girl starts to appear on the screen.

CONTINUED:

REICH(cont'd)

Five-five. Hundred and twenty pounds.
Blonde. Lots of appeal.

Reich checks the image on the screen. Of course, the girl looks nothing like Barbara. The Ad Man types in changes as fast as Reich calls them out. As if by magic, a likeness of Barbara D'Courtney gradually materializes on the screen.

REICH

Green eyes. Wider than that. Fuller lips. Higher cheekbones. A little narrower. Yeah, yeah. Like that. Stronger chin. Straighter hair. Off the forehead...Longer neck...Better jaw, a little fuller right in there...Yeah, that's it...That's the kind of girl I'm looking for...

It's now an idealized double of Barbara, like a billboard, bland, cheerful, with none of her intensity. But it's her.

REICH

How many scouts can you mobilize in an hour?

AD MAN #3

Three hundred.

REICH

Not enough. Triple it. Offer a ten thousand K bonus and a promotion to the scout who finds the girl who looks most like that picture.

ON REICH

Consumed with bloodlust as he studies Barbara's face on the screen.

REICH

I want my Skyhawk Jumper girl by tomorrow night.

CUT TO:

INT. ESPER GUILD - CORRIDOR OUTSIDE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Powell faces T'Sung H'Sai's secretaries, who gaze dreamily at the image of Barbara he's passing to them telepathically, which we see faintly superimposed over the scene -- Barbara in the garden, just as Maria surprises her on the path.

SECRETARY #1

Don't you worry, Powell. She'll turn up. Like a ruby in a rubbish heap.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Powell looks out the window. Sunset is fading, winter twilight descending on the city.

POWELL

I want it to go out first thing in the A.M. And this message goes with it: the peeper who finds Barbara D'Courtney for me gets his Guild dues remitted for six months. If he finds her tomorrow -- a year.

SECRETARY #2

That'll make the grapevine jump.

CUT TO:

INT. A NIGHTMARE

We're backstage at a theater. Moving through the wings, onto the stage. The stage lights blind us. There's sheet music on a stand. We step up to it. The theater is empty. Just one figure, fifth row center. He looks up. It's The Man With No Face.

We run, down a long corridor. The horrible specter follows, walking calmly, yet gaining with every step. The end of the corridor is blocked by the wooden gate in the overgrown wall. We burst through the gate, into the light. We're in the backyard of the little white house. We rush to the screen door. The heavy FOOTSTEPS are getting closer. We see our hand, the hand of a small boy, trying to open the door. It's locked. The footsteps are like shots.

We turn. He's almost upon us...

REICH'S BEDROOM

Reich sits bolt upright in bed, SCREAMING in raw animal terror. He hits a switch. The jade wall slides open. He pulls his sheets around himself and goes out onto the terrace. Looks down at the Christmas-lit city. Calls out faintly, in agony, to himself, to the city...

REICH

Why?

We HOLD on him for a moment before we PAN ACROSS THE CITY in a descending arc and MOVE IN through a casement window on another sleepless figure in another bedroom...Lincoln Powell, working late.

POWELL'S BEDROOM

Powell is watching a fast-paced video bio of Ben Reich, a puff piece following Reich's meteoric climb from poverty to the heights of wealth and power: stills of a YOUNG REICH growing up in the slums of New Paris, Mars, the only child of a single

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

mother...his intense devotion to this long-sacrificing mother who brought him back to Earth for a better life...Her tragic death...Reich's early conquests...

Powell can't keep his mind on it. He lights a cigarette, stands at the window. Images of Barbara appear and dissolve in the smoke that drifts around him: Barbara with the refugee children. Barbara with her father. Barbara turning to see Maria, her face looming, radiant...

He can't stand it. He goes out onto the balcony. The images vanish in the cold air. From below, the sounds of CAROLING CHILDREN waft up on a cold wind, singing ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH.

The unlit brick wall behind Powell makes the left half of the screen black. In this darkened area, FADE IN Ben Reich standing on his own balcony, gazing out over the same city, hearing the same carol.

As the CAROL CONTINUES OVER, both sides of the screen dissolve to
A MONTAGE - THE RACE TO FIND BARBARA D'COURTNEY

The left side follows Reich's attack, the right side Powell's. On Reich's side, a stack of 8X10's hits a table: The Skyhawk Jumper Girl prototype. Hands grab pictures from the pile.

On Powell's side, T'Sung H'Sai's Secretary #1 greets a FRIEND on the street. A FLASH: Powell's image of Barbara in the garden. The two women finish their greeting and go on.

Each half of the screen divides in two horizontally.

On Reich's side, in the upper half, a Reich Enterprises SCOUT, prototype photo in hand, studies the faces of GIRLS on a bus. None of them are right. In the lower half, AD MAN #1 hands out photos to more SCOUTS. The Scouts all have distinctive red jackets and that bright, cheerful Reich Enterprises look.

On the Powell side, T'Sung H'sai's Secretaries #2 and #3, on top and bottom, each greet an Esper FRIEND, flash them a picture of Barbara, and move on.

The screens divide again, into four on each side. On the Reich side, more SCOUTS look at more GIRLS in the city. On the Powell side, the Secretary's friends each FLASH an image of Barbara to other ESPERS.

Then the screens divide into sixteen. The images change faster, as Reich's search goes on and Powell's message spreads, mind to mind, through the Espers of the city -- surgeons, storekeepers, subway clerks.

(CONTINUED)

In one square on Reich's side, Reich reviews blonde candidates on his office video and angrily rejects all of them. In one square on Powell's side, Powell himself passes Barbara's image to ESPERS on the street.

The images in all of the squares keep changing, except two: on Reich's side, one square HOLDS on a YOUNG SCOUT walking down the street. On Powell's side, one square HOLDS on a young ESPER GIRL walking down an alley. These images stay constant, growing larger, as the carol approaches a triumphant cadence, the tempo slows, and the halves go back to four screens, then two, then one on each side.

On Powell's side, the Girl goes in the back door of a store.

On Reich's side, the Scout goes in the front door of a chic dress shop.

They're inside the same shop, but the screens remain separate. The Scout looks at the faces of the girls trying on clothes. The Girl rushes out of her coat and into her smock. She's a dressmaker's assistant.

The Scout looks in shock at something we haven't yet seen. The Girl looks in shock at something we haven't yet seen.

The Scout and the Girl, each on their own half of the screen, move forward, toward each other. The two halves of the screen become one, just as we see Barbara D'Courtney standing on a tailor's block, being draped in silk and sequins by a DRESSMAKER while Chooka Frood helps out, adjusting folds and reveals with a critical eye.

The CHRISTMAS CAROL ENDS.

Barbara is as lost and passive as when we last saw her, a walking catatonic.

The Dressmaker looks down at Barbara's feet: one bare, one still in the gold slipper, now in tatters.

DRESSMAKER

And shoes? How about these
lovely--

She moves to slip a black pump onto Barbara's bare foot. Barbara springs away in terror. Chooka Frood takes her hand, calming her.

CHOOKA

She likes the one she's got on.
(strokes Barbara's
hair)
Don't you, love...Just the dress.
Do it up and send it right over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As Chooka takes Barbara's arm and grandly leads her out of the store, the Dressmaker gathers up the gown and snaps at the Girl.

DRESSMAKER

Wrap this up! Fast!

GIRL

I...I'll be right there. I have to make a call.

She rushes to a bank of V-Phones. The Scout does the same. They stand right next to each other. A heavy glass partition keeps them from hearing each other, but we can hear them both.

SCOUT

I've got the perfect girl. No doubt about it. And get this -- she's with Chooka Frood! They're headed back to the Rainbow House right now...Don't thank me. Just make sure Reich knows who told you!

GIRL

You have to get hold of Captain Powell. I've seen her. She's with that...that woman. Chooka Frood. They're on their way back home right now...And would you let Captain Powell know who told you?

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - EVENING

A patrol car zooms down Broadway, veering through traffic. Mary is at the wheel, Powell beside her.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - EVENING

Reich's Skyhawk hurtles over the skyline.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE EDGE OF CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

Mary pulls the car into the shadows. Powell gets out. Notices the police insignia on his jacket. Tears it off, tosses it into the car, waves to Mary and walks through the trees, toward lights and MUSIC.

Before him is The Rainbow House of Chooka Frood, the old Central Park boathouse, now the nerve center of the city's pleasure market. A neon rainbow frames the entrance. Milling around outside are DERELICTS with a few K's to burn, MILLIONAIRES in vintage autos, SOCIALITES on camelback in full bedouin drag. Powell pushes through the crowd. A burly VENUSIAN BOUNCER grabs him, grunts and snuffles at him, and finally lets him pass through the neon rainbow.

INT. ENTRY HALL

Powell is alone in a velvet-draped chamber with a tall DOORMAN in twentieth century evening dress.

DOORMAN

Frab or fortune, sir?

POWELL

Fortune.

Powell hands him a coin. The man gestures to the left. Powell goes through a velvet-draped doorway to

A DARK STAIRCASE

An OLD WOMAN sits at a table of flickering candles. She hands one to Powell. He descends into darkness, holding the candle, following a line of PEOPLE WITH CANDLES, like a procession of pilgrims.

INT. THE ENTRY HALL

Reich has stepped in.

DOORMAN

Hello, Mr. Reich. Will it be frab or fortune this evening?

Reich presses a few silver coins into his hand.

REICH

Frab. And I wasn't here, understand?

DOORMAN

No one is ever here, Mr. Reich.

Reich goes to the right.

INT. THE FORTUNE ROOM

A dim chamber lit only by the candles held by the dozen spectators seated silently in a circle around a glowing floor of black glass. Powell takes a seat. There's a sudden breeze. The candles flicker. A single beam of light comes from somewhere -- and there is Chooka Frood standing before them, a candle in her hand.

Chooka's fortune act is understated, chilling, effective.

CHOOKA

I am come here to you...to help
you look into the deeps of your hearts...
you...who are looking for revenge
on a man named Zerlen from Mars...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A WOMAN in the audience gasps: that's her.

CHOOKA
...for the love of a red eyed
woman of Callisto...
(another gasp)
...for every credit of that
rich old uncle in Paris...

With Powell's words, we shift into the Esper Mode.

POWELL
Well who'd a thought it.
Chooka Frood, an honest-to-
God peeper.

Chooka steps out of her ghost-form and searches the candle-lit
faces.

CHOOKA
Wha'? Who are you?

POWELL
Lincoln Powell. I've got a few
questions for Barbara D'Courtney.
The new girl.

CHOOKA
Get out of here, you filthy
peeper.

POWELL
Why haven't you come to the Guild,
Chooka? What kind of life is this
for someone with your talents?
There's real work waiting for you!

CHOOKA
Real money?

POWELL
Where's the girl?

CHOOKA
There ain't no girl.

POWELL
It's no use trying to block me,
Chooka. I'm going deeper than you'll
ever go -- without Guild training.
Yeah...there she is...third floor,
south wing...fourth room past the
fountain on the left...much obliged,
Chooka.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Chooka's two selves merge as she blows an earsplitting WHISTLE on one of the chains around her neck. The spectators CASP. Powell puts down his candle and runs away into the darkness.

UPSTAIRS - THE FRAB JOINT - ANTE ROOM

A MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES stands in front of a wall of screens. On every screen, a PRETTY BOY or PRETTY GIRL teases and beckons. Reich searches the screens for Barbara.

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES
...and, of course, any combination
you fancy can be arranged.

REICH
I don't want any of 'em. I want
the new girl. The blonde.

MISTRESS
All of Chooka's girls are new.
And if you want, they can all be
blonde.

Reich pushes past her, through a velvet curtain.

MISTRESS OF CEREMONIES
You can't go back there!

She presses an ALARM.

INT. THE FRAB JOINT - BEHIND THE CURTAIN

A series of linked chambers where Chooka's minions purvey the usual vices to the hungry and invent new ones for the jaded. Each chamber represents a fantasy fulfilled, with 25th century projections creating astonishingly convincing realities on the walls. Reich storms into a Shiek's tent, where a CUSTOMER in a bernoos scrambles for cover and three HAREM GIRLS scream. None of them are Barbara.

In a CONTINUOUS SHOT, we follow Reich as he tears through the screens from one fantasy to another, leaving a trail of fury and indignation behind him: A classroom where an OLDER CUSTOMER disciplines some naughty SCHOOLBOYS...a hospital with a very capable NURSE...Reich rages on, searching for Barbara.

THE DANCE FLOOR

Powell makes his way across the jammed floor. People don't even pretend to dance in couples anymore. The music is sullen and throbbing, Tears for Fears 500 years later.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

In the middle of the floor, three RED-EYED WOMEN, Chooka's henchwomen, jump in front of Powell. He's cornered, hemmed in by jerking, gyrating bodies on all sides.

One of the Red-Eyed Women goes for his neck. Grabbing a torch from a dancer, Powell manages to fight off the valkyries and move on across the dance floor. The crowd closes behind him, blocking the pursuit. And no dancer ever notices a thing.

THE FRAB JOINT

Reich tears through a foaming ocean and steps into a Louis XIV salon. A blonde in frills and petticoats, her back to him, combs her hair at a mirror. Reich grabs the blonde's arm. The blonde turns, furious... but it's not Barbara. It's a frightened CUSTOMER in a wig.

Reich throws the man down, turns to keep going -- and finds himself face to face with Chooka, in a black rage.

CHOOKA

Get out of my house, Reich.

REICH

Where's the girl?

CHOOKA

MAGDA!!

Magda bursts into the room from another direction, a neuron scrambler -- a small deadly pistol -- in her hand, aimed at Reich's skull. Reich freezes, but stays cool.

REICH

Well, well. A real authentic neuron scrambler. And here I thought they were illegal.

CHOOKA

Teach him some manners, Magda.

Before Magda can fire, Reich swings out and clubs her with the back of his hand, catching the gun as she drops it. He grabs Chooka and rams the gun into her temple.

REICH

Where is she?

CHOOKA

She's mine. I found her.

Reich pulls the trigger back one CLICK. Silent, invisible radiation paralyzes Chooka, makes her stiffen, tremble and sweat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REICH

That's one notch, Chooka.
You ready for two?

She doesn't answer. He CLICKS the weapon again. Chooka is in unbearable pain. Still, she doesn't give in.

REICH

Three is the big D, Chooka.
I hope you've got all your papers
in order.

CHOOKA

(in agony)

There...that door...to the right...
second room...left after the turn...

Reich drops her and runs, jamming the neuron scrambler into his belt, out to

A CORRIDOR

Reich looks both ways. Runs to the right. The corridor turns. He yanks open the second door on the left and goes into

INT. THE VIEWING ROOM

A round chamber with walls and ceiling of midnight velvet, and a floor of transparent glass in a lattice-pattern of crystal panes. Underneath is a terrible sight: Barbara D'Courtney sits on a round bed while a slimy BLIND GUY, in dark glasses and undershorts, fondles her roughly and slowly takes off her sequined dress. Barbara stares into space, lost, elsewhere, feeling only vague horror. The Blind Guy's thin, grey wife sits across the room, watching it all while the Blind Guy asks her questions.

BLIND GUY

How does she look? How does
she feel?

WIFE

She doesn't know what's
happening.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Reich shoots the neuron scrambler at Barbara and the Blind Guy. The invisible ray strikes the glass floor, bounces off with a harsh METALLIC BUZZ and springs back as a visible beam of light, straight at Reich. He jumps back.

BLIND GUY

She knows. She isn't that far gone. Tell me what she looks like!

Reich gets down and tries to pry a pane of glass out of the lattice. It won't budge. He keeps trying. Below, the Blind Guy pulls open Barbara's dress and pushes her down on the bed...

Reich struggles with the pane. Pulls up part of the silver lattice that holds it into place.

IN THE ROOM BELOW

Powell bursts through the door.

POWELL

Get out and leave the girl where she is.

BLIND BUY

(to his wife)

Who is this jerk?

Powell flashes a badge at the wife.

WIFE

He's a cop.

BLIND GUY

Tell him to take it up with Chooka.

(leering)

'Less he wants t'stay and watch, that is.

He grips the back of Barbara's neck. Powell goes for him... FLASH! the image of a woman's hand closing over a dagger. Powell wheels around and swings with his right arm -- exactly meeting the Wife's hand, which grips a dagger, a quarter second before it would have gone into his back.

The knife flies across the room. The Wife screams. The Blind Guy lunges at Powell. With one smooth move, Powell punches him and flips him to the floor. His Wife falls to his side, whimpering, cowering from Powell.

Barbara watches it all blankly.

IN THE VIEWING ROOM ABOVE

Reich gets more of the lattice up: just a little more work, and he'll have a panel out, and be able to shoot.

BELOW

Powell approaches Barbara slowly. She shrinks away on the bed.

POWELL

Are you all right, Miss D'Courtney?

At the sound of her name, she stops moving back, but still looks at Powell blankly.

POWELL

I've got something of yours, that
you lost. I've come to give it
back to you.

He takes the gold slipper out of his pocket. Gently holds it out, as though offering food to a mad tiger. At the sight of the shoe, the faintest light comes to Barbara's eyes.

ABOVE

Using the neuron scrambler as a wedge, Reich tears away all but the last bit of metal that holds the panel.

BELOW

Powell slips the shoe onto Barbara's bare foot, his eyes fixed on hers. He holds out his hand.

She takes it.

He helps her up. Re-fastens her dress. Leads her to the door.

ABOVE

Reich gets the last bit of metal up. Pulls at the panel. It's free, but hard to grasp. He watches Powell open the door and step out, checking the corridor, still holding Barbara's hand. Reich gets the panel out. Puts the gun to the hole. There's a slight CHINK.

BELOW

Barbara hears the chink and looks up. She sees only the mirrored dome.

ABOVE

Reich aims the gun at her. Powell's right behind her. There's no problem. Reich can take both of them out with one shot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But his eyes meet Barbara's, and something happens. He freezes. He can't do it. His hand shakes uncontrollably. He tries to steady the gun, tries to shoot. He still can't.

Powell steps back in, takes Barbara's arm, and leads her out of the room.

Reich holds his head and ROARS in agony and frustration. Pulling himself together, he goes back out to

THE CORRIDOR

He runs to a window. Tears aside the curtains.

In the alleyway outside, downstairs, Mary Noyes helps Barbara into a car. Powell gets in and the car tears away.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE - CHARLTON STREET - NIGHT

Mary Noyes' children open the street door of a rundown brownstone. CAMMIE, 13, peaks out, followed by DALE, 8, her little brother. Cammie SHHHHH'S Dale. In a loud whisper--

DALE

I didn't say anything!

Cammie looks both ways, sees no one. She closes the door.

INT. THE STAIRCASE

The kids barrel upstairs and burst into

MARY'S LIVING ROOM

Preparations for Christmas everywhere: half-trimmed tree, stockings, holly. Powell, Mary and T'Sung H'Sai surround Barbara, asleep on the couch. They look up as the kids tumble in.

CAMMIE

No one's out there, Mom.
No one saw you bring her in.

MARY

Thanks, Cammie. You put Dale to bed now.

DALE

(a protest)

Mom...

Mary gives her children a look that silences all protest. Cammie pulls Dale into the back bedroom and shuts the door. But not all the way. They watch through the crack as the adults go on with their conversation.

KIDS' POV - THROUGH SLIGHTLY OPEN DOORWAY

T'Sung H'Sai has been studying Barbara, and now gives his diagnosis. Powell listens impatiently. In the kitchen, which is open to the living room, Mary clatters around, fixing soup, her eyes on Barbara.

T'SUNG H'SAI

It's a classic case of the Withdrawal Syndrome. The mind wishes it had never been born. It can't face what it's seen, so it crawls back inside itself.

POWELL

For how long?

T'SUNG H'SAI

That depends. The conscious brain's like any other muscle. It gets weak if it's not used. If she doesn't get out of there soon, the escape tunnels could close up.

POWELL

Permanently?

T'Sung H'sai sees Powell's look of horror and smiles

T'SUNG H'SAI

Don't worry, Lincoln. In this day and age, nothing is permanent. Except physical death. And you know, investigating death from a symptomatic point of view, we've actually found that--

POWELL

Later!

(beat; humbly)

I'm sorry, sir. It's just that she's got my murder locked up in their with her. Everything I need to nail the killer. If I go in after the evidence, will it hurt her?

T'SUNG H'SAI

On the contrary. Bringing her subconscious face to face with the trauma that drove her inside is the only way to get her out.

Powell takes Barbara's hand, touches her head.

T'SUNG H'SAI

Cool your jets, Powell. You can start tomorrow. She needs rest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY

And so do you.

She puts soup down in front of him. He ignores it.

POWELL

How long have I got?

T'SUNG H'SAI

(studies Barbara)

What's today...the 21st? If
you can get to her by Christmas,
you've got a good chance of
pulling her out.

Powell picks up his soup spoon, puts it down. He sits beside Barbara. Through the window above the couch, we see the Reich Enterprises 200 story R, looming above the skyline. Mary watches Powell, sees the tenderness in his face as he touches Barbara's hair, adjusts the blanket that covers her. It isn't easy for Mary to watch.

We MOVE past Barbara, THROUGH THE WINDOW, toward the 200 story R. One light burns in a high window...

INT. REICH'S OFFICE

Reich, still a wreck from the fracas at Chooka's, faces Tate on the screen. Tate's calling from a public V-Phone.

TATE

Powell's not at home. No one
knows where he is. Not the cops,
not the Guild.

Reich growls, beyond anger.

EXT. THE STREET - PUBLIC V-PHONE - WITH TATE

Busy Christmas SHOPPERS all around. A SANTA CLAUS with a bell.

TATE

(desperate)

How could you let her get away,
Reich?

REICH

(vehement)

Let her!? Powell was armed.
It was back off or die...go on!
Find him! Find where he's hiding
her!

The screen goes black.

CUT TO:

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Powell, in the clothes he's been wearing all night, offers Barbara a steaming spoonful of oatmeal. She looks blankly at the oatmeal, blankly at Powell, that hint of terror still in her eyes. Mary and the kids aren't home.

POWELL

It's got cinnamon in it. Real cinnamon, from a tree. But I guess that's no big deal to a D'Courtney.

He gives up. Pushes away the uneaten breakfast. Brushes a stray lock of hair away from Barbara's eyes. Holds both her hands.

MOVE IN ON POWELL

as his thoughts burrow deep into Barbara's consciousness.

MOVE IN ON BARBARA

as she faces him, passive, lost.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BARBARA'S SUBCONSCIOUS

This is the gateway to the landscape of Barbara's mind: a small bare room with a bare hardwood floor and one narrow door. Barbara huddles in a corner at the far end, her inner self just as catatonic as her outer, but with the horror more apparent in her eyes. Powell walks toward her, reaching out.

POWELL

Hello, Barbara.

Terrified by the intruder, Barbara gets up, pressing herself against the wall, and slides toward the door. When she gets to it she turns and races away, into darkness.

Powell follows, through the doorway, out onto a sun-baked plateau on a Martian moon, with a huge red planet hanging low overhead. Barbara walks away from Powell over the hard earth, looking back anxiously as though afraid that if she goes faster, he'll go faster.

A door-shaped gap in the universe looms ahead, a portal into another chamber of Barbara's mind. She passes through the mindgate. Powell follows...

...into another bare room, where Craye D'Courtney sits by a window in a wheelchair. Barbara runs to him, falls at his feet, buries her head in his lap, sobbing. Her father rocks her, MURMURING to her.

Powell approaches quietly. Barbara jumps up and runs out the far door, to

EXT. AN OVERGROWN GARDEN

The garden where Maria surprised her on the path. In Barbara's inner world it's a jungle of weeds and vines and blood red flowers. Barbara, running like a wild, scared five year old, scrambles up an oak tree and perches on a high branch, watching Powell with wide, frightened eyes.

He nods to her casually, as though getting her to talk to him was the last thing on his mind. He looks around.

There's a croquet-like game set up on the overgrown lawn. Powell finds a mallet and ball. Tries to hit the ball through a wicket. Misses. Barbara, clinging to her branch, laughs scornfully. Powell looks up at her.

POWELL

Do you want me to leave?

She nods vigorously. He holds up a mallet, offering it to her.

POWELL

Okay. You win, I'm out of here.
I win, you talk to me. Deal?

She considers the offer, then scrambles down the tree with a grin that says "You'll regret this, Powell."

She takes the mallet and brushes past him imperiously to take her first shot. The ball goes neatly through the wicket. She turns to Powell, her eyes daring him to match that shot.

Powell takes the dare. Swings -- and makes it. Barbara frowns and walks to the next wicket.

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT

Mary, in uniform, comes in with Cammie. When she sees Powell she drops her packages and rushes to his side. He's in a trance, staring at Barbara, perfectly still.

MARY

Lincoln...Lincoln!

Mary waves her hands in front of his eyes. Nothing. She sits beside him, watching him uneasily.

BARBARA'S SUBCONSCIOUS - THE GARDEN

Powell and Barbara are locked in mortal combat on the overgrown croquet court. We follow them through the last wickets. Barbara plays with a vengeance, as though her life depended on winning. Powell plays calmly, unsettling her with his nonchalance, his gentlemanly bow as he hands her the mallet for

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

each turn. She gets reckless, losing one turn after another, until Powell finally blasts her ball into the trees and sends his own flying through the last wicket, all in one stroke.

She faces him, flushed, frightened, fiercely beautiful in defeat.

He picks a stalk of orchids off a vine. Bends them into a wreath. Approaches her. She trembles, but doesn't move away. He places the crown of flowers lightly on her head. He's very close to her.

She steps away, but not far.

POWELL

Is this where you grew up?

She nods.

POWELL

It's beautiful. But you're trapped in here, aren't you.

No answer: just a look of panic, as if she might dart away at any moment.

POWELL

I can help you get out.

Still, she doesn't say anything. But she doesn't resist when he takes her arm and leads her up the path, through another mindgate, into

A MAZE OF NARROW CORRIDORS

filled with the softly echoing SOUNDS of Barbara's inner universe: voices, whispers, cries of pain and pleasure. Through narrow side doorways we catch glimpses of unexplored memories. A forest. An ocean. They pass through a chamber where Barbara's father and mother, ELEANOR D'COURTNEY, a handsome aristocratic woman in silk and jewels, are SCREAMING AT EACH OTHER in a Martian dialect of French.

This seems to frighten Barbara. She draws Powell along the farthest edge of the room.

POWELL

Is that your mother?

She nods. They leave the chamber. Powell pauses at a fork, mentally scouting the way. He chooses the left fork. Barbara freezes, sensing where he's going, shaking her head in panic.

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CONTINUED:

POWELL

But this is the only way out.

He takes her hand. She relents, and proceeds in absolute terror, gripping his hand.

He reaches a gilded door. The door from the boudoir into the orchid room. Barbara is beside herself with fear. Slowly, slowly, Lincoln reaches for the orchid petal door handle.

POWELL

You don't have to go in if
you're not ready to. You don't
even have to look.

She doesn't move. He takes this as encouragement and opens the door, just a crack. Light pours out.

Barbara looks inside. The light pours on her face. It's too much for her. She SCREAMS. We've heard that scream before: when her father was murdered. She runs. Her SCREAM ECHOES horribly through the narrow corridors. She rushes through a mindgate. Powell follows.

A bare, rocky mountainside. Twilight. The sky glows firey red. Barbara runs down the slope, sliding on the loose rocks.

Powell follows her. As the slope gets steeper, and Barbara gets farther away from him, he hears a voice calling faintly from a great distance.

MARY'S VOICE

Linc...Lincoln, where are you...

MARY'S APARTMENT

Powell is still facing Barbara, gripping her hands, in a trance. Mary shakes him. Cammie pours water over his head. None of it's any use.

MARY

I can't find him. He's gone too
deep for me.

CAMMIE

Is he all right?

MARY

He won't be, if I don't get
him out of there soon. He could
get stuck in there forever.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAMMIE

And then what?

MARY

God help both of 'em.

INT. THE DEPTHS OF BARBARA'S SOUL

Powell slips and stumbles down the rocky slope, trying to keep his footing. Barbara is far below, barely visible among the boulders.

MARY'S VOICE

Up, Lincoln. Up! Follow my voice!

Lincoln pauses for a moment, drawn by Mary's voice. He looks up the mountain. As he looks back toward Barbara she goes over a ridge and disappears. He follows again, trying to go faster, but loses his footing and slides down the steep slope, out of control. He tries to stop himself, but there's nothing to grab onto. He's heading for a sheer drop.

MARY'S VOICE

You have to come back, Linc...
We tracked down that book Reich
sent Maria...

That does it. With a tremendous effort of will, Powell digs his arms and feet into the rockslide and stops himself. He looks up.

He's under water now, in a deep well, and the surface is far, far above. He's holding his breath, and he can't hold it much longer. He swims up, as hard as he can.

MARY'S APARTMENT

Powell is dead white. Shaking. Eyes glazed. Drenched in sweat. Cammie mops his brow. Mary whispers to him.

MARY

Come on, Linc. Don't leave me
alone with this case.

THE WELL

Powell's lungs are about to burst. He's in agony. With a last surge, he pushes through to the top. Breaks the surface.

MARY'S APARTMENT

He leaps from the chair in the same way he burst from the water, gasping for air. He collapses, conscious again, drawing huge deep breaths. Barbara, still in her chair, is unchanged.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mary falls to Lincoln's side, helps him up.

MARY
Are you all right?

But Powell has no thought for his own condition.

POWELL
Where's it from?

MARY
Where's what from?

POWELL
The book!

All her worry -- and what does she get? As she sighs,

CUT TO:

INT. MASSLER'S OFFICE

Powell slams "Let's Play Party" and a stack of documents onto Massler's desk. Massler faces him, Da hovering at his side.

POWELL
(points to a document)
Here it is. "Let's Play Party", listed in a catalogue of antique volumes bought at auction on June 2nd by Bibliotech, a division of Reich Enterprises. Six months ago. And...
(another document)
The acid that obliterated everything except the Sardines game was applied not more than ten days ago. Lab's sure of it.

Da skims over the documents.

DA
Convincing, if inconclusive. Current chance of prosecution, eighteen point eight percent...Assuming objective motive confirmed.

Powell frowns. Could have been better, could have been worse. Massler waits oh-so-patiently for Da to finish, then calmly produces documents of his own.

MASSLER
You're getting sloppy, Powell. On August 17th, Bibliotech sold that lot of books to Librathon, a member corporation of the D'Courtney cartel.
(MORT)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MASSLER(cont'd)

On September 22nd the entire collection was transferred to D'Courtney's private library at his estate in New France, where Barbara was living at the time.

POWELL

What!? Why wasn't that on file in Corporate Records?

MASSLER

But it was, Powell. We found it there an hour ago. Why don't you go back and look again?

While Powell struggles to contain his anger, Da snuffles over Massler's sheet.

DA

And Miss D'Courtney once again takes the lead, with a 32.5% chance of successful prosecution for the murder of her father.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE - DAY

Powell stalks along, his mood as black as the clouds that hang low over the city. As he goes under the 19th century memorial archway he suddenly senses something. Stops. Looks behind him. Listens. Opens his mind.

The PSYCHIC SYMPHONY of thinking, plotting, hating, fearing rises. Powell can't pick any single voice out of it to justify his alarm. With an effort, he closes his mind. The sound stops.

He keeps going. As he walks out of frame, Augustus Tate walks around from behind the arch, waits until Powell is well ahead of him in the park, and follows.

WITH POWELL

He keeps going. Can't shake off that sense of being followed, but can't pin it down. He stops at a glowing 25th century kiosk where newspapers are automatically dispensed and news bulletins are flashed. He pretends to survey the papers while he looks behind him.

Then he's not pretending. He's looking at the headlines, stunned.

THE HEADLINES

THE SENTINEL

D'COURTNEY SOLARS FALLS TO REICH
Takeover Block Fails

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We PAN to the paper beside the Sentinel:

TIMES OF VENUS - SPACEMAIL EDITION
D'COURTNEY CARTEL CRUMBLES
 Reich Devours Chemicon, Fortrex, Transcon

POWELL

grabs The Sentinel and reads.

TATE

watches from across the park. With Powell's mind occupied, he's able to pierce his mindblock.

FLASH: the page from The Sentinel that Powell's reading, with Powell's inner voice reading along.

POWELL'S VOICE

...as control of the entire satellite falls to Reich Enterprises, the new owner has begun by barring Espers from positions at Level 3 or above, claiming that loss of profits through security leaks have...

There's a blur of images in Powell's brain as Tate searches deeper, stopping at Barbara lying on Mary's couch. The window behind her frames a view of the Reich R. Suddenly, the image vanishes, and Tate is just looking across the park at Powell, who glances around, feeling the air, positive that he's being read. He puts down the paper and hurries on.

Tate follows.

A BALLOON VENDOR holds a day's supply of balloons in the shape of Santa Claus heads. Powell stops and buys them all.

Tate watches, wary -- what is this? -- and follows the balloons into a crowd around a STREET MUSICIAN. He follows the balloons out of the crowd. The balloons are now being carried by a LITTLE BOY...and Powell has vanished.

Tate, cursing to himself, suddenly notices the Reich R over the rooftops. It's almost the same view as from Barbara's window, almost the same distance. As Tate thinks this over,

CUT TO:

INT. REICH'S OFFICE - DAY

Reich stands with a pen and a map of the city in front of him, watching Tate on the V-screen.

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CONTINUED:

TATE

I'm as sure as I can be, Reich!
He's got her somewhere east of
Washington Square, south of Eighth
Street, west of Second Avenue, and
probably north of Canal...

REICH'S HAND

draws a box in red ink on the map, around an area of
narrow, twisting streets. A very small box.

REICH'S VOICE

Not bad at all for starters,
Tate. From there we ought to be
able to narrow it down in no time.

WITH TATE-AT A V-PHONE ON THE STREET

TATE

(panicking)
He could tell I was following him,
Reich. I just know he could.

REICH

So? You're not losing your nerve,
are you?

Reich leans closer to the lens, studying Tate with piercing,
deadly intensity. Tate's face is all twisted up.
He's as close to crying as he'll ever get, and petrified.

REICH

Speak up, Tate. You planning to
bail out?

TATE

No. No. I'm fine. Just fine.

REICH

That's what I like to hear.

The screen goes blank, leaving Tate with a terrible sense
of doom.

WITH REICH

He sits for a moment, brooding. To the air--

REICH

Get me Intelligence.

After a moment, Reich's bright, eager VP INTELLIGENCE comes on.

REICH

There's an employee I'd like you
to help me keep an eye on.

CUT TO:

INT. MARY'S BROWNSTONE - STAIRCASE

Powell trudges upstairs, grim and worried. Opens the door to the living room. What he sees instantly thaws his dark mood.

THE LIVING ROOM

Cammie and Dale are stringing popcorn on the tree. Barbara watches them, following their movements, glowing with interest and curiosity. She's still not talking, still trapped in herself -- but she's on the mend.

DALE

This popcorn's no good. It keeps breaking.

CAMMIE

It's not the popcorn, Dale. It's you.

Powell comes in, smiles at the kids, tousles Dale's hair. Sits quietly across from Barbara. She looks at him with interest, if not recognition. He takes her hands.

POWELL

Hello, Barbara.

MOVING IN ON POWELL

The tension and anxiety drain from his face as he returns to

THE CHAMBERS OF BARBARA'S MIND

Powell stands in the bare room, which is empty.

POWELL

Barbara?

His voice ECHOES. He walks into the next room, which contains fragments of the hospital ward we saw in Maria Beaumont's memory: a few beds, a window. Powell doesn't see Barbara peek out of under the blanket on one of the beds and watch him, grinning mischievously.

He hears the sheets RUSTLING and turns. She lies back and pretends to be wan and ailing. He approaches her. She laughs in his face, jumps up and runs through a doorway.

Powell follows, into the room where Craye and Eleanor D'Courtney are eternally SCREAMING AT EACH OTHER in a strange Martian dialect. Barbara's nowhere to be seen -- but the door of a heavy antique armoire is open just a crack.

Powell tiptoes to the armoire. Opens it. There's Barbara inside, cowering from the screaming, eyes glittering with unreleased tears.

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CONTINUED:

Suddenly, Craye breaks into English.

CRAYE

Don't bring Barbara into this!

ELEANOR

You're the one who took her to visit that trash...Listen to me carefully, Craye. If you ever want to see your daughter again...If you expect one cent of my money...

Powell turns toward Craye and Eleanor. Seizing the advantage, Barbara pushes open the door and dashes away, giggling in triumph. Powell follows her, through another mindgate to

EXT. THE OVERGROWN GARDEN

Barbara runs away across the lawn. Gets to the tree. Starts up the trunk. Powell catches up, turns her around, holds her shoulders.

POWELL

There's no time to play, Barbara. We have to go back to the orchid room.

BARBARA

You go...without me...

POWELL

I can't. I can only see what you see. And that's the only place where I can find the man who killed your--

Barbara puts her hands over her ears like a petulant five year old and WAILS to block Powell out. Powell grips her wrists, pulls them away from her ears.

POWELL

You want him to get away with it? Bring the whole solar system to its knees? Pin the murder on you? But you're not afraid of demolition, are you. Oh no. You're nice and safe in here. Just like you always were. The pretty princess in the garden with the high wall around it. And to hell with what's on the other side.

She yanks her hands away and slaps him. he feels his cheek. This may be happening on the psychic plane, but it hurts. Badly.

He gives up. Shrugs. Walks away, through a mindgate and down a long corridor with the light of consciousness at the other

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

end. In the distance, we can just make out Mary's children trimming the Christmas tree.

Barbara runs up behind him. Grabs his wrist. Pulls him down a side corridor, without a word.

She leads him through a passageway so narrow they have to turn sideways. She's terrified, but keeps going in spite of the fear.

They reach the gilded door. She looks to him. He nods encouragement. She reaches for the orchid handle. Opens it. Steps into the room, fast, before she can change her mind.

Powell, right behind her, looks -- and sees Craye D'Courtney rising up on the silk bed, hiding, from this POV, the face of the intruder--

But it's still too much for Barbara. She CRIES OUT and turns away, burying her face in Powell's chest. The room goes dark. Craye and the killer are dim silhouettes. We hear the DULL EXPLOSION. Grey blood showers onto Powell and Barbara.

BARBARA

Don't make me look.

POWELL

It's the only way out of here.

BARBARA

I can't. I can't.

She tears away from him. Runs for the door that leads down to the picture gallery. Powell looks back quickly and sees the dim figure of the killer clutch his head and ROAR in agony -- but as Barbara goes out the door, the room goes dark.

Powell follows Barbara down the stairs. She trips over the unconscious Guards. Picks something up, a small gold capsule which catches the light.

POWELL

Wait! Let me see that!

Powell comes close. Looks at the broken capsule in her hands. The violet dust that stains her fingers.

Reich's footsteps come pounding down the stairs. Barbara clutches the capsule and breaks away. Runs. Powell follows.

Barbara runs down the picture gallery. A couple of NAKED PARTYGOERS are entwined in the basin of a gurgling fountain. Barbara passes them and hides behind a heavy velvet curtain. Powell hides with her.

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CONTINUED:

POWELL

Is this what happened after--

She nods, fast, and holds up her hand, signalling for him to listen. She peeks out through a part in the curtains. So does Powell.

Augustus Tate is standing in the shadows, checking his watch. Reich runs up. Tate lunges at him, whispering.

TATE

You're clear. There's no peepers in this wing. Was it all just the way I--

REICH

You son of a bitch! There was a daughter!! Why didn't you--

TATE

Quiet! Let me peep it.

He peeps what happened in the orchid room. He recoils in horror, panicking, whining.

TATE

My God. Oh my God. You'll have to kill her too, Reich. Drown her in the fountain...or...or...

REICH

Shut up! Find her. We'll cover the house. Meet back here in ten minutes. Go!

He rushes away. Tate pauses, trembling, sensing the vibrations in the air around him.

Barbara grabs Powell's hand and runs back, into darkness. She finds a staircase. Runs down, into the main entry hall of the mansion. Out the front door. Into the cold night air, freezing in her thin nightgown, never letting go of Powell's hand. The Organgrinder comes at her, leering, menacing. She shrinks back. Runs to the park. Light snow is falling. She drops the capsule.

Powell stops to see where the capsule has fallen. Barbara pulls at him.

BARBARA

We have to get away.

POWELL

(out of breath)

I have to go now...There's so much work to do...so much to prove...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA
Stay with me.

POWELL
I'll be back. I promise.

BARBARA
You're lying. I know you are.

POWELL
No...

He clutches her hand in both of his. Kisses it. But she's been hurt too deeply to trust him. She tears away and runs off into the darkness and falling snow.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SAME - DAY

The real world. Powell's car tears up to the edge of the park. The snow is all gone or turned to black slush. Powell jumps out and goes to the spot where Barbara dropped the gold capsule.

He digs in the slushy snow with his fingers. And there it is: a glint of gold. As he tosses it in the air, catches it and grips it in his fist,

CUT TO:

INT. MASSLER'S OFFICE

Powell lays the crushed gold capsule in front of Da. Massler eyes it coldly.

POWELL
It's something Reich's been developing for years, out of Chemcorp on Venus. Just the thing for those uppity mine-workers. We didn't know he'd perfected it. De Santis?

De Santis, the man from lab, steps forward, lays notes in front of Da.

DE SANTIS
There was enough powder left in the capsule for us to run a breakdown. It's a nucleic variant on chlorodyethyl hexodyne-3. Exposed to oxygen, it explodes in a blue flare that ionizes the rhodopsin in the victim's eyes. Knocks him out cold -- and erases the whole event from his brain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

That's what happened to D'Courtney's guards. Reich snapped it open when they came downstairs to stop him. Then Barbara picked it up on her way out and dropped it in the park, where I found it.

Da studies it all, making little computer snuffling noises as it processes everything.

POWELL

Cough it up, Da. What are my chances of nabbing Reich now?

DA

(begrudgingly)

Forty seven point oh five percent...

DA AND POWELL

...assuming objective motive confirmed.

Encouraged, Powell proceeds with confidence.

POWELL

That shouldn't be far off. I know how Reich found out where D'Courtney was going to be. He had an Esper accomplice. And I know who it was.

(a pause, for maximum effect)

Augustus Tate.

Massler and Da wheel to face Powell in surprise.

MASSLER

What!? Wasn't he president of your guild?

POWELL

Three terms.

MASSLER

If you peeped that--

POWELL

I did peep it. But I'll have an eyewitness to back it up.

MASSLER

Who?

POWELL

Barbara D'Courtney. When I find her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MASSLER

No good, Powell. She's a prime suspect. Da?

DA

That's correct. Only a confession from Tate would be accepted.

MASSLER

And I doubt you'll get it. We seem to have found a motive for Miss D'Courtney.

He whips out a document and lays it in front of Da.

MASSLER

Interplanetary Priority Telecom, two days before the murder. D'Courtney to Willard Booth, his earthside attorney. Made an appointment to talk about his will. About changing it, to be exact. We got this from Booth himself.

POWELL

Booth!? He's as crooked as Tate is!

MASSLER

(ignores him)

Seems the old guy wasn't happy with the crowd his daughter was hanging out with. He wanted some leverage.

Powell lunges at Massler. Massler's Technicians jump up and hold him back, his fist an inch from Massler's jaw. He struggles, fuming and raging. Massler shakes with indignation.

POWELL

It's a fucking lie, and I'll prove it! I'll get my confession from Tate! And I'll see you in a demolition cell, right next door to your friend Reich!

CUT TO:

INT. TATE'S OFFICE - DAY

The dark, plush offices of a major attorney. Tate looks out the window, preoccupied, while his worried SECRETARY'S VOICE drones on the intercom.

SECRETARY'S VOICE

...if we don't get another continuance on the Wilkerson case, I'm afraid we're going to have to settle. And on the Transunited thing--

(a PHONE RINGS)

I've got Lincoln Powell on line two, Mr. Tate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tate jerks around from the window, slams the intercom off with his hand and faces Powell on the V-Phone. Powell's calling from the street.

POWELL
Gus! Glad I found you.

TATE
What is it?

POWELL
I need your help with something.
Think you could meet me at the Guild
in about fifteen minutes?

There's nothing Tate would less rather do, but he hasn't got much choice.

TATE
I'll be there.

EXT. STREET - WITH POWELL - DAY

Powell slips his pocket V-Phone into his cloak and walks. As he passes a news kiosk he grimly notes the bulletin being flashed on the electronic newsboard:

REICH ENTERPRISES CONSOLIDATES FREIGHT ROUTES
BETWEEN JOVIAN MOONS AND MARS CENTRAL...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE ESPER GUILD

Powell guides Tate up the broad marble steps of the entry hall, all done up for Christmas.

POWELL
Here's the bottom line, Tate:
My investigation's up shit creek,
and the killer's got the paddle.

Puritanical Tate stiffens at Powell's language. Powell makes it worse by putting his arm around him in a relaxed, familiar way. Hardly Tate's style.

POWELL
There's no way he or she could have
done the old guy in without a peeper
running interference for him. Or her.

Tate doesn't react in any way, but Powell goes on as though he had expressed deep shock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

I know, I know. It's impossible.
Too terrible to contemplate. But
if we don't contemplate it, who will?

TATE

Get to the point, Powell. What
do you want from me?

POWELL

I'm asking some of the top minds in
the guild to help me sniff the traitor
out. Garen's in. So are Nelson and the
boys up in Internal Affairs. They're
good. But if you kick in--huh! That
sneaky bastard won't stand a chance.

Tate is quaking. Powell guides him, an iron grip on his arm:
he knows just where they're headed.

They pass a classroom filled with FIRST GRADERS and stand at the
door. The TEACHER waves and gives them a smile, then faces the
class and leads them in the Esper Pledge, hands over their hearts.

CHILDREN

Whatsoever mind I enter, there will
I go for the benefit of Man...

Tate starts to move on, but Powell grips his arm even tighter.
He is making Tate watch this. Then he has an even better idea.
He puts his hand over his heart and joins in.

POWELL AND CHILDREN

...refraining from all wrong-doing and
corruption, from all intent to harm
or to deceive...

He glances at Tate. What can Tate do? He joins in.

TATE, POWELL AND CHILDREN

...I will give no deadly thought to
any, though it be asked of me. What-
soever thoughts I see or hear in the mind
of man which ought not to be made known,
I will keep silence thereon, counting
such things to be as sacred secrets.

Tate, already fear-stricken, is devastated by shame. The kids
sit down and get out their books and Tate and Powell move
on. We MOVE WITH THEM down the corridor.

POWELL

Gives me the chills every time I
hear it...You know, I really pity
the guy, whoever he is.

CONTINUED:

TATE
(trying to
seem calm)
Oh? Why's that?

POWELL
Imagine being cut off from all this.
Afraid to open your mind to the
only people who can ever really under-
stand you. Exiled to the world of
talking out loud. Forever.
(shakes his head)
I guess even Demolition isn't much
of a punishment, compared to that...
So, can I count on you, Gus?

TATE
Yes...Of course you can...Look, can
we talk later? I've got to get back
to the office...

He tears free of Powell's grip, practically falling over a
chair as he backs away, then hurries down the corridor.

Powell watches him go, not at all certain that this tactic
is going to work.

CUT TO:

INT. TATE'S PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

The window Reich crashed through is still broken. Tate sits
at the table in near darkness, the freezing wind whistling
through the room, polishing off a decanter of whiskey.

He reaches for the V-Phone. Begins to make a call. Switches
it off. Begins again. Switches it off. And finally makes his
call.

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Powell keeps a lonely vigil beside the sleeping Barbara. The
only light comes from the blinking lights on the Christmas
tree. His pocket phone rings. He takes it out. He feels a grim
satisfaction, but no particular relief, when he sees who's on
the little screen.

POWELL
Hello, Gus.

TATE
Powell. We have to talk..I've--
I've got some information for you.

INT. REICH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Reich sits in Charlemagne's chair, leaning forward, listening to Tate's call to Powell.

TATE'S VOICE

There's a cafe at the corner of Tenth and Spring. I think it's called Second Planet. Could you meet me there in an hour?

TATE'S APARTMENT

He downs the last of the whiskey.

TATE

(cont'd)

And come alone, all right?
Alone! Or I don't talk.

CUT TO:

INT. SECOND PLANET - NIGHT

Maybe sixty years ago, when the spicy roots and tubers of Venus were the latest ethnic food craze, this was a cheerful place, but the night of December 22nd 2355 finds it sullen and smoky, dim and forgotten. The VENUSIAN BARTENDER, a brute of a creature, sets down two drinks between Augustus Tate and Lincoln Powell, his only customers, and removes the empties. Tate downs his drink in a gulp. Powell gestures for another round. Tate is drunk, whining, desperate.

TATE

It wasn't my fault. You have to see that. That's why I asked you here. So I could tell you the truth before you heard the lies.

POWELL

I'm all ears, Gus.

TATE

When a sensitive telepathic brain gets tangled up with a psycopath like Reich, the G-waves fall into the defective pattern. They hybrid...

POWELL

Save the Neurology 101. How did it start? He didn't offer you money?

That's one question Tate isn't going to answer. He forges on.

TATE

He came to me with a nightmare. About a man with no face. It was eating him alive. Killing him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

Why'd he come to you? You're not a shrink.

TATE

No. But I'm the best peeper in the city. Better than you, on a good day. And Reich always gets the best.

POWELL

When was this?

TATE

On the tenth.

POWELL

Nine days before D'Courtney's trip to earth. Enough time for you to peep everything you needed out of Maria. Enough time to plan every step of the--

TATE

I couldn't help it! I was in too deep. But I'm sane now. I'm out of it. Tell that to the police, Lincoln. They'll believe you. They like you. Everybody likes you. I'll give you everything you need. I'll give you the rope to hang Reich. But you have to protect me.

POWELL

I've had the rope for two days. All I need now is a tree to hang it on. The motive, Tate. Why did he do it? Do you know?

But Powell has shown his hand just a little too clearly. Suddenly on guard, Tate lowers the glass from his lips and studies Powell shrewdly.

TATE

Oh y s. I know. And believe me, it's just what you're looking for. But first you have to promise that you'll keep me out of it.

POWELL

I'm just a cop on the beat, Gus. I don't own the courts. Why don't you go straight to your friend Reich? Wasn't protection part of the deal?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TATE

Him? A friend?

(spits in disgust)

You know, Powell, I could go down
happy, knowing he was going down
with me.

Another drink lands on the table. Tate is about to drink...
but hits it away, suddenly dead sober as he begins his
confession.

TATE

The day before he came to me, Reich
sent D'Courtney an Interplan Telecom--

At that moment, Powell's restless radar picks up an approaching
menace. A second later, so does Tate's. They jump up and
turn toward the door.

A car SCREECHES by. An object comes crashing through the grimy
window and lands on the floor. Tate watches it in horror: a
disk the size of an LP, which spins, sending out sharp sparks
of light and a LOW WHINE, rising gradually in pitch and volume.

POWELL

Get off the ground.

He jumps on the counter. Tate's frozen. Can't take his eyes
off the terrible thing. The whole room starts to VIBRATE.

TATE

What...what is it?

POWELL

Harmonic ray. It works through the
floor. Get up here, Tate!

A glass table near the disk VIBRATES and EXPLODES into fragments.
Shards strike Powell and Tate. Tate scrambles for the bar. Powell
pulls him up. More objects in the room start to vibrate. The
Bartender grabs handfuls of cash, stuffs them into his pouches.
A half dozen chairs EXPLODE into splinters. The disk spins
faster and faster. The WHINE gets louder and louder. Powell
shouts to the Bartender.

POWELL

Get up here!

The Bartender GROWLS at him and starts to run out of the bar
with the cash. Halfway to the door he freezes, shaking, and
explodes like a volcano of blood and bone. Tate just about
loses it...but disgust is overtaken by panic as the bar itself
starts to vibrate. Powell looks up: there's a pipe, two feet up.

POWELL

Grab the pipe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tate is too scared to jump. Powell grabs him and throws him up. He catches the pipe, barely. Just as Powell leaps up and grabs the pipe, the metal countertop bursts into smithereens which cut into Powell's body and face. But the pain is forgotten as he senses something terrible in Tate's mind.

POWELL

Don't do it, Tate. Don't let go.

TATE

It'd be fast. Faster than demolition.

POWELL

We have to beat Reich.

TATE

We can't. No one can. He's already won.

POWELL

Gus! NOOOO!

ON TATE'S HANDS

Opening wide. Releasing the pipe.

THE SCENE

Tate falls out of frame. There's a THUD as he hits the floor, followed by the awful crunch of exploding flesh and bones.

Powell looks down and sees the remains.

The harmonic ray reaches its screaming peak and then winds down, gradually muttering into silence. We hear a vehicle pull up outside. FOOTSTEPS. The door opens a slit. A razor of light shines in and searches the floor. Powell pulls his legs up, at the limits of his endurance. The light finds Tate's and the Bartender's remains: a red and grey puddle of flesh, blood and bones. The lights blink out. The door closes. FOOTSTEPS. The car screeches away.

CUT TO:

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Barbara sits by the window, stamping out cookies with a star-shaped cookie cutter. Dale, Cammie and Mary are in the kitchen, in hysterics as they try to separate eggs for a cake.

Powell staggers in, bloody, cut-up, out of breath. Barbara looks up at him and doesn't look away. He falls into the chair

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

across from Barbara and grips her hands. Just as Mary notices that Lincoln's in the living room, we

DISSOLVE TO:

BARBARA'S INNER WORLD - THE BARE ROOM

There's a window in the room now, with a view of the Reich Tower. Barbara sits at the window, cutting cookies. Powell comes in. She looks up. Knocks over the cookies as she leaps up, rushes to him and stops just short of throwing her arms around him. She stands there, awkward, a little embarrassed.

BARBARA

You came back.

POWELL

I said I would.

BARBARA

People say lots of things.

POWELL

It's good to see you.

She sees his wounds and goes to him, horrified, pulling his shirt away from the bloody lacerations.

BARBARA

God, look at you! What have you been through?

She tears cloth off her dress to make bandages, which she wraps around a deep wound on his arm.

Powell wants to sink into her arms, but he makes himself face the business at hand.

POWELL

We're running out of time. Reich may already know where you are. Massler's just about got you tried and convicted.

Barbara, dressing his wounds, flushed, fevered, ignores him.

BARBARA

You need a rest, Captain.

POWELL

Listen...

BARBARA

(interrupting)

Have you ever been to the Islands of Dawn? On the far side of Callisto?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL
On a cop's salary?

BARBARA
I used to go there every summer.

There's a mindgate behind her now, a frame of infinite blue sky. She walks backward toward it, beckoning, playing the siren.

POWELL
No... Listen...

When she's through the mindgate, she turns away, gives Powell one mocking look over her shoulder, and runs off into the blue. Powell follows.

EXT. THE ISLANDS OF DAWN

A paradise of pure elements on a far away planet: snow white sand, clear aquamarine water, a perfect cobalt sky...and no Barbara, until she surfaces a few yards off shore, throwing her hair away from her face and beckoning with her arm.

What can Powell do? His shoulders drop, he tilts his face to the lavender sun, the tension drains out of him. He GROANS in reluctant surrender. Throws off his shoes. Runs down the beach, tearing off his bloody clothes, and dives into the water.

UNDERWATER

On this island-in-the-mind the water is breathable, with no bubbles. Barbara and Powell chase each other like dolphins. Powell lets go like a stockbroker on his first day in Maui.

INT. MARY'S LIVING ROOM

Powell is deep in a trance. White. Sweating. Mary strokes his head.

UNDERWATER

As Barbara leads Powell deeper into the blue water, Mary's voice comes to him faintly.

MARY
Don't go too far, Powell...

He doesn't want to hear it. But he hears it. He remembers the purpose Barbara is so eager to make him forget. He takes her hand. She sees the change in his expression and looks worried. But she follows as he leads her upward, directly into a beam

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

of sunlight. The sun WHITES OUT THE SCREEN.

When the white fades, Powell and Barbara are floating down, through air, not water. They land lightly on the floor of the boudoir in the orchid suite in Maria Beaumont's house.

Powell starts to lead Barbara toward the door to the murder room. Barbara holds him back.

BARBARA

No. Not yet. I need more time.

POWELL

There is no more time.

She falls against his chest.

BARBARA

Yes there is. In here there is.
There's forever.

POWELL

Stay in here much longer, and it
will be forever.

She kisses him. The room is getting physically hotter.

BARBARA

Would that be so terrible?

POWELL

We're in danger. Both of us.

BARBARA

No we're not. There's nothing
anyone can ever do to us. Not
in here.

POWELL

Except kill us. That's real, even
in here.

BARBARA

Is it? Lots of people think we'd
still be here. The part of us that
counts. How can you be sure that
isn't true?

POWELL

I'm not sure of anything.

As they kiss more and more passionately, everything in the room is haloed in heat and desire.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA

Give me one good reason why we
should ever go back.

He starts to talk. She silences him with a kiss.

BARBARA

A reason you really, truly believe
in, Lincoln Powell.

He doesn't have a reason. All his reasons have melted in the
flames.

MARY'S VOICE

Powell...POWELL!!

But he ignores it. Barbara is all around him. Pulling him
back onto the bed. In her psyche, at least, Barbara is a
virgin. She gasps in pain and wonder as he enters her, then
pulls him in, deeper, closer, clinging to him, clutching him.

MARY'S LIVING ROOM

Powell is near the edge, his eyes glazed, trembling, drenched
in sweat, his hands gripping Barbara's.

CLOSE ON THEIR HANDS

Barbara's nails dig into Powell's palms, drawing blood.

THE SCENE

MARY

Hold my hand, Cammie. Don't let go.

She grips her daughter's hand, like an anchor, as she
concentrates on Powell. She shakes from the effort of going
deeper into the mind than she's ever gone before. Then, suddenly,
we can tell that she has seen what's going on in the orchid
boudoir. She gasps and jumps back. Shock gives way to pain.

CAMMIE

What is it, Mom?

Mary can't answer. She's working too hard to fight back the tears.

INT. THE ORCHID BEDROOM

Sex without the bounds and limitations of subconscious
constraints, the obstacles of conscious communication. Sex
that's within the subconscious, at the deepest levels of
Powell's and Barbara's beings. They communicate directly
from soul to soul, tapping the deepest sources of pleasure and
abandon.

For both of them, a blinding climax.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The flames in the room fade. It is very quiet. Barbara lies in Powell's arms, a faint smile lighting up her face.

And then she hears it. Voices, coming faintly from the other room. Reich and D'Courtney. D'Courtney's voice is weak, faltering.

REICH'S VOICE

Why aren't you down at the party,
D'Courtney? Not feeling up to it?

D'COURTNEY'S VOICE

Ben...Ben Reich...

Powell springs up, listening. He reaches out to Barbara, but she's so lost in the memory she's reliving that she doesn't know he's there. She gets out of bed.

REICH'S VOICE

You've been at my throat since the
day I started out. There was room for
both of us, but you wanted my blood.

Barbara, worried, pulls on a translucent silk robe. The one she was wearing the night of the murder.

D'COURTNEY'S VOICE

No...No, Ben...

REICH'S VOICE

Don't Ben me! I'm no friend of yours.

Barbara puts on one gold slipper with tiny emeralds over the toe.

REICH'S VOICE(cont'd)

It's too late for that. You had your
chance a week ago.

(in a frenzy)

Do you know what that took? Ben
Reich, offering merger!? My mother
would spit on me if she were alive.
And you dared to refuse me!!!

Barbara looks up, increasingly concerned. She drops the second gold slipper.

D'COURTNEY'S VOICE

But...I...I...accept...

REICH'S VOICE

Too late, D'Courtney.

D'COURTNEY'S VOICE

No...already...mis...take...

Barbara jumps up, knocking over a bottle of perfume. Runs down the narrow corridor. Powell follows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

D'COURTNEY'S VOICE

Barbara! Help!!

Barbara throws open the door. Reich looks up, straight into her eyes. In his hands is an ancient weapon, a 20th century revolver. Barbara SCREAMS. Reich grabs D'Courtney, jams the pistol into his mouth. Shoots. Blood sprays all over Barbara and the mirror behind her. She screams and screams, but doesn't look away.

She falls beside her father. Holds his hand, sobbing. At last, she allows the loss to flood her heart.

BARBARA

Oh God. Oh God. I love you, Daddy.
Please don't be dead. Please come
back.

The room goes dark. Powell disappears. Everything is in shadow except Barbara and her father, in a pool of light. Powell kneels beside her, at the edge of the light, one hand resting gently on her back. When the first wave of tears has subsided, she turns to Powell and goes into his arms.

BARBARA

I should have been with him.

POWELL

There was nothing you could do.
And you've helped me catch the man
who did it. I've got him now.

Gradually, the orchid room dissolves and Barbara and Powell are in Mary's living room, in the same position, on their knees, arms around each other, Barbara still sobbing. Cammie and Dale put their hands on Barbara's shoulders, silently comforting her.

Mary stands to the side. But bitterness is not in her nature. Moved by Barbara's grief, she joins her children and kneels beside her, lending her silent support.

CUT TO:

INT. MASSLER'S OFFICE

Powell strides up to Massler's desk, De Santis and his staff behind him. Massler and Da watch coldly while he strikes a match on the desk and lights a cigar. Powell has victory in his grasp and is savoring every second.

MASSLER

What are you celebrating?

POWELL

The motive, Massler. Carved in
stone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He blows smoke in Da's electronic eyes. Da HISSES and blinks.

POWELL

We knew from the beginning that D'Courtney had Reich up against a wall financially. We knew Reich was fighting him in every market, and losing. But we didn't know...until now...that ten days before the murder, Reich offered D'Courtney a merger, and that D'Courtney refused. Leaving Reich few alternatives.

Massler takes this very badly.

MASSLER

Where did you get this, Powell?

POWELL

I followed a tip and subpoenaed D'Courtney's ComLog for the last month. Just came down from Mars half an hour ago.

(lays out document)

December 5th, 10 A.M. EST, Earthtime. 220 Central Syrtis, Marstime. Reich wired this message to D'Courtney... And this one's his reply.

DA'S POV - THE DOCUMENTS

Written in code: YYJ TTE RRC UUF AAL QQB

D'Courtney's answer: WWH

THE ROOM

MASSLER

What is this gibberish?

POWELL

Interplan ExecuCode. The language the big guys talk in when they've got something really important to say. A new edition goes out every day to the heads of the twenty nine Member Corporations of the TriPlanet Ecozone.

MASSLER

And you've seen the key?

POWELL

Didn't need to. I know what it says. But don't worry. A friend over at GCO Combine is sending up a copy

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL(cont'd)
 of the December 5th edition of
 the code. We ought to have it...
 (checks watch)
 Any second now.
 (folds his arms,
 turns to Da)
 While we're waiting, Da...Assuming
 my merger evidence is confirmed,
 what do you think?

Da hisses, snuffles, looks it all over. Grumbles. Hesitates.
 Finally:

DA
 Accepting assumption, the probability
 of a successful prosecution of Ben
 Reich is eighty nine point eight percent.

Powell's staff CHEERS. De Santis claps him on the back.

DE SANTIS
 Eighty nine. Jesus! We haven't broken
 eighty in five years.

Massler glowers, and doesn't look any happier when a MESSENGER
 comes running in, out of breath, and hands a slim book to Powell.

POWELL
 Thanks.

He steps up to Da. Unseals the book. Finds the table with
 the key. Begins to translate the communication.

POWELL
 Reich cabled YYJ suggest TTE merger...

Powell looks up and grins at Massler, then goes on.

POWELL
 ...RRC both our UUF interests AAL
equal QOB partnership.

He looks up again, flushed, excited, on the edge of triumph.
 Massler is not looking great.

POWELL
 And D'Courtney answered WWH...
 Accept.

Beat. Silence. Powell does the take of the century.

POWELL
 Accept?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Massler leaps for the book.

MASSLER

That's it! Buried by your own evidence, Powell! D'Courtney accepted! How do you like that? Reich had every reason in the world to keep him alive! You're screwed, Powell! Washed out!

He bustles around, addressing his Technicians, as though Powell didn't exist.

MASSLER

We've wasted enough time on this hogwash. Start preparing the case against Barbara D'Courtney. I want it ready for trial by the first of the year. Obviously, Barbara knew about this and didn't want her father letting someone else get their hands on half her inheritance.

Powell stands in stunned silence, baffled, studying the telegram and the code book, trying to figure this out. Massler looks right at him when he says--

MASSLER

I'd particularly like to explore the connection between the suspect and Captain Powell.

ON POWELL

As he begins to absorb the fact that it's all over: that he has lost.

CUT TO:

INT. REICH'S OFFICE - EVENING

On one screen is Reich's VP Intelligence. On another is a still photo of a young Cop we've seen at police HQ. Reich listens and watches, brooding.

VP INTELLIGENCE

I've tracked down two more friends of Powell's in the area you've defined. One is Sergeant Leonard Mogel. Worked with Powell on the Curley case. Lives at 49 Astor Place. The other is Lieutenant Mary Noyes...

The still photo changes to a shot of Mary in uniform. Reich sits up, tense, alert: that's the cop who was with Powell at Chooka's.

VP INTELLIGENCE

She's worked closely with Powell for fifteen years. People say she's been carrying some kind of torch for him since her husband died, five years back.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VP INTELLIGENCE (cont'd)
Maybe even longer. She lives at 12
Charlton Street. Well within the area
defined.

REICH

Thanks. You've done a good job.

AS the VP Intelligence is just about to say something suitably
humble, Reich cuts him off. He grabs his map of the city.

ON THE MAP

His fingers locate Charlton Street, inside the box he drew
in red ink.

CUT TO:

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - NIGHT

The world is doing its last minute Christmas Eve shopping.
Powell stalks along in a black rage. Suddenly, an ad jingle blaring
brightly out of a drugstore stops him:

CHORUS OF GIRLS

Nervous? Tired? Anxious? Wired?
Just got fired?....Karminex!

That's the last straw. Powell pounds his fist out sideways against
a wall. Which hurts like hell. He falls against a V-Phone kiosk,
nursing his hand. In pain, he picks up the phone and dials.

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT

Christmas Eve. Barbara and the kids trim the tree while Mary sets
up dinner. Barbara hangs ornaments with a sense of wonder, her face
open and glowing, as if this were her first Christmas ever. She
hasn't completely recovered, but if she's still frozen in a kind
of arrested childhood, at least it's a happy one. The phone rings.
Mary, setting down a hot platter, answers it.

MARY

Seasons Greetings, Captain Powell.

EXT. THE V-PHONE KIOSK - WITH POWELL

He's warmed by the vision of domestic happiness he sees on the
little screen -- table, lights, candles, dinner on the table. The
wave of comfort is so powerful that he can't talk for a moment.

POWELL

Save me a drumstick. I'm on my way.

IN MARY'S APARTMENT

Barbara hangs a glass butterfly on a branch of the tree and

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

watches it turn, catching the flashing colored lights strung in the tree, hypnotized.

CAMMIE

My Dad got us that in China.

Pain clouds Barbara's face at this mention of fathers, but only for a second. Dale pulls the last ornament from the box: the star. He reaches up to put it on, but he isn't quite tall enough.

MARY

Next year.

DALE

That's what you said last year.

CAMMIE

(to Barbara)

You put it up.

Dale hands Barbara the star. Barbara reaches way up and puts it in place on top of the tree. They all stand back to look at the finished tree. Barbara hums to herself, a faltering version of OH TANNENBAUM. No words, just the melody. This is the closest she's gotten to talking. The kids and Mary exchange a look and sing.

CAMMIE, DALE AND MARY

Oh Tannenbaum, Oh Tannenbaum,
How lovely are thy branches...

As the others sing, Mary suddenly trails off, picking up a negative vibration nearby. Dale and Cammie catch this and stop singing.

CAMMIE

What's wrong?

MARY

Dale, you get Barbara into the den. Block the door if you can. Cammie, you bolt the back door.

A CAR PULLS UP downstairs. Dale pulls Barbara into the adjoining den and closes the door. Cammie rushes out through the kitchen. Mary hits the lights. The apartment goes dark, except for the candles on the tree and the flashing colored lights.

The door downstairs opens. There are FOOTSTEPS on the stairs. Coming closer. And closer. Mary takes out her shattergun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There's the sound of a hand testing the doorknob. Which is locked.

There's a quick, light, very polite knock.

A moment of silence, then more sounds at the doorknob. A twang. A metallic rasping. A small EXPLOSION. The lock blows open. Reich steps in, to see Mary's gun pointed at his heart. His own neuron scrambler is at his side.

REICH

Is that any way to say
Merry Christmas?

MARY

I don't want to hurt you, Reich. I
want you safe and sound for demolition.

IN THE DEN

While Dale tries to wedge a chair under the doorknob, taking agonizing care not to make any noise, Barbara watches, more frightened by Dale's urgency than by the peril outside.

REICH'S VOICE

Where is she?

MARY'S VOICE

I don't know.

Dale slips. The chair hits the door.

IN THE LIVING ROOM

Reich turns toward the sound.

REICH

Do I hear a little beastie crawling
in the woodwork?

He starts slowly toward the door to the den, smiling at Mary, daring her to shoot. She grips her gun but doesn't fire. He reaches for the door handle. Still Mary doesn't fire.

At that moment, Cammie comes in from the kitchen, hurling a big glass pot. Reich shields with his arm. The glass shatters on his face, but the pain doesn't slow him down. He fires at Cammie. The invisible rays hit her and she falls backwards against the kitchen wall, paralyzed.

In the same instant, Mary fires at Reich. The shatter ray blows the gun out of his hand and stuns his arm, but he weathers it. She throws herself at him with the blind fury of an avenging mother bear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They wrestle on the ground. He grabs for her shattergun. It goes off, blowing up a lamp.

IN THE DEN

Dale, crying from fear and frustration, tries to blockade the door with the chair. We hear the battle raging outside, furniture exploding, cries, crashes.

And then silence.

Quick footsteps. Reich's hand on the door. Dale frantically reinforces his blockade with a lampstand. Reich throws his weight against the door again, and again. The lock snaps, but the chair holds, groaning under the pressure. Dale digs his feet into the rug and presses against the chair with all his eight year old might. It's hopeless. The back of the chair snaps. The door flies open, breaking off its hinges, splintering the chair and throwing Dale to the ground, flattening him.

Reich stands in the doorway. Dust settles on the wreckage of the room behind him. Barbara jumps to her feet and backs away. Reich comes toward her. Just like he did in the orchid suite. Gun in hand.

REICH

There isn't a thing to be afraid of. You'll be real comfortable at my place. Until Massler's got the music all ready for you to face.

She backs away. He comes toward her. She edges sideways. They circle each other, Reich moving as carefully as if Barbara were armed. She gets between him and the door. Gropes behind herself. Finds the edge of the door. Backs out into

THE LIVING ROOM

But Reich isn't going to let her get away. He leaps to her, grabs her arm.

REICH

How much did you tell Powell?
What did he know that he didn't tell Massler?

She pulls away, withdrawing back into herself, becoming again the catatonic child.

REICH

I want an answer! Did you tell anyone else?

He twists her around, hurting her. She SCREAMS. He grips her neck. She struggles, choking, losing her strength.

CONTINUED:

There are RUNNING FOOTSTEPS on the stairs. Reich jerks around, throwing Barbara down. Crouches. Whips the scrambler up under his left elbow.

It's Powell, and he's too fast for Reich. He springs just as Reich fires. The invisible beam misses. He lands on top of Reich. They crash over a wrecked table. Reich gets on top of Powell. Grabs a broken table leg. Swings it at Powell's head. Powell pushes him off, punches him in the jaw.

Reich's out, sprawled on the floor.

Now Powell can look around. The drifting dust changes colors as the Christmas lights flash. A music box has gone off in the fracas, playing NOEL NOEL. Barbara huddles in a corner, watching him, her eyes wide and blank. He moves from body to body.

In the den, he heaves the door off of Dale, who's badly hurt, but alive. Dale looks at Powell, his eyes widening in recognition and relief, then loses consciousness.

Powell leaves him and goes to Cammie. He feels her pulse, listens to her breath. The paralyzing ray is slowly wearing off. It's as though she's defrosting. She reaches up to Powell stiffly. As he helps her up, he hears a GROAN, and turns to see Mary, half hidden in the wreckage. Her eyes are open. He helps Cammie to her side.

He holds his friend, his partner. She's dying, and they all know it. Cammie takes her hand.

CAMMIE

Mom...

POWELL

I love you, Mary.

MARY

Now you tell me.
(spasm of pain)
Dale...

POWELL

He's all right.

Peace comes to her with this news.

MARY

Make sure he gets to bed by eight thirty. He gets colds when he doesn't sleep enough. Except on weekends, he's allowed to--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Those are her last words. She slumps in Powell's arms. He holds her tight for a moment, then lays her down and jumps to the phone. Cammie stays by her mother's side, holding her, weeping.

INT. POLICE HQ

A DESK OFFICER answers a call. Powell comes on the screen.

POWELL

I've got an emergency. I need
a medic squad at--

OFFICER

Could you hold a second, Captain?

He puts Powell on hold. The screen goes black. He waves urgently across the room to Massler, who's just going into his office. Massler comes quickly and stands to the side, peering over the desk officer's shoulder as he switches the phone back on. There's Powell, and the wreckage...and Barbara, cowering behind him. Powell, furious at the delay, doesn't see Massler.

POWELL

What the hell was that for? I've got
two injured children here. Get an
emergency unit to 12 Charlton Street.
Now.

The screen goes black. Massler looks like he just won the lottery.

IN MARY'S LIVING ROOM

Powell kneels beside Barbara, looks into her eyes, trying to find the light. There is none. She has retreated to the darkness. His work has been undone.

Behind him, Reich stirs. Grips the chair leg. Lunges--

Powell spins around and tackles him, ROARING. Gets his hands around his neck.

POWELL

You shit! You fucking bastard!

He's very close to killing him...but a sudden thought comes to him, and we FLASH to his subconscious, to the classroom at the Esper Guild, the rows of shining seven-year-old faces reciting the Pledge.

CHILDREN

...to harm or to deceive. I will
give no deadly thought to any,
though it be asked of me...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

For a moment there's a struggle in his soul between the force of vengeance and the power of the Esper pledge...and then Powell takes his hands off Reich's neck, still pinning him down.

POWELL

Why did you kill him, Reich? Why?
He accepted your merger. You could
have out-foxed him and gotten your claws
on the whole thing in a year.

REICH

(defensive panic)
No. WWH. Reject. He turned me down.

POWELL

What are you saying? You want the
evidence to go against you?

Reich struggles, groaning, kicking. Powell strengthens his grip.

POWELL

Shut up! I can't peep you when
you're raving like that.

He holds Reich's stare. Peeps him. Nothing, just that jingle.

CHORUS OF GIRLS

...Pressure? Tension? Apprehension?
Need we mention--Karminex!
Nervous? Tired? Anxious? Wired?...

Powell keeps fighting against the mindblock, sweat pouring down his face. And this time, fueled by his rage and grief, he does it.

The jingle fades and we FLASH to Reich's subconscious.
Powell's mind bores through a cascade of images, the stuff of ultrahigh finance: business graphs, printouts, numbers, money. A few glimpses of Maria's party. At last, Powell gets to what he wants:

INT. REICH'S OFFICE - DAY

Reich paces. Powell stands near the desk, unnoticed.

SECRETARY'S VOICE

Mr. Reich, the-reply to your telecom
is coming in from Mars.

REICH

Seal the line. Seal all the lines.

He grabs his slim, black ExecuCode book from the desk, glances quickly at the code key, tosses it back on the desk and turns to the screen just as the answer flashes in big letters:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARSTIME 2828 CENTRAL SYRTIS
C. D'COURTNEY TO B. REICH
REPLY: WWH

REICH
(in a rage)
Reject? I'll reject you, D'Courtney!

He throws a crystal ashtray at the screen, which shatters. Powell glances at the code book on the desk. Holds it out to Reich.

POWELL
But Reich. Look. WWH means accept.

Reich backs away, toward the window. Powell comes toward him, maintaining a maddening calm, showing him the clearly printed code key.

POWELL
You know it does, Reich. Why do you need to pretend to yourself that you killed D'Courtney for money? Why can't you face the real reason?

REICH
Get away from me.

POWELL
What is the real reason, Reich?
You can't hide it from me now. I've gotten past your chorus line.

Reich would rather die than face Powell's question. He turns and runs straight through the glass wall.

The view of the skyline shatters. On the other side of the window is a rundown working class town on another planet. Powell chases Reich through the grey streets.

Reich runs to the wooden gate in the overgrown wall. Tears it open, runs inside, slams the gate behind him.

Powell runs up to the gate and tries to get it open, straining and pulling. He can't do it. The door won't budge. We dissolve back to

MARY'S APARTMENT

Powell is still pinning Reich to the ground, but the effort of trying to get through the wall has almost undone him. For the first time, Lincoln Powell has found a mindgate he can't unlock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

You're not even blocking, are you.
You're as open as you can get. How
can I expect to find the answer, if
you don't even know it?

There are SIRENS on the street. Cars pull up downstairs. We hear voices, footsteps, doors opening. Reich throws the weakened Powell off and jumps up, backs toward the kitchen like a cornered animal.

POWELL

I take it you haven't heard the news.

REICH

What news?

POWELL

You're cleared, Reich. As of an hour ago. No motive, no conviction. We've closed your file.

There are footsteps on the stairs. Reich backs away.

POWELL

Of course I could try to arrest you now. For what you did tonight. But of course you were just strolling down Charlton Street, heard a ruckus, and went inside to see what happened. And you'll have twenty witnesses to prove it.

REICH

If this is another one of your filthy peeper tricks...

POWELL

It'll probably make the seven o'clock Sentinel. If you hurry, you can grab one before it sells out. You're hot copy, you know.

Reich turns and runs out the back, just as the front door opens and MEDICS rush in and tend to the injured. Powell helps them cover Mary. But there's no time for mourning. He gets to work, helping the medics lift Dale out of the debris.

EXT. THE CITY - NIGHT

Reich gets down the fire escape, runs through the alley to the next street.

There's a kiosk. Copies of the seven o'clock Sentinel are shooting out of a slot into a pile. Reich grabs one.

THE HEADLINE - CLOSE

REICH CLEARED IN D'COURTNEY KILLING
-Police Hunt For Missing Heiress-

A photo of Barbara, and:

HAVE YOU SEEN THIS GIRL?

REICH

drops the paper and walks away, trying to absorb the shock. He walks faster, then runs, laughing, weak with relief, the enormity of his triumph dawning on him.

CUT TO:

INT. MARY'S APARTMENT

Powell helps the medics put Dale and Cammie on the stretcher. When he's done all he can, Powell turns to Barbara. Looks into her distant, frightened eyes.

POWELL

We've got to go now. I can't
let the police get hold of you.

She edges away. He reaches out. Waits. She takes his hand. Lets him help her up. He leads her out the door.

They start down the stairs -- and come face to face with Massler and a few BIG COPS, on their way up. Powell freezes, holding Barbara close. Massler steps forward.

MASSLER

You're under arrest, Miss D'Courtney.
You've been charged with the murder
of your father.

Two of the Big Cops come forward. Powell pulls Barbara behind him. Gripping her arm, he backs up the stairs, blocking the cops. They come at him. He hits one cop. The cop hits back, a whole lot harder. Powell falls to the side, against the wall, holding his jaw.

The cops handcuff Barbara. Massler turns to Powell.

MASSLER

You have a choice, Powell. You can
come with me now and keep the lady
company on the way uptown, or you
can wait until I get a warrant for
your arrest on obstruction of justice
and harboring a fugitive. Which ought
to be by about eight A.M.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

She's sick. She needs help.

MASSLER

We've got plenty of doctors at headquarters. We've even got a couple of peepers.

As they lead her away, she looks back, bewildered, confused. Then the guards pull her roughly around and take her down the stairs. Powell rushes upstairs.

CUT TO:

INT. THE ESPER GUILD - NIGHT

Outside T'Sung H'sai's office, the OFFICER WORKERS are having their Christmas party. Punch, decorations, music. No talking, but lots of telepathic jokes and laughter and some singing. The PHONE RINGS AND RINGS. Finally, Secretary #1 answers. Powell comes on, looking pretty awful.

SECRETARY

Lincoln Powell! Are you having a rough day?

POWELL

I've had better.

SECRETARY

Well come on over while there's still some--

POWELL

(interrupting)

Listen. I want to call a meeting of the Guild Council. Tonight.

SECRETARY

On Christmas Eve? God, Lincoln. I mean, maybe I could rope a few stragglers in here by Saturday, but--

IN MARY'S APARTMENT - CLOSE ON POWELL

Looking into the phone but not seeing anything. Possessed.

POWELL

No. Tonight. It has to be tonight.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE CITY - NIGHT

Reich is still running through the streets, now, we feel, with a destination. He stops at a FLORIST'S cart. Tears bills out of his pockets. Flings them down and grabs an armful of roses. Runs.

He reaches an old stone church. The gate to the cemetery is locked. He pulls himself up, gets over the fence, tearing his jacket and gashing his arm on the iron spikes. But he barely feels it. He gathers up the roses he has dropped. Runs through the graves to a darkened mausoleum. Reaches into his shirt. Takes out a silver key on a chain.

He finds a lock in the marble wall of the mausoleum. Turns it. The immense Roman tomb is flooded in light. Gilded iron doors swing open. Inside, in a halo of golden light, is a marble statue of his mother, larger than life, seated, gazing off into the distance just like in the portrait in his office. The MUSIC OF CHOIRS pours out of the mausoleum: Mozart's Requiem.

REICH

Merry Christmas, Ma.

He climbs to the dais, spreads the roses before her.

REICH

I did it. I won. I beat them.

He climbs higher, onto the knees. He touches the marble hair, looks up into the serene face.

REICH

Maybe somewhere out there in space there's somebody left who can get in my way...But I'll take care of him, too...And then I'll carve up his planet...

He runs his hands over his mother's eyes, nose, cheek bones, as though carving out a planet in her likeness.

REICH

Carve it up like this...and this... and this...So every pathetic drone in my galaxy knows who his master is...

He can't contain himself. He seizes the stone head in both hands and kisses the cold lips. The hard stone breaks his fantasy. He jerks away.

He slides back down. Gathers up some of the roses. Backs away. Runs, leaving the mausoleum open, with the music pouring out.

ON THE STREET

Reich throws himself over the iron fence, cutting himself up on the spikes. Picks himself up. Gathers a few bedraggled roses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Runs in front of a taxi, which misses hitting him by millimeters. He goes to the window and shouts to the furious DRIVER.

REICH

The Plaza. One hundred times the fare if you get me there in five minutes.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ESPER GUILD - NIGHT

Dark, except for one window blazing bright on a high floor. We MOVE IN on the lit window.

INT. ESPER GUILD - COUNCIL ROOM

Powell faces the Esper Council, nine MEN AND WOMEN presided over by T'Sung H'Sai.

POWELL

There's a wall in Reich's mind that no Esper can get past. Reich himself can't get past it. Unless I find out why Reich killed D'Courtney, he'll go free.

A Councillor begins to speak, but Powell silences him with a respectful gesture.

POWELL

I'm not asking for your advice. I'm asking you to authorize a mass cathexis.

There's a HUBBUB of shock and surprise.

T'SUNG H'SAI

With who channeling the energy, Lincoln?

POWELL

You think I'd ask anyone else to do it? Me.

COUNCILLOR

We've tried it three times, and the person doing the channeling hasn't survived it yet. I move that we ban any more experimenting with cathexis until--

POWELL

This is no experiment!

The Councillors fall silent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL

Alexander the Great. Napoleon. Hitler. Thrax. Van Danziger. When it comes to conquering the known world, they're all kids in the sandbox next to Reich. You all know how far he's gotten. How powerful he is. If he gets away with this murder, who's going to stop him? The Government? He's richer than any country. Other corporations? By New Years Eve he'll own half the solar system. Us? Forget it. We're number one on Reich's hit list. On Tuesday night he took over Titus Uranium. On Wednesday morning the Titus Parliament passed a law banning Espers from Government service on Jupiter and all its moons. And that's only the beginning.

T'SUNG H'SAI

You're asking us to vote your death.

POWELL

I've got my own reasons for taking the risk. I won't hide them from you. I'm wide open.

As the Councillors read his mind, two simple images hang shimmering in the shadowy council hall: Barbara, just as Massler leads her away, and Mary, as she says her last words. The images dissolve.

COUNCILLOR

Maybe if we had some time to consider, we could--

POWELL

No. Even tomorrow's too late. Mass cathexis isn't something I can do out of a jail cell.

Silence. The men confer telepathically. Quickly exchanged glances. Thought. A pause. They all face him.

Lincoln feels their decision. They're not happy about it, but it's yes. He sighs, every fiber in his body letting go.

T'SUNG H'SAI

God be with you, Lincoln.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE CITY - NIGHT

Reich's taxi careens through crowds of Christmas-shopping pedestrians, to the fountain in front of the old Plaza Hotel.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Centuries ago, this was the fashionable hub of the city; now it's just another corner fleshmarket, a place to meet enterprising girls and boys who can't meet Chooka Frood's standards, or don't want to follow her rules.

Reich jumps out of the taxi, throws bills through the window and stalks along the sparse line of BOYS and GIRLS lounging around the frozen fountain.

REICH'S POV

As he advances. The faces peer at him, sizing him up, beckoning. Old faces powdered to look young, very young faces painted to look older. We MOVE IN on the only face that isn't strained into a mask of seduction: DUFFY, 18, with no makeup, her sad, bright eyes watching Reich seductively out of under a tousled mop of dark hair.

REICH AND DUFFY

He grips her shoulder, turns her roughly to face him.

REICH
Got any plans?

DUFFY
(cool)
I guess I do now.

CUT TO:

INT. POWELL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - CLOSE ON A DESKTOP

As Powell's hand writes quickly, we read what he has already written:

I, Lincoln Powell, being of sound mind and body,
do hereby bequeath all my worldly possessions
to the governing council of the Esper Guild and name
as my executor...

PULL BACK. Powell finishes his will with a flourish. Folds and seals it. He gets up and goes out to

EXT. THE TERRACE

He looks up at the stars.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BARBARA'S PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Comfortable but bare. Two GUARDS outside the thick wired-glass door. Faint sounds of CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Barbara stands on her tippy-toes and pulls herself up so she can just barely see out of the one small window of her cell.

HER POV

A patch of black sprinkled with stars.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. POWELL'S TERRACE

Powell is jarred out of his reverie on the stars by a SOUND, half electrical, half musical, faint and distant, like a string plucked once and left to vibrate into silence.

It has begun. He checks his watch: so soon? He waits.

The sound comes again. And again. Different tones. Some close, some far off. Like the faint pattering of raindrops before a storm. He shivers as the energy pours into him. He grips the railing of the terrace.

MONTAGE - THE MASS CATHEXIS

The SOUND OF GATHERING ENERGY continues, the individual tones building gradually to a whining electromusical torrent, as all the Espers in the city -- people we've seen at the Guild and in the hunt-for-Barbara sequence -- lend their mental energy to Powell:

Children around a Christmas tree: one of them, whom we recognize from the class at the Guild, faces out the window, Christmas forgotten...The Guild Teacher sits up in bed beside her sleeping husband...A Council Member looks through a frosted window...one SINGER in a choir falls silent...

POWELL'S TERRACE

A SCREAMING TURBINE of energy spins around Powell. He stumbles back inside, crashing against a wall as though the apartment were a boat pitching on a heavy sea. The SOUND OF THE ENERGY grows LOUDER AND LOUDER. He grabs his cloak. Stumbles out.

EXT. THE STREET - NIGHT

He comes out onto the street, struggling to maintain his balance, as though the flood of energy were a windstorm that could sweep him away.

He does it. He masters himself. Takes in the energy. Absorbs it. Masters it. As he starts to walk, we PULL AWAY from his face, the sound of the energy still growing. We begin to move faster, rising far above him, at rocket speed. The street falls away. The buildings. In a flash, the whole city is just a

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

glowing jewel on a dark continent, which fades to a pinpoint. The earth falls away and joins the stars. The stars themselves dwindle to sparks and go out.

There is only blackness and SILENCE as we

SMASH CUT TO:

CLOSE ON BEN REICH

as he jerks upright, drenched in sweat, out of breath.

REICH

What was that?

DUFFY'S VOICE

(waking up)

What was what?

ANGLE - REICH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Reich and Duffy have been sleeping in a tangle of satin sheets, roses and clothing. Duffy reaches up to Reich. He pushes her off.

REICH

That sound. Fingernails on a blackboard. Billions of them.

He catches his breath. Gets up, pulling the sheet around himself like a toga. He stalks around the huge bed like a Roman emperor, gathering his wits.

REICH

To hell with nightmares.

DUFFY

I'll drink to that.

She pours the last of a bottle of champagne into a glass.

REICH

Why should I worry about bad dreams?

(sings)

'I've got the whole world in my hands, I've got the--'

He breaks off. He feels like he's losing his mind.

DUFFY

Where's my serenade?

Reich tears off the sheet and throws himself onto Duffy, thrusting into her violently, seized by a megalomaniacal frenzy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Duffy watches him, detached, a thousand miles away from his brutal caresses.

REICH

You name the serenade and it's yours.
Gold serenades. Emerald serenades.
You want a serenade from here to Mars?
I'll put my engineers on it tomorrow.

DUFFY

Guys are always so generous when
they're drunk.

REICH

Why shouldn't I be drunk? I've licked
D'Courtney. I've licked Powell. I've
got sixty years of owning the world
ahead of me. Seventy. Eighty!

DUFFY

Who wants to live that long?

REICH

It'll take that long!...First I have to
finish off D'Courtney...Then I eat up
the rest...The small ones, the fleas...
Case and Umbrel on Venus...GCO Combine...
United Transaction on Mars...Then the
lice...Unions! Governments! The Esper
Guild!

In his madness, he rolls her across the nightstand, hitting
the button that opens the sliding jade wall to the terrace.
A cold wind blasts in. Getting a little uneasy, Duffy moves
away, but Reich sweeps her up into his arms and out onto

EXT. THE TERRACE

He goes on fucking her against the stone parapet, the skyline
all around them, the city glittering below.

REICH

Some of the world will taste sweet...
Like you...and some of it will stink to
high heaven...But I'll eat it all...

(to the city)

And all of you out there...Can you
hear me? You're all mine...body and
soul...awake or asleep...From now on
you'll dream my dreams...You'll--

Suddenly, he's silent. He pulls away from Duffy, stares wildly
into the night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REICH

The stars...

DUFFY

The what?

REICH

The stars. They're gone. Look
at the sky.

She looks up.

There's just the moon and one red jewel -- Mars -- in a black
firmament. The stars are gone.

DUFFY

Looks just like it did the last
time I checked. What are 'stars?'

She says the syllable the way we might say 'glorb' -- something
random, meaningless, unfamiliar.

REICH

What the hell's the matter with
you? Don't you understand? There's
been some kind of terrible
catastrophe in space!

DUFFY

You're scaring me, Mr. Reich.

He pushes past her as though she weren't there. Storms back
inside. Starts pulling on his clothes and barking at the
V-Phone as he does.

REICH

Get me the Croton Observatory.

After a moment a bleary-eyed OBSERVATORY WORKER comes on. .
He's obviously been sleeping on the job.

OBSERVATORY WORKER

'Servatory. G'morning.

REICH

It's been noticed, hasn't it?
What's the explanation?

WORKER

For what?

REICH

The stars! What is it, some kind
of gas in the stratosphere, blocking
them out? Has the President been told?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WORKER

Why do I get all the winners?

He switches Reich off. The screen goes black. Reich pulls on the last shoe and rages out.

DUFFY

Hey, wait!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREET - NIGHT

Deserted. Reich dashes toward the street light on the corner. A lone taxi is coming down the street. He flags it down. The DRIVER leans out.

DRIVER

Where you headed?

Reich is about to rave about the stars, but controls himself.

REICH

Uptown.

INT. THE CAB

As it pulls away.

REICH

(casually)

Notice the sky?

The Driver takes this as the straightline for a joke. And he's heard every joke. He plays along.

DRIVER

Why do you ask?

REICH

The stars are gone.

The driver laughs obligingly.

REICH

It's not a joke!

DRIVER

I got that feeling.

Now Reich begins to break. Pleading--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REICH

You never heard of stars? Little bits of light way up in the sky? Orion? The Big Dipper? You don't know what I'm talking about?

DRIVER

To be honest -- nope. But don't take it too hard, mister. After all... I'm just one of the tourists.

REICH

(weeping)

Oh God...Sweet God...tension... apprehension...need we mention...

DRIVER

What was that?

He's about to go to pieces. But he's still Ben Reich. He GROANS with the effort of containing a volcano of terror and confusion.

REICH

Take me to the Reich Building. 59th Street entrance. On the double!

The car speeds ahead. Reich leans forward, punches numbers on the back seat V-Phone. MISS BLAIN, his chief secretary, comes on. She was asleep in bed a second ago, but you'd never know it.

MISS BLAIN

Good morning, Mr. Reich.

REICH

Call a staff meeting. I want all department heads and division supervisors in my office at seven sharp. Is that clear?

EXT. STREET - MOVING WITH THE TAXI

as it hurtles up Broadway. It's just about dawn. Reich opens the window and looks anxiously into the blank sky.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREET - NIGHT

Powell walks aimlessly down the empty sidewalk, deaf and unseeing, the sound of the cathexis energy a faint HUM around him.

CUT TO:

INT. REICH'S OFFICE - DAY

Early sunlight streams through the windows. Reich faces his assembled STAFF. He's in him element, in the only reality that matters. Running things. Channeling his fear into action.

REICH

For ten years, you've all been brave soldiers in the front lines of our war against D'Courtney. The last obstacles to total victory have just been swept out of our path. Starting today, starting now, we can commence operation of plan A5 to take over the commercial infrastructure of the entire solar system.

He pauses, waiting for the excited response -- but sees only blank, worried faces.

REICH

Perhaps some of you don't comprehend the enormous significance of this moment. Those of you that are city supervisors will have continents to run. Continental supervisors will become satellite chiefs. The chiefs you replace will become Planetary directors. From now on--

He falters. The staff members are shifting uneasily, giving each other nervous glances.

REICH

What's the matter? Is there some bad news I haven't heard?
(to Miss Blain)
You! Answer!

MISS BLAIN

I...we...I've never heard of this...
This D'Courtney organisation, Mr. Reich...
We...

She turns her head for support. The entire staff shakes their heads in mystification.

REICH

D'Courtney on Mars!

MISS BLAIN

On where, sir?

Reich ROARS in anguish.

REICH

There's a thousand memos about
D'Courtney in the files! A million!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He upturns his desk, knocking down a few of the staff. Heavy objects CRASH and shatter. Reich runs into

THE OUTER OFFICE

The staff follows, in an uproar. Reich tears into the files on the secretaries' desks, throwing things around, searching in vain. Around him, secretaries make urgent calls, people race around. There's a buzz of anxiety and alarm.

STAFF

Who's his doctor?...Did you call the police?...No! No scandal!...Get Legal on the phone...Isn't the infirmary open yet?

REICH

You've changed them all, you bastards! Who's behind this? Who's making you do it?...It's Powell, isn't it! What's he paying you?

The crowd of office workers parts. Three SECURITY GUARDS, big burly guys, come in. Reich backs away from the. They move in like wranglers trying to calm a wild stallion.

GUARD

Easy now, easy now, Mr. Reich...
Easy now...

REICH

Get away from me, you sons of bitches.

He pushes over a steel filing cabinet, knocking one guard backward into the others, and runs. He gets into an elevator. The doors close on him.

ON ANOTHER FLOOR

He runs out of the elevator, into a display area called "SCIENCE AND YOU", an educational exhibit for children. Corporate propaganda, like a G.E. pavilion at a World's Fair. Models of molecules, etc.

Reich runs to a big cut-out of a smiling, square-jawed scientist under a banner that says "ASK DR. MIRACLE!" Dr. Miracle's torso is a big screen. Reich switches on the display. There's cheerful scholastic film MUSIC, and Dr. Miracle's cheerful canned voice:

DR. MIRACLE

Hi there, youngsters! The secrets of the universe are yours for the asking...so ask away!

REICH

What's Mars?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. MIRACLE

(chuckling)

I know a lot, but that's one word
I don't know!

REICH

(desperate)

What is there in the universe?

DR. MIRACLE

At the center of the universe is
the sun...

An image of the sun, pulsing, seething, appears on the screen..

DR. MIRACLE

93 million miles from the sun is
our home, the Earth.

An image of the earth appears, revolving around the sun. Reich
waits. But that's all there is.

REICH

Is that all? Nothing else? Tell
me again! What's in the universe?

DR. MIRACLE

At the center of the universe is
our home, the Earth.

Period. The sun on the screen begins to fade, and as it does,
the sunlight from outside fades also. With a strangled cry,
Reich runs out of the exhibit.

EXT. REICH ENTERPRISES - NIGHT

The sun is gone. The buildings blaze against the eternal night.
And everyone goes about their business as always. Reich runs out
of the building and rushes down the street like a madman.

REICH

The sun! Oh my God! The sun!

A car hits him and he flies back onto the sidewalk, out cold.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THE CITY - NIGHT

Powell stumbles across a busy street. Cars SCREECH around
him, barely missing him. He sees nothing, hears nothing.
All of his being is focussed on channeling the energy that
still HUMS around him.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Reich comes to. He's on a table covered with a dirty sheet. He jerks upright when he sees where he is. Around him, COPS are writing in report books, murmuring to each other. A DOCTOR puts his hand on Reich's forehead, trying to ease him back down.

DOCTOR

It's all right. You're going to be fine. I'm a doctor.

REICH

Are you a peeper? I need a peeper. To go inside my head and prove I'm right.

COP #1

What does he want?

REICH

A peeper! An Esper! A--

He sees the puzzled looks. He breaks off. This is the last straw. He struggles to sit up.

REICH

Listen...I'm Ben Reich...Of Reich Enterprises...I want to confess. To Lincoln Powell.

COP #2

Who?

REICH

Captain Lincoln Powell, Metro Police! I want to confess!

The cops gather around, expectant. One types into a computer terminal.

COP #3

Got any particular crime in mind?

REICH

The D'Courtney murder. I murdered Craye D'Courtney last week in Maria Beaumont's house...Tell Lincoln Powell! I did it! I killed D'Courtney!

COP AT TERMINAL

How do you spell that?

REICH

Capital D apostrophe C-O-U-R-T-N-E-Y.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The cop at the terminal gestures to his chief. The chief glances at the screen, at Reich, at the screen again.

EXT. POLICE STATEION - NIGHT

Two Cops throws Reich out into the darkness. He sprawls on the ground.

CAPTAIN

There ain't no D'Courtney killing
in the books. There ain't no Lincoln
Powell in the service. And we ain't
takin' no slok from your kind.

In the bright doorway, the cops laugh as they slam the door.

Reich staggers to his feet. The city has changed. Broken pavement. Dark buildings. No skyline. A few dim streetlights.

And no people.

He stumbles along, running, his footsteps echoing in the emptiness. He runs toward one distant streetlight. His voice is small and weak.

REICH

Help...Somebody, help...I'm sick...
I need help...
(sings, faintly)
Nervous...tired..anxious...wired...
Where is everybody? Powell! Maria!
Tate!

The streetlight goes out just as he reaches it. The world is lit by a weird, dead glow. He grips the iron pole.

REICH

HELP! HEELLLLLLPPPPPPP!

Silence. He hears RASPY FOOTSTEPS, coming closer. There is a TAPPING, like the sound of a walking stick on wet gravelly pavement. Reich runs.

A wall comes up in front of him. There's a gate in the wall. The garden gate. From his dreams. From the deepest places in his psyche. The footsteps are getting closer. The gate opens. He runs in.

The little house is in ruins, jagged against the black sky. The yard is overgrown. The world is drained of color, except for a red ball in the grass, glowing as though with its own light. He leaps for the ball. Falls. Looks up.

HIS P.O.V.

A man's legs in black boots and dark pants. A cane.

REICH AND THE MAN'S LEGS

It's a boy who lies on the grass, clutching the red ball, looking at the black legs: YOUNG REICH, nine years old, tousled golden hair and bright eyes.

YOUNG REICH

Daddy...Make them put it all back...
Make them turn the lights on...

He crawls forward. Puts his arms around the legs. Looks up.

It's The Man With No Face. Except he has a face now. D'Courtney's face. But younger. Unlined. Calm. Radiant. Beyond the cares and trials of this world. In this black and white world, his eyes are a luminous blue.

D'COURTNEY

I can't, Ben. The game's over.
It's too late.

ANGLE - THE GARDEN

It's grown-up Reich on the grass again. He stands up and steps away.

REICH

It's not too late. You have to help me.

D'COURTNEY

Why?

REICH

Because...I don't know..Because...
(breaking)
I'm sorry...

D'COURTNEY

That you killed me?

REICH

I didn't know who you were!

D'COURTNEY

If you know now, you knew then.

REICH

No...I didn't...I forgot...
It was so long ago... and Mom never told me your name...I begged her to, but she wouldn't...even when she was dying...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

D'Courtney puts out his hand, still with that serene, forgiving, other-worldly smile. But Reich, suddenly bitter, steps out of his reach.

REICH

You killed her. It took her twenty years to die, but you killed her.

D'COURTNEY

I paid for that a long time before you played Sardines at Maria's house.

REICH

Why did you make us go away?

D'COURTNEY

You should know the answer to that. You of all people, Ben Reich. I was building my own empire. That was all that mattered. I could have lost it. And I could have lost Barbara.

REICH

I had a chance to kill her. Twice. But I didn't do it.

D'COURTNEY

Because you knew who she was. Just like you knew who I was, in your heart.

More of the world is gone: the garden walls, the ruined house. D'Courtney still holds out his hand to his son.

REICH

The game isn't over. We can still win. There has to be a way.

D'COURTNEY

There is no way. It's the end.

Everything is gone now. There's nothing but the two men in a dark infinity. And it's Young Reich who faces his father, a frightened boy, his golden hair bright as the vanished sun.

YOUNG REICH

I'm scared, Daddy. Make them turn on the lights.

At last, he reaches out and takes the offered hand.

CLOSE - THE HANDS

Young Reich's hand grips his father's hand. D'Courtney falls to his knees, takes the boy in his arms.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Now, at last, the light of dawn begins to grow, and we hear a chorus of distant CHURCH BELLS ringing out JOY TO THE WORLD.

It's Christmas morning on a city street in the real world.

The ground is white from a fresh light snowfall. A pale star appears in the frosty sky overhead. The two figures remain still, embracing each other.

We hear a CAR SWEEP BY.

INSIDE A PATROL CAR

The car slows and two cops look out at the figures huddled in the cold, one in a black coat; the other in shirtsleeves. The cop on shotgun is IVERS, from the beginning of the story. The older DRIVER shakes his head.

DRIVER

Hell of a Christmas.

He's about to drive on when Ivers sees the face of the man in the black coat. It's Powell, and the figure clutched in his grip is grown up Reich.

IVERS

Hey, stop. It's Powell.

He jumps out of the car. Runs to him.

Both men are stiff. White. Ivers pulls Powell out of Reich's iron grip.

POWELL'S POV - IVERS

Looking down at him. Trying to help him up.

POWELL

realizes who has rescued him. He smiles faintly. As though with his last breath--

POWELL

You were right...sitting on a train...

IVERS' VOICE

Take it easy, Captain.

POWELL

And I was wrong...about the soul...
Ivers...I saw it...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His eyes begin to close.

POWELL

(urgently)

The Guild. Esper Guild. Take me
there. It's in my head...take me...
before I...

ON IVERS - POWELL'S POV

As Powell loses consciousness, Ivers' face begins to go
dark, and we

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - PATIENT'S POV

Curtains, a ceiling, medical apparatus, tubes. Suddenly,
Dale and Cammie lean over us, very excited. Dale has a bandage
on his head. Cammie wears a sling.

DALE

His eyes are open.

A NURSE appears, leaning in a drawing the children back.

NURSE

That doesn't mean a thing. When
they're in that deep, there's no
such thing as awake.

Cammie and Dale don't seem convinced, but they step back.
Then Dale leans in again, holding up a tabloid newspaper,
grinning. The banner headline:

WHODUNIT?

REICH DUN IT!!!!

DALE

You got him, Captain Powell.
Soon as they got all that stuff out
of your head they checked it out
and BAM!

CAMMIE

It only took them two days, once
they knew what they were looking for.
That machine bought the revenge motive
in a second.

(shuddering)

Imagine killing your own Dad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DALE

Reich practically croaked before they could get him into Demolition, though. His brains were burned out worse than yours.

Cammie jabs him and quickly elbows him out of the way.

CAMMIE

You're going to be fine, Captain Powell. They'll have you out of here by New Years.

She leans in, smiling, reaches out to touch us...but there's no response. She steps back, unable to hide how worried she is.

The nurse draws Cammie and Dale away. We HOLD on the blank ceiling while they talk, in lowered voices.

NURSE'S VOICE

I told you. He doesn't even know you're here.

CAMMIE'S VOICE

Is he ever going to come out of it?

There's no answer, just a troubled SIGH.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

THE SAME - NIGHT

Maria Beaumont leans over us, gossiping to beat the band, decked out in jewels and furs, clutching orchids to her half-exposed bosom.

MARIA

...of course we all knew about Craye's little peccadillo...but who would have dreamed there was a child?...Poor dear Craye! He was so in love with that... that actress, wasn't it? Or was it waitress?... And when Barbara's mother found out, well! She told Craye if he didn't send the tramp off to Earth pronto he could kiss every cent of her dough goodbye, plus never lay eyes on his Barbara-kins ever ever ever again... If only you had come to me, Captain, I could have saved you acres and acres of...

With Maria still prattling on,

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

THE SAME - NIGHT

T'Sung H'Sai looks down at us, solemnly, with his cool, penetrating gaze.

ANGLE - THE HOSPITAL ROOM

Powell lies on his back, as white as when they found him on the street, staring blankly at the ceiling. As T'Sung H'Sai concentrates on him, we FLASH to Powell's subconscious:

An endless, featureless, windswept plain. Powell stands in the distance, staring across the plain, as drained and frozen as he is on the hospital bed. T'Sung H'sai walks toward him, calling, fighting the wind.

T'SUNG H'SAI
Lincoln! Lincoln Powell!

The wind swallows up T'Sung H'sai's words. He stops. It's no use. Powell can't hear him.

IN THE HOSPITAL ROOM

T'Sung H'Sai touches Powell's arm and turns away. He looks at the Nurse, who shakes her head.

CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ROOM

It's almost midnight on New Years Eve, and the hospital staff is crowded in the corridor, drinking champagne, talking and laughing. Newspapers on a cart beside the door catch T'Sung H'Sai's eye. He picks one up and reads it as he walks along.

THE NEWSPAPER

A photo of Powell. The bold caption:

STILL IN A COMA...HOW LONG CAN HE LAST?

T'Sung H'Sai puts the paper down on a meal cart and goes on. We HOLD on the paper as an ORDERLY rolls the cart down the corridor.

INT. BARBARA'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Identical to Powell's. Barbara sits on the windowsill in a hospital robe, looking blankly at the night and her reflection in the dark window. A NURSE is making notes on a chart. The Orderly wheels the cart in.

ORDERLY
Miss D'Courtney?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Barbara doesn't turn. The Orderly starts out, leaving the cart. But the Nurse sees the newspaper and grabs the Orderly's shoulder.

Barbara watches in the mirror-windows as the nurse snatches up the paper, glances at Barbara to make sure she isn't looking, and gives the cowering Orderly a very stern, reprimanding look.

IN THE CORRIDOR

As Nurse and Orderly come out, the Orderly tears the paper up and dumps it in the trash just outside Barbara's door. Nurse and Orderly move on.

After a moment, Barbara steps out into the corridor, takes the paper out of the trash.

THE NEWSPAPER IN HER HANDS

Pieces of Powell's picture and a fragment of text:

...DOCTORS IN THE NEUROPHYSICAL DEPARTMENT
OF KINGSTON HOSPITAL HAVE ALL BUT ABANDONED
HOPE THAT CAPTAIN LINCOLN POWELL WILL
REGAIN...

Barbara's hands move the fragments together. And there's Powell, in his glazed, pained, unconscious state.

BARBARA

Suddenly animated. Still in a trance, but a purposeful trance. She starts walking, down the crowded corridor, looking through the open doors of the patients' rooms, ignored by the New Years revellers around her.

The Nurse and the Orderly, down the corridor, see her go, carrying the torn newspaper. They start after her, just as she goes around a corner, out of sight.

WITH BARBARA

She moves through the party, looking into rooms. The third room is Powell's.

IN POWELL'S ROOM

Barbara approaches Powell's bed. His eyes are closed. She touches his white, frozen face. Trying to reach him. Still unable to speak.

IN POWELL'S SUBCONSCIOUS

Powell stands on the empty plain, eyes on the distant horizon. The howling wind begins to die down.

IN THE HOSPITAL ROOM

Tears well in Barbara's eyes. A tear falls on Powell's cheek.

ON THE EMPTY PLAIN

The clouds part, just slightly. No blue is visible beyond, but rays of sunshine beam down onto the frozen ground. Powell looks up, shielding his eyes, letting the rays warm his face.

IN THE HOSPITAL ROOM

Barbara speaks her first conscious words since her father was murdered.

BARBARA
Captain...Powell...

ON THE EMPTY PLAIN

Powell looks up into the growing light.

BARBARA'S VOICE
° (distant)
Captain Powell...I love you,
Captain Powell...

The clouds part. There's a burst of sunlight that blinds Powell for a moment.

When he can see again, there's Barbara, in her hospital gown, across the plain. Color returns to his face as he begins to recognize her, like an old man recalling something from decades ago.

He runs to her.

She runs to him.

IN THE HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

The Orderly and the Nurse are talking urgently to Powell's Nurse. We can't hear them, though, because of the racket of Doctors, Nurses, and Patients counting down to New Years.

DOCTORS, NURSES, PATIENTS
Nine! Eight! Seven! Six!...

The Orderly and the nurses run toward Powell's room, get to the door, and stop. Powell's Nurse is in shock.

THEIR POV

Powell is sitting up in bed, Barbara in his arms. Just as the countdown out in the corridor reaches "ONE!", he sees the nurses and the orderly over Barbara's shoulder and looks at them, trying to focus, with no idea where he is or who they are. He grins faintly at their stupefied expressions.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POWELL
(weakly)
Happy New Year.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DEMOLITION CENTER

A bank of screens display changing images of Reich's progress through the early stages of demolition: receiving injections, writhing in agony, unconscious, screaming in pain, graphic read-outs of brain scans.

DR. JEEMS, a young, over-eager brain specialist, narrates the show for Powell and Barbara. Barbara holds Powell's arm, tight, as she watches the horrible record.

JEEMS
Here at Kingston, Miss D'Courtney, we view the criminal as a tree, a living tree with rotten limbs -- and sound roots. The object of demolition is to cut the tree back to the point at which it started to grow wrong, however far back that may be. As the osmotic injections break down every particle of the brain's twisted pattern--

On one screen, Reich howls in a dim room, in unbearable pain. Barbara cringes and grips Powell's arm.

JEEMS
Don't worry, Miss D'Courtney. Your brother's a tough one. With a little luck, he ought to be ready for rebirth by spring.

Barbara can't take anymore. She turns away. To Powell--

BARBARA
You were right. I shouldn't have come here. I just...I...

She breaks away from Powell and leaves. Powell nods to Jeems and follows.

EXT. KINGSTON HOSPITAL GROUNDS - DAY

Barbara comes out of the Demoliton Center. It's a bright winter day, with snow on the ground. Cammie and Dale are building a snowman but leave their play to fall in behind Powell as he catches up with Barbara..

POWELL
Are you all right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA

I will be.

He takes her hand. They keep walking. Suddenly they hear a GUTTURAL CRY and look up.

There's Reich, teetering on top of a wall, crouched like an animal. He falls off the wall, rolls, comes to his feet. He looks at Barbara and Powell with the crazed eyes of a lunatic child, of a man driven mad by pain.

Then he recognizes them. He comes forward, head cocked, eyes wide.

His GUARDS vault the wall and come toward him. Powell signals that it's okay, and they hang back.

Reich peers at Barbara and Powell, a low animal moan of suspicion and hope in his throat. It's Barbara he comes toward. Slowly. Tentatively. Like a dog afraid of a beating.

Barbara grips Powell's arm, but doesn't step back. Reich looks into her eyes.

REICH

Sis...ter...sorry...

Overcome, Barbara puts out her hand. He touches it awkwardly, then springs away, embarrassed. He rolls in the snow, jumps up, and playfully throws a snowball at Dale. Dale's uncertain for a moment, then throws one back.

Powell and Barbara watch Reich playing like a kid. A happy kid. The kid he never got a chance to be.

For a moment, we see what Powell sees: Young Reich playing in the snow, Reich before pain and rejection turned him to evil, a golden-haired child, clear eyed, happy and free, his soul unleashed by demolition.

Then the image fades, and there is only the demolished man gamboling wildly in the snow with two children.

In the foreground, Powell's hand reaches out and takes Barbara's. For a moment, their linked hands frame the snowball fight. Then Powell reaches out to put his arm around Barbara and they move closer together, their winter cloaks drawing a curtain on this story.

THE END