

THE DEMOLISHED MAN

Screenplay by

Brian DePalma

and

John Farris

based on the novel by

Alfred Bester

FADE IN:

EXT OF A MAJOR U.S. CITY IN THE YEAR 2049

DISOLVE TO

EXT BASTION WEST SIDE - NIGHT

This famous last bulwark in the Siege of New York was dedicated as a war memorial, to be maintained in perpetuity as a denunciation of the insanity that produced the Final War. It consists of a shattered, gutted couple of acres of old brownstones circumscribed and illuminated by walls of eternal, eerie blue light, in the midst of low-cost housing towers of striking modernity.

A man named PETE comes quickly along a street near the War Memorial. He wears a blue jump suit and a hardhat stenciled FOREMAN.

CLOSER ON PETE

As he is accosted by a PIMP. The pimp is got up in the fashion of the day: mirror spectacles, mirror beauty marks on his face. His teeth, when he smiles, are mirrors that broadly reflect Pete. The Pimp also wears a tellytopper, more revolving mirrors that become round TV screens. Each screen displays a lovely courtesan wearing an elaborate powdered wig from a distant era. Otherwise the courtesans are fetchingly naked.

PIMP,

Off a little early tonight? What's the use goin' home - the wife's asleep. If you woke her up, she'd be too tired. But my courties are wide awake - and they don't ever get tired.

Pete is impressed with what he sees, but

PETE

No good. I'm a bust man this week..

The pimp abruptly turns off the free show, but he has a last resort.

PIMP

Dee-mo. Cheap.

He looks back over his shoulder, at

EXT DOORWAY OF A BLASTED BROWNSTONE

Beyond the blue wall of light. In the doorway is a young beauty, more alluring than anything Pete has seen on the

CONTD

tellytopper. But there is a quality of mindlessness about her.

EXT ANGLE ON PETE

After a long look he draws back, shuddering.

PETE

No thanks.

And he proceeds home, talking to himself.

PETE

Fucking dee-mos. Everywhere you look these days.

EXT APARTMENT HOUSE

Pete places the palm of one hand on a sensor plate. He is approved, and beneath his feet a hatch opens, revealing an anti-grav beam which, through no visible means of support, conveys him safely to his floor. He steps out into the corridor. The beam vanishes.

INT PETE'S APARTMENT

It is as dark as a cave in the earth, but tiny night-lights in the floor wink on and off, guiding him to his son's room. Pete sits for a few moments, smiling to himself, watching the boy sleep in a riser-bed, which gently adjusts the position of the body all night long.

INT PETE'S BEDROOM

The floor is illuminated, a square of soft light. The bed, like a water-filled cocoon hung from the ceiling, is dark. Pete enters quietly.

PETE

Honey?

Unfortunately the first face he sees isn't his wife's. There is a man in bed with her. Pete's wife sits up quickly behind her lover, gasping.

WIFE

Oh no, oh no, God - !

PETE

WHO THE HELL IS HE?

CONTD

The blood vessels in Pete's neck stand out. His wife babbles. Pete explodes, yanks the man from the cocoon bed and throws him against a wall. Then Pete goes after his wife and methodically begins beating her to death.

In the midst of this carnage a TV screen comes to life, ominously, filling the bedroom with a hellish glow.

TV SCREEN

A POLICEMAN wearing a collar reminiscent of those worn by 20th-century clergy speaks sternly to Pete.

POLICEMAN

You have committed a triple-A felony. Police are on the way to take you into custody. As you know, there is no possibility of escape. Surrender quietly. Surrender quietly.

ANGLE ON PETE

Holding the head of his battered, dead wife by the hair, staring at the TV screen. Suddenly he giggles, lets his wife drop to the floor.

PETE

Try and find me, Espers!

Still giggling, Pete makes a run for it, through the hall of his apartment.

PETE

No Demolition! No Demolition!
You saw what she did! She
deserved what she got!

EXT CORRIDOR

Pete hits a sensor-plate with his palm next to a sign reading EMERGENCY FIRE ESCAPE. An anti-grav beam not so gently ejects him from the building, through an iris-skylight made of some soft translucent material.

EXT SKY GARDENS

Floating fifty feet above the tops of several buildings. Pete goes tumbling down a slope of cushiony synthetic grass. Moaning, he dodges through a children's playground, only to find his way blocked by a pair of Esper cops who got there first.

CLOSEUP - PETE

Snarling.

PETE

Think you know everything, you goddam Espers! Well, you ain't gonna demolish me!

He turns to a post studded with sensor plates for different destinations, palms one labeled WAR MEMORIAL.

EXT WAR MEMORIAL

Pete is beamed down at a slant, hits and is off and running through the bluish jagged maze. At the end of a street an Esper cop saunters out of a doorway into his path. Pete hesitates, sweating, then plunges through a shelled doorway.

INT WRECKED BROWNSTONE

Pete staggers up a rickety flight of stairs. Turns. Another Esper cop is sitting on the stairs above him, waiting. Pete screams and jumps blindly through a glassless window.

EXT WAR MEMORIAL

Pete runs down an alley, tired now, staggering from wall to wall. He chooses a doorway and plunges inside.

INT SECOND BROWNSTONE

Darkness. Silence. Pete strains to hear something. Finally he is convinced he is alone. He whispers to himself.

PETE

Beat 'em. They won't find me now. Not in this maze.

He gropes along a wall, chuckling. Suddenly he encounters flesh, clothing. Pete starts back, screaming. Two Esper cops move toward him as he runs again.

FIRST ESPER COP

We have your pattern. Surrender quietly.

PETE

Blundering through the house, sobbing. He has begun to change his tune.

PETE

I didn't know what I was doing! I love her! I just went crazy when I saw them together!

CLOSEUP - ESPER COP

We do a clock-wise of his face, revealing Pete falling through a hole in the floor. (Strobe effect).

FULL SHOT - THE TWO COPS

They stop abruptly. WE HEAR PETE PANTING IN THE DARK, desperate to find a way out. One of the cops takes out a vial of nose candy. SUDDENLY THERE IS A SOUND OF THE FLOOR CRACKING, GIVING WAY, A TERRIFIED YOWL FROM PETE. THUMP. Silence. The two cops look at each other.

SECOND ESPER COP

Fractured right ankle. Scalp laceration. Mild concussion.

FIRST COP

(delicately screwing nose candy into one nostril)

He's going to wish he'd broken his neck.

CUT TO

A FILM IN PROGRESS

Grainy, black and white footage of the funeral of John F. Kennedy in 1963.

LINCOLN POWELL'S VOICE

The assassination of a head of state could only happen in a peeperless society. Thanks to the work of World Police, we are now fully stable politically. The era of the sneak attack, the double-cross, the deceit and lies sadly characteristic of governments of the past, is long behind us...

POWELL now appears as a tiny figure, in color, on the screen, walking slowly toward us across the street in Washington, passing through the long cortege. Slowly he fills one side of the Vu-cube, an imposing, craggy man with penetrating eyes, a face that is almost terrifyingly intelligent -- but, at unexpected moments, forlorn, almost sad. He is Prefect of World Police, the highest-ranking Esper cop.

He steps out of the Vu-cube before an audience of young criminology students, leaving the picture behind him.

ANOTHER ANGIE ON POWELL - VU-CUBE PICTURE BEHIND HIM

The picture changes, to footage of Jack Ruby wasting Oswald.

POWELL

Only a distorted telepathic pattern can produce death by violence...a man can't walk around with a distorted pattern, maturing murder, and go unnoticed in the year 2049. There has not been a successful Triple-A felony in more than thirty years. And there never will be.

Applause. Powell smiles slightly, scanning his eager audience.

PRETTY GIRL - HIS POV

CLOSEUP OF POWELL

Routinely peeping her.

GIRL - AS BEFORE

Clock-wise to what is on her mind: she is naked, ecstatically screwing Powell. She wears the de rigueur Madame Pompadour wig, the fashionable thing to do when having sex.

CLOSEUP OF POWELL

Still smiling, giving a little shake of his head.

THE GIRL

Sliding a little lower in her seat, chewing morosely on a thumbail.

CUT TO

EXT WORLD POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

INT HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Predictably large, modern, functional, and cold. But in one corridor there is a set of carved walnut doors with brass knobs. Lincoln Powell comes up a moving stairway and passes through the doors.

INT FOYER

Edwardian in design; spare but elegant. There is a large, old-fashioned visitor's book on a pedestal, which Powell signs with an electronic pen. As soon as he completes his signature the light in the room changes subtly and a disembodied voice, like a butler's, says

VOICE

Ah, Mr. Powell. Go right in.

An invisible door in the paneling clicks open.

INT COMPUTER ROOM

A large chamber that is like something out of Sherlock Holmes' time: green-shaded gaslights, heavy opulent Edwardian furniture. Powell sits in a wingback chair, helps himself to whiskey from a decanter on a table beside the chair. He looks up expectantly. A scintillating blue light appears around him, playing in ripples over his body, a light that takes in everything from his skin temperature to his state of mind. It vanishes. We hear another disembodied voice: avuncular, fusty, a bit English.

MOSE

You're depressed tonight, Lincoln. Didn't the lecture go well?

POWELL

It went okay. Like the last lecture, and the one before that.

MOSE

I think you're bored as well as depressed.

POWELL

You're right.
(drinks)
Nothing new there.

During the subsequent dialogue, THE CAMERA PANS SLOWLY AROUND THE CHAMBER and comes to an anomaly: a giant cathedral radio in one corner. It looks like a radio, until THE CAMERA PEERS CLOSER to see the cold flickering brain-lights behind the speaker fabric. This is MOSE, the computer, the World Police Department's Final Authority on evidential matters, a soulless brain but the only brain Lincoln Powell feels truly comfortable with.

MOSE

There must have been someone new to tickle your fancy. The pattern of excitation is still evident.

CONTD

POWELL
(conceding)
She made an impression.

MOSE
Then why aren't you with her?

POWELL
(he has to think about
it)
No challenge. And no surprises.
How about a game?

MOSE
Lincoln, you were here last night.
And the night before.

POWELL
Uh-huh.

MOSE
I detect symptoms of withdrawal that
in the long run must prove unhealthy
for you.

INTERCUT POWELL AND MOSE

POWELL
Either I'm in the wrong line of
work, or I was born a hundred years
too late. I'm a cop--but there are
no crimes a ten-year-old esper
couldn't solve in his sleep. Still,
I have to stay sharp, don't I? Run
a crime for me, Mose. How about a
nice juicy murder from the 20th
century, or a kidnapping?

MOSE
You're trying to avoid the basic
problem. I don't have your ESP
ability, but of course I don't
need it, do I?

Once again the blue light flickers around Powell, and he
frowns.

POWELL
Cut it out, Mose. This is a social
evening, not a shrink-session.

CONTD

MOSE

You suffer from the loneliness of the truly gifted. But you mustn't allow yourself to be alienated, to cut all ties with your fellow human beings.

POWELL

I decided not to go to bed with a girl, why make so much of it?

MOSE

Consider your motive...

POWELL

All right. It's difficult to have an affair when you already know how it'll work out - the beginning, the middle, the end. What am I supposed to do? Turn off my mind? Take a blind plunge off the high board? No thanks. Let's play. Come up with something tricky, Mose. A crime I can't solve. Beat me, Mose. Just once.

Silence; a mildly disapproving silence. Powell waits, drinking, a thin smile on his face.

MOSE

Very well. The Carlsberg kidnapping in 1959. Are you familiar with it?

POWELL

No.

Nearby a sideboy divides in two, revealing a large vu-cube. As MOSE describes the events leading up to the kidnapping, a re-creation with animated figures, scale-model props and locations unfolds in the vu-cube. Powell, relaxed but intent, studies the docu-drama.

MOSE

The victim was Belinda Carlsberg, 16-year-old daughter of a wealthy manufacturer. At approximately 8:05 a.m. on the morning of April 3rd Belinda was dropped by the family chauffeur at the gates of the private school which she attended in suburban Balacynwyd, Pennsylvania. Note the winding drive and the tree-lined park

CONTD

MOSE (Contd)

fronting the campus. Belinda started up the drive, but she never reached her school. In fact, she never again was seen alive...

CUT TO

EXT CORPORATE SHUTTLE JETTING THROUGH SPACE

Insignia identifies it as the flagship of the Monarch Industries fleet.

BEN REICH'S VOICE

Thousands of square miles of Amazonian jungle has been destroyed by our rivals in their greed to exploit the mineral wealth of earth. But we at Monarch Industries have had the courage and daring to turn our attention to the skies...

INT BEN REICH'S STATEROOM - VU-CUBE

Ben Reich's face reproduced holographically as he rehearses a speech. During the speech CAMERA PANS to Reich, president of Monarch, and two of his key aides, PAUL and GEORGE, watching Reich on the cube.

REICH'S VOICE

Enormous sums of money have been spent, and lives have been lost, in our efforts to utilize the vast store of minerals in the asteroid belt for the good of mankind.

VU-CUBE

Reich's face is replaced by an image of an industrial satellite orbiting hundreds of miles above the earth.

REICH'S VOICE

Ladies and gentlemen, the task we set for ourselves ten years ago has been accomplished. The challenge has been met. The first conveyor drones are now arriving from the asteroids. Today is an historic day. No longer will we suffer the rape and destruction of our planet. There is wealth to last a thousand years in the asteroids. I pledge that it will be mined

CONTD

REICH'S VOICE (CONTD)
for your benefit. Now I proudly
dedicate this great satellite to
you, the people of Earth.

The vu-cube blanks out. .

THREE SHOT - REICH AND HIS AIDES

Soberly considering the speech.

GEORGE

Ummhmm.

PAUL

Should it be "a historic day,"
or "an historic day?"

GEORGE

I don't know. I'll check it out.

PAUL

Ben, you couldn't be any better.

GEORGE

It's a great speech, Ben. I mean
that.

Ben has risen silently and walked to a port.

INDUSTRIAL SATELLITE - HIS POV THROUGH THE PORT

Tiny, just rising above the rim of the earth.

CLOSEUP - BEN

Studying the satellite.

REICH

I want a security update on the
entire guest list.

PAUL

Ben, we've had them all under a
microscope since the invitations
went out.

REICH

Do it again. You may have missed
something. And double the
satellite patrol. Nothing bigger
than a speck of dust passes
through our grid.

CONTD

Paul and George exchange looks.

PAUL

Yes, sir.

REICH

That's all for now.

After they leave, Ben approaches the blank vu-cube. He takes a wallet from his coat pocket, and a thin cartridge from the wallet which he inserts into the vu-cube.

A FILM FROM THE NINETEEN-THIRTIES

Stark images of a prison's death row give way to "newsreel" footage of a barbaric execution by electric chair.

FULL SHOT - STATEROOM

While Ben is staring into the vu-cube his wife DEBORAH quietly enters. She is appalled by the cries of the wretched condemned man in the film, and turns on the lights in the stateroom. Ben looks around at her, still grim and shaken.

DEBORAH

Ben, what are you looking at?

She glances quickly at the electrocution, and away, grimacing.

DEBORAH

Since when are you interested in pornography? Ben, please turn that off!

Ben obeys, and replaces the film cartridge in his wallet. He keeps the wallet in his hand. Deborah approaches him.

DEBORAH

Why were you watching such an ugly thing?

REICH

Curiosity, I suppose. Trying to imagine what it would be like to be in his place. They called it "capital punishment."

CONTD

DEBORAH

(bewildered; trying to
smile)

Well - it is fascinating, I suppose.
But what sort of monsters were they,
to take a man's life that way?

REICH

Civilized monsters. Each generation
thinks it's more - civilized - than
the one that came before. And we
live in the most civilized age of all.

He deftly inserts another cartridge into the vu-cube.

A MODERN, THREE-DIMENSIONAL COLOR FILM

This time we see a man floating naked in a dark void,
screaming dementedly, his limbs splayed and rigid, blood
on his lips. Transparent tubes are attached to his head.
It is Pete, the wife-murderer from our opening sequence.

TWO SHOT - REICH AND DEBORAH

It's more immediate, and more dreadful, than the execution
by electric chair. Deborah tries to turn away again, but
Ben holds her fast.

REICH

The sane, rational way to deal
with transgressors in our society -
Demolition. Everyone says they
approve of Demolition - because
they don't know a damn thing about
it, and they don't want to know.

DEBORAH

What - what are they doing to him?

REICH

It's a state secret. Even I don't
have access to the secrets of
Demolition. To know about
Demolition is to be Demolished..
Automatically. No recourse.

DEBORAH

That film -

REICH

Strictly forbidden. It cost millions.
But I wanted it.

CONTD

DEBORAH

Why?

Reich cuts off the cube with a slash of his hand. He places the cartridge in his wallet, and puts the wallet away.

REICH

It goes well with the nightmares I've been having lately. Let's have a drink. Gin-and-gold?

DEBORAH

Yes. Ben, I know you haven't been sleeping well, but that's -

REICH

Overwork? Anxiety? Maybe.

He programs a Silent Bartender and sits back on a free lounge, taking Deborah in his arms. The free lounge rocks gently above the floor.

DEBORAH

It's just that you've been fighting so hard for so long to put the company ahead -

REICH

Ahead? No, I've just managed to stay even. When the satellite's operational, then we'll go ahead, to stay. But D'Courtney can't allow that, can he? He's tried every dirty, illegal trick to force a merger, and he isn't through yet. Deb, I guess I'm scared.

Two gin-and-golds pop up from the Silent Bartender. Deborah peels them artfully.

DEBORAH

Oh, no, not you. Ben, you've made it, you really have. But you don't know how to relax and enjoy your achievement. Why don't you let me take over now?

REICH

Take over - ?

CONTD

DEBORAH

(kissing him)

I've got a tough job to do. I have to rehabilitate my husband. Humanize him. God knows he needs it.

REICH

(kissing her back)

Let me give you a couple of ideas that just popped into my mind -

DEBORAH

No more from you, I can handle it. Just lie back now. Close your eyes. I want you to think of a big blue ocean, and so many fish they jump into the boat -

REICH

Uh-huh -

DEBORAH

And a beautiful 65-foot motor-sailer I've had my eye on for six months. A real antique, built in Denmark in '77 -

REICH

Sounds expensive.

DEBORAH

My services come high.

REICH

I haven't been sailing - you know how long it's been?

DEBORAH

Just you and me, Ben. Three months, six months. Ben Junior can get along without us for a while - what do you say?

A long, passionate kiss. Ben opens his eyes.

REICH

Déb, go buy that boat. Now.

She gets up laughing.

DEBORAH

Not that I think you'd change your mind, but -

CONTD

She is out the door before he can say anything more. Ben lies back grinning, taking a long pull at his gin-and-gold.

BARBARA D'COURTNEY'S VOICE

Mr. Reich, may I speak with you, please?

Ben is out of the free lounge quickly, staring at the cube. He sees a young and beautiful woman who appears to have a lot on her mind.

BARBARA

It's important, Mr. Reich.

REICH

Who are you? How did you tie into my circuits?

Ben presses a stud on a jeweled finger ring; the jewel begins to pulsate with light.

BARBARA

Codes can be bought. You of all people should know that.

REICH

No more talk - unless I know who I'm talking to.

BARBARA

My name is Barbara. That's all you need to know for now. Don't bother trying to sweep, you won't learn a thing.

REICH

What do you want?

BARBARA

It's imperative that I meet with you -

REICH

Sorry - Barbara. Maybe you've got more brains than the average Courtie, but I'm not buying.

CONTD

BARBARA

I'm not a courtie, Mr. Reich.
And I have vital information
for you, it won't wait -

Her image begins to go to pieces on the cube; Barbara looks
around.

BARBARA

(faintly)
What's happening?

REICH

You're unauthorized, Barbara,
code or no code. The cube is
phasing you out.

BARBARA

(fainter still)
I'll be in touch again! You must
listen to me, it means -

Her image disappears before her voice. The blank cube
beeps twice, and an anxious electronics officer aboard
the shuttle appears.

OFFICER

Sir, I have no idea how this
happened -

REICH

Where did she originate?

OFFICER

Data is incomplete. Her whereabouts
are unknown.

REICH

Keep trying. And change all my codes
immediately.

EXT INDUSTRIAL SATELLITE

As the Monarch shuttle approaches.

INT BRIDGE OF THE SHUTTLE

BEN REICH JR. occupies the co-pilot's chair next to the ship's captain when Ben enters. His son is sixteen and has his father's good looks, as well as an air of earnest reliability, a developing attitude of command. As the boy completes a series of computer calculations Ben puts a hand on his shoulder.

REICH
How are we doing, son?

BEN JR.
Could I dock her myself, dad?

Ben glances at the captain, whose name is HENDRICKS.

REICH
What do you think, Bill?

HENDRICKS
He's learning fast...he just may be the best student pilot I've ever trained.

BEN JR.
(a hint of rivalry)
Better than dad?

REICH
(grinning)
How about that, Bill?

HENDRICKS
Well...you could do it when you were his age.

BEN JR.
Come on, dad! Let me show you what I can do.

REICH
Okay, on one condition...we won't set the robo to bail you out if you miscalculate.

Ben Jr. is indecisive for just a moment; then he nods resolutely and gets to work. Hendricks leaves the captain's chair and Ben takes his place.

REICH
(to Ben Jr.)
Captain, you have the helm.

Then he sits back, truly at ease, proud, smiling as he watches his son maneuver the shuttlecraft to a flawless rendezvous with the satellite.

INT SKY ATRIUM - DAY (ARTIFICIAL)

Trees, flowers, bubbling fountains, with a panoramic dome view of the industrial satellite and the bleakness of space beyond, the black sky brilliant with stars and swirling nebulae. A press conference is in progress.

REICH

...Our projections indicate a 13% growth rate per annum for the next three years.

REPORTER

Does that take into consideration the hundred million cost overrun for this satellite?

REICH

It does.

REPORTER

Thank you, sir.

Reich singles out another reporter.

WINFALL

Mr. Reich, Hubert Winfall of Telemag Digest. I don't find in the prospectus allowance for potential shutdowns. Wouldn't a loss of thirty days or more put Monarch in the red for this fiscal year?

REICH

We won't have any problems with the satellite, Mr. Winfall. Every phase of this operation has been exhaustively tested.

WINFALL

One more question, sir. I understand that D'Courtney Cartel is pressing for a merger, offering terms quite favorable to Monarch Industries. Would you care to comment -

REICH

I've said this repeatedly, but I'll say it again. Any merger is out of the question.

CONTD

WINFALL

Sir, speaking for the millions of concerned viewers of Telemag Digest, don't you think it's time this senseless and wasteful competition between giant conglomerates came to an end?

REICH

The "senseless competition," as you put it, has resulted in new inventions, new products, new ideas that ultimately benefit everyone. If I hadn't fought for twenty years to preserve the integrity of my company, this magnificent satellite would not have been built.

WINFALL

It's really a matter of ego, then, of self-preservation. Perhaps that's why you can't see a merger is both inevitable and desirable...

An angry silence; then Ben abruptly terminates the press conference and stalks away, surrounded by concerned aides.

REICH

(under his breath)

Goddam D'Courtney leech! Get him off my satellite.

INT RIFLE COURT - NIGHT

Octagonal in shape, about twelve feet on a side, with sloping walls and a high illuminated roof. Rifle is a fast, tricky, potentially dangerous game, a combination of pinball and jai-alai. There are two teams of two players, and two balls are always in play, one yellow and one blue. Each ball is about the size of a handball; it is hurled at (legal) speeds of 70 miles an hour by a pneumatic device worn on the arm. The device also has a web-like scoop that covers the hand. Good Rifle players can run half way up a wall, pick off the caroming ball, aim and fire in a second and a half. The primary object is to neutralize your ball in a "null zone" while racking up points with the opponent's ball. There are various gates and "spinners" located around the court. When a ball glances off one of the appropriate tally is fed to a

CONTD

scoreboard overhead. A clock ticks away on the scoreboard.

Ben is teamed with his son against Paul and George. While they scamer around the court George is having an urgent conversation with Ben.

GEORGE

What bothers me is not knowing how or when D'Courtney will put the pressure on...and I hate to say it, but we're vulnerable.

REICH

Your projections give us the time we need - you've always been right, George.

GEORGE

I know. This time we're dealing with a mass of variables I can't assimilate into the projection. We're in space, Ben. Other companies have tried and failed -

REICH

And we took them over. We won't fail.

GEORGE

Of course not. Ben...you pay me for telling you what I think.

REICH

You want a raise? You've got it. Two million a year.

GEORGE

No, no, it's just that I feel - You're a younger man than Craye D'Courtney. He can't go on forever. And right now you're at the peak of your career. You could accept a merger on very favorable terms for yourself.

Ben says nothing, but he switches his hurler to maximum - a hundred miles an hour, the professional's rate of play - and the next time a ball comes to him he aims it at George, getting him high between the shoulder blades. George goes down writhing in pain. Ben stands over him threateningly.

CONTD

BEN JR.

Dad!

REICH

(savage)

They get to you, George?
 D'Courtney's leeches buy you out?
 Merge with Craye D'Courtney? Tell
 your new friends I'd rather merge
 with the devil himself!

(to Paul)

Get him away from me! He's through!

INT SEARBATHS - NIGHT

The sear bath first cleanses by dry vacuum, then an intense, painless flash removes the top layer of dying epidermis, leaving a residue of ash that is sucked away, revealing fresh new skin. The bather wears a protective cap and goggles.

As Ben leaves his sear bath his son is walking into the locker room. Ben catches up, but the boy shrugs him off.

REICH

Wait a minute, son.

Ben Jr's face is contorted by grief and outrage.

BEN JR.

You hit him deliberately! Why'd you
 do a dirty thing like that!

REICH

Because he was selling me out -
 to D'Courtney Cartel. I brought
 George up from nothing - trusted him.
 But let me tell you something about
 business. There's nobody you can
 trust too far. It's a lesson you'd
 better learn now, if you're going
 to survive.

BEN JR.

(sullen)

The hell with your business.

REICH

Ben - don't say that to me. I've
 spent twenty years putting together
 Monarch Industries - for you.

CONTD

BEN JR.

Maybe I just don't want it.

REICH

Then sooner or later D'Courtney will win - by default. You know what that means?

BEN JR.

Dad - why do you hate him so much?

REICH

(he can't quite express it)

Because he's a - a thief, and a scavenger. Ben, over three thousand types of flora and fauna have disappeared in the last 30 years. Oh, we have their genetic codes, we can duplicate them in the lab, but they no longer exist in a natural state. Allow D'Courtney to take over Monarch's holdings, and he'll complete his rape of the earth. That's just what he's been doing, piling up huge profits, while we spend money turning deserts back into farms, orbiting dreams like this satellite. I'll need your help to put even bigger satellites up here. How about it?

Ben Jr., mollified, smiles at his father.

BEN JR.

Sorry I got so upset. I never saw you like that before, it - scared me.

REICH

Okay, now?

BEN JR.

Yeah. Everything's okay.

INT STEAM ROOM - NIGHT

Ben, naked, lies on a jade table. His eyelids flicker drowsily. Suddenly, out of the steam, a huge man emerges. He raises an old-fashioned gun and points it directly at Ben. The assassin has no face.

CONTD

MAN WITH NO FACE

It's time, Ben.

(his finger eases back
the trigger)

Don't disappoint me.

(louder)

Merge!

The hammer strikes an empty chamber. THE MAN WITH NO FACE steps back into the steam and disappears. Ben, shaken and incredulous, gets slowly off the table.

INT BEDROOM SUITE - NIGHT

Deborah is sleeping. A SOUND awakens her. When she sits up light illuminates the pool of carbonated glycerine in which the bed floats.

DEBORAH

Ben?

He appears slowly at the periphery of the light. He is sweating from the steam room. There is a look of profound shock in his eyes.

REICH

In the steam room. A man just
tried to kill me.

DEBORAH

What? That's not possible, Ben.

REICH

A man - huge - no face.

DEBORAH

No face?

REICH

Threatened me with a - a gun.
An old-fashioned gun.

DEBORAH

You must have fallen asleep,
darling, and -

REICH

No nightmare. It was real. He
was real. And I'm telling you,
Deb - he didn't have a face!

EXT SATELLITE - NIGHT

A small shuttle craft from earth arrives at the main dock. Two of Ben's AIDES meet DR. AUGUSTUS TATE as he debarks.

INT SKY ATRIUM - NIGHT

A billion stars blaze colorfully overhead. At Ben's feet tropical fish swarm in a liquid medium. The atrium is semi-dark. Tate enters. The aides withdraw.

TATE

Mr. Reich?

REICH

E for Esper. Esper for Extra-Sensory Perception. For telepaths, mind readers, brain peepers. Man's highest evolution. But you don't look that impressive to me, doctor.

TATE

(a tolerant smile)

What seems to be the trouble, Mr. Reich?

REICH

My wife thinks I've been working too hard. She says I had an hallucination.

TATE

I've come a long way to see you, Mr. Reich. If you'll permit me...

REICH

Go ahead. Get your damned peeping over with.

CLOCK-WIPE to a confusion of images in Ben's head: the encounter in the steam room.

TATE

What did he mean by "merge?"

REICH

One of Craye D'Courtney's leeches giving me some advice.

TATE

And a warning?

REICH

D'Courtney's been pushing for a merger. Next time that gun'll be loaded.

CONTD

TATE

Don't be ridiculous. That's nothing but a paranoid delusion. Successful premeditated murder is impossible.

REICH

You have all the answers - explain how that leech got into my suite and threatened my life!

TATE

Did you know him?

REICH

What the hell are you talking about? He didn't have a face.

TATE

You could recognize him. You're afraid to.

REICH

If the best you can do is waste my time with idiotic statements -

TATE

I think your "faceless man" is part of a general anxiety syndrome. He doesn't fill you with fear because he has no face. You hate and you fear him...but you know who he is.

EXT SATELLITE SMELTER - DAY (ARTIFICIAL)

Ben and a group from the press, all wearing hardhats, observe as the huge facility moves on line with the arrival of the first of a series of drone shuttles from the asteroid belt.

REICH

Each shuttle has a capacity of forty-eight tons of unprocessed ore. At the rate of three shuttles per hour, that's a capacity of one and a quarter million tons a year. And it's just the beginning. We've installed the most modern laser furnaces available. If you gentlemen will come this way -

He steps aboard a people-mover and the others follow.

INT BEDROOM SUITE - DAY (ARTIFICIAL)

A geodesic dome. Deborah is having breakfast. Ben Jr. rushes in pulling on his shirt.

BEN JR.

Mom, I overslept!

DEBORAH

I let you sleep a half hour longer, you looked like you could use it.

BEN JR.

Dad's already left!

DEBORAH

You'll catch up to them. Have some breakfast.

BEN JR.

No, I'm late -

DEBORAH

Ben, you've got all day.

He comes reluctantly back to the table.

BEN JR.

Okay. How's dad today?

DEBORAH

(a cheerful smile)
Never better.

INT SATELLITE CONTROL - DAY (ARTIFICIAL)

On a display screen the stream of drone shuttles from the asteroids is electronically charted. The Traffic Control Managers speak to their stations in the asteroids, and various security launches hovering around the satellite. These posts are visible on TV screens. Computers are active.

TCM - 1

Ceres station, we have a mid-course correction for DR6 as follows: one-one-nine...three-seven-five...stop-one-six.

TCM - 2

Hannibal grid, we scan some kind of space junk floating out there too close to our orbit. What is it?

HANNIBAL GRID COMMANDER

Can't identify.

TCM - 2

Get out the sweeper, Hannibal grid.

HANNIBAL GRID COMMANDER

Roger.

TCM - 3

Skyfreighter Jove, you may enter docking orbit - and welcome aboard, Skipper.

TCM - 4

Smelter blue, this is Drone Control. We are scheduling lift-off of DR1 in thirty seconds. And counting.

INT. BEDROOM SUITE

Ben Jr. is bolting his breakfast and flipping through the channels of a closed-circuit TV, from the sky freighter to DR1 departing the smelter.

BEN JR.

Look at that, mom! She'll make a round trip a month, almost a million miles each way - hey, dad promised me a trip to Ceres station next month after finals.

DEBORAH

You've earned it.

EXT SMELTER BLUE - DRONE 1

As it rises slowly several hundred feet above the life-support domes covering the satellite. Something goes wrong. The drone wobbles off course and plunges back toward the satellite.

INT SATELLITE CONTROL

Alarms go off as the technicians attempt to regain control of the erratic ship.

EXT SATELLITE

The runaway drone hits the satellite, doing monstrous damage.

EXT APARTMENT TOWER COMPLEX

Part of the disintegrating drone ship smashes through the protective bubble, near the terrace suite where Deborah and Ben Jr. are having breakfast.

INT SUITE

The room goes red-dark as a sign flashes LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEM EMERGENCY. Bells ring. Ominous sounds of air escaping into space.

IN SLOW MOTION Ben grabs his mother by the hand tries to run from the room. His breath forms ice clouds in the air. He turns his head, panic in his eyes, as his mother falls. FREEZE FRAME. The room goes as dark as space itself.

INT RESCUE TRAM

Arriving at the apartment tower complex. Behind the tram an explosion rocks the satellite. Ben Reich gets out of the tram with a dozen other men. They are wearing life support suits and helmets. The apartment mall is littered with debris and bodies. Ben looks around frantically.

EXT DOORS OF THE SUITE

RESCUERS are prying at the sealed doors as Ben and his party arrive. The doors spring open. Ben pushes the others aside and goes in.

INT SUITE

The air is filled with shimmering clouds of ice particles. The temperature is down to absolute zero. He shines a powerful light through the room, picking out the figure of his son, arrested in flight, still as a statue. The

CONTD

glances from the boy's face to Deborah lying dead on the floor.

Ben weeps, and reaches out to take Ben Jr.'s face between his hands. The boy literally shatters at his touch, a shower of crystallized flesh and bone.

EXT SATELLITE - DAMAGE SITE - DAY

Prefect Lincoln Powell surveys the area with a team of investigators from the World Police and Ben Reich's assistant, Paul.

POWELL

How long before you can be operational again?

PAUL

At least four months. We evacuated nearly two thirds of our work force pending repair of the life-support systems. Of course we've had to shut down our mining operations as well.

POWELL

That's unfortunate.

PAUL

Disastrous for the company. But the real tragedy is the personal loss. I don't think Ben's going to get over this. That boy was everything to him.

An INVESTIGATOR receives a message from another part of the satellite.

INVESTIGATOR

(to Powell)

Sir, G-team has completed its probe of the traffic control computer. They may have something.

POWELL

Let's get over there.

INT BEN REICH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Ben slams a fat computer report on a desk and turns on Lincoln Powell.

REICH
Unacceptable! Your entire report is unacceptable. This was no accident. That drone crash was deliberate sabotage.

POWELL
The evidence says otherwise, Mr. Reich. A clear case of computer malfunction.

REICH
It was sabotage!

Powell peeps Ben to see what is on his mind. IMAGE OF CRAYE D'COURTNEY.

POWELL
No, Mr. Reich, you're wrong. Craye D'Courtney had nothing to do with this.

REICH
Is that so? I see. Just about anybody can be bought these days, can't they Powell?

POWELL
(unruffled)
I've finished my work here. And my findings are official. I'm deeply sorry, Mr. Reich. I know you've suffered a great loss. In a few weeks perhaps you'll be able to study the report without being misled by your emotions.

REICH
Get out of here!

POWELL
Good night, Mr. Reich.

EXT MONARCH CORPORATE SHUTTLE
Approaching Earth.

INT BEN REICH'S STATEROOM

On the Vu-cube is a spokesman for D'Courtney Cartel, a

CONTD

narrow, prim, dapper man who reads a statement from Craye D'Courtney. Behind him is a huge blow-up of D'Courtney. He looks stern, tough, and confident, a man who has never lost a crucial match in his life, no matter what game he happens to be playing.

SPOKESMAN

...All of us at D'Courtney Cartel
join together in expressing our
sorrow at the loss of your family
in the tragic accident aboard
the space satellite.

The Vu-cube develops a glitch, so that the last phrase is repeated several times: "tragic accident aboard the space satellite." Each time we

CUT FROM CLOSEUP OF BEN REICH TO CRAYE D'COURTNEY'S FAINTLY SMILING FACE

Ben is a little drunk. Tears stream down his cheeks.

EXT CORRIDOR OUTSIDE BEN REICH'S STATEROOM

Augustus Tate approaches the door.

INT STATEROOM

Ben is sprawled on the free lounge, studying images of Pete, the Demolished Man, on the Vu-cube. Tate enters hesitantly, getting no response from Ben. He stares at the vu-cube, aghast.

TATE

Where - where did you get that?

Then he peeps Ben. IMAGE OF BEN MURDERING CRAYE D'COURTNEY. The vu-cube suddenly goes blank. Tate is so overcome he has to sit down.

TATE

Oh my God...no!

Ben finally turns to face him.

REICH

Did you get it all, Gus?

TATE

Mr. Reich...if you keep thinking like this, I have to commit you.

CONTD

TATE (Contd)

You know the law.

REICH

I know the law...and the penalty. But that son of a bitch has been after me for years. He destroyed my wife, and my son. And now I'm going to kill Craye D'Courtney... with your help.

TATE

(in a whirl)

But this is impossible - I can't sit here and listen to - there are rules I'm sworn to uphold. I have to commit you, Mr. Reich.

But he doesn't move, though he is suffering from profound anxiety. Ben compounds that anxiety by again turning on the vu-cube. Gus can't take his eyes off Pete as he is demolished. Ben approaches him, and puts a comforting hand on his shoulder.

REICH

Just the way it happened to your father.

Gus begins to weep.

TATE

What do you know...about my father?

REICH

I ran the file on you, Gus. Your father was a brilliant inventor - but no businessman. Craye D'Courtney paid him a fortune to join the Cartel - then -

TATE

He stole my father's inventions.

REICH

Framed him for embezzlement, and had him demolished. Another rival gone - all in a day's work for D'Coyrtney. Where is your father now, Gus?

CONTD

TATE

Please - no more - TURN IT OFF!

Ben does so. Gus sits weeping.

REICH

Help me kill Craye D'Courtney.
I can't do it without you.

TATE

Murder is impossible. Espers peep
intent and guilt.

REICH

Esper evidence isn't admissable
in court.

TATE

Once an Esper discovers guilt
he can always uncover objective
evidence to support his peeping.
Sooner or later you'll be up
against Lincoln Powell.

REICH

What can stop a peeper? Another
peeper.

TATE

D'Courtney's virtually a recluse.
He'll be impossible to get to.

REICH

I can get to him. In the meantime
it'll be up to you to protect me.
You'll check the normals, spot the
peepers, warn me and block their
mind-reading if I can't avoid them.
After I've killed him, you'll see
to it that I get away.

TATE

Powell is brilliant - and deadly.

REICH

You're as good as he is, Gus.

TATE

Yes. Yes, I may be. But my protection
won't be enough. You'll need a
foolproof scheme. You can't leave
any physical evidence. . .What am
I saying? It can't be done. Let
me go, Mr. Reich.

CONTD

REICH

Go ahead. Walk out of here. And turn me in. That's what you have to do now, Gus - you can't violate the Guild's code of ethics, can you? What are you waiting for?

Gus doesn't move. He stares at Ben.

REICH

I'm no Peeper. But I know what's on your mind.

Twenty years of pent-up emotion spills out.

TATE

Yes! Yes! I want him dead! Kill him, Reich! Kill himmmmmmm!

CUT TO

EXT A WOODED AREA ON EARTH - DAY

Ben Reich is stalking a deer with an old-fashioned weapon: a crossbow. An earlobe beeper interrupts him.

SECRETARY'S VOICE

You have a long-distance caller, Mr. Reich. Maria Beaumont.

Ben puts his crossbow down and consults a wrist computer.

REICH

Send her to me. Co-ordinates X35 - 7J1.

In a few moments MARIA BEAUMONT, an ageless socialite, is walking beside him, holographically.

MARIA

(chiding)

Ben, I've spent weeks trying to get hold of you!

REICH

I haven't felt like talking to anybody.

MARIA

It isn't good for you to go on and on, endlessly grieving. Give your old friends a chance to help.

CONTD

REICH

What did you have in mind, Maria?

MARIA

Nothing elaborate - a masquerade party. Just a two or three day affair, three hundred of my most intimate friends. You must come and let me cheer you up.

REICH

No thanks.

MARIA

Ben - I promised - I gave my solemn word to a certain someone that you'd be there.

REICH

Who?

MARIA

Well - Craye D'Courtney is jetting down from that lofty retreat of his in the Himalayas, and he's frantic to have a meeting with you.

REICH

For what reason?

MARIA

How would I know? Business, I suppose. That merger thing. He's being very secretive. No one's to know that he's coming. Ben - would you take some advice from an old friend? I know you're not interested in business affairs any more - not after the tragedy. Why don't you sell out, and really start to enjoy life.

REICH

Not a bad idea.

MARIA

Marvellous! Can I count on you?

REICH

How is D'Courtney these days?

CONTD

MARIA

Haven't seen him for ages. I understand he's not well.

REICH

That's a pity.

MARIA

Ben, I must run, I'm having lunch in Delhi and I haven't done my hair. See you on the 15th?

REICH

I'll think it over.

INT GIFT SHOP - DAY

An establishment for the very wealthy. Display cases like crystal balls float in the air; they can be summoned at the snap of a salesman's fingers. One of the salesmen is hovering around Ben as soon as he clears the door.

SALESMAN

Mr. Reich, how wonderful to see you again!

REICH

I'd like something special for a lady I've neglected.

SALESMAN

By all means.
(holding up his hands)
Perhaps the latest in fingernail implant chips.

He rubs one of them with the ball of his thumb, producing haunting musical effects in the air. Ben is non-committal. Other chips orchestrate a dazzling light show which emanates from a crystal wind chime.

REICH

Gimmicks. I said something special.

Ben walks away from the Salesman and stops in front of a display of books.

REICH

What have we here?

SALESMAN

19th and 20th century books, Mr. Reich.

CONTD

REICH
(looking over the titles)
Interesting.

His hand moves across the volumes, stopping on a remembered tattered brown book, which he pretends he's seeing for the first time.

REICH
What's this one? 'Let's Play Party.'

SALESMAN
From the Walburn Collection. Most of the volumes were printed in the 1950's.

Ben reads from the table of contents, chuckling.

REICH
'Honeymoon Bridge'... 'Prussian Whist'... 'Post Office'... 'Sardine.'
What could that be? Page 96.

Ben flips through the pages until he comes to a bold-face heading: HILARIOUS MIXED PARTY GAMES - ONE: SARDINE. He starts reading the rules of the game, laughing. The Salseman joins in.

REICH
'One player is selected to be it. All the lights are turned out, and then 'It' hides anywhere in the house. After a few minutes the players go to find 'It,' hunting seperately. The first one who finds him does not reveal the fact but hides with him...

DISSOLVE TO

MONTAGE OF BEN REICH DEFACING THE GAME BOOK

With heat, acid, stain, and scissors, he mutilates all the other game instructions to incomplete fragments. Only "Sardine" is left intact.

REICH'S VOICE
...wherever he may be. Successively each player finding the Sardines joins them until all are hidden in one place and the last player, who is the loser, is left to wander alone in the dark.

CONTD

When he has finished doctoring the game book, Ben calls in a manservant.

REICH

Have this book gift-wrapped and delivered immediately to Maria Beaumont.

EXT GARDEN - TWILIGHT

Ben is studying the crippled Monarch satellite through a powerful telescope when he hears a voice behind him.

BARBARA D'COURTNEY'S VOICE

Mr. Reich?

He turns, and is confronted by her shimmering holographic image.

BARBARA

Hear me, Ben. It's so important.

REICH

(savagely)
Get the hell away from me!

He runs across the lawn, as if afraid of her.

BARBARA

No, Ben, come back!

Barbara's image comes twinkling after him. Suddenly Ben whirls, having taken up a strategic position. His foot touches a hidden alarm. As Barbara catches up to him a force field springs up around him like a lawn sprinkler; her image shatters against the field, and dissipates. Her voice trails off to the stars.

BARBARA

I'm so sorry for you, please believe me...

INT AUGUSTUS TATE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gus is entertaining a forbidden guest: his own father, who is dressed in a custodian's ill-fitting jump suit. He gobbles home-made cake while paying guilty attention to a vu-cube. Gus is trying to teach his father how to read.

TATE

Try again. Sound out each word.

Three-dimensional words appear sequentially in the vu-cube. Two simple sentences. Tomorrow the weather will be fair and warm. Tomorrow I will go to town. The old man tries, stuttering. He looks up helplessly at Gus. Cake crumbs cling to his whiskery chin.

FATHER

I can't. Reading's too hard.

A strained smile from Gus. He inserts another cartridge into the vu-cube, punches up title after title: works on ballistics and aerodynamics.

TATE

You wrote all these. Brilliant works!

FATHER

(a sweet, meaningless smile)

Did I?

TATE

Damn it! I know you can read again - and write. If you'll only try.

Gus only succeeds in making the old man nervous. He spills his drink.

FATHER

Look what I did...you been so nice to me.

TATE

I'm your son! Your son - don't you understand?

The father shakes his head, grinning in terror at Gus's vehemence. Gus slumps in a chair, demoralized, grief-stricken. A soft bell, and a small TV screen pops up out of the arm of the chair. Ben Reich's face fills the screen. Gus's father rises.

CONTD

FATHER

Better go. Be late for work.

Gus presses a button to admit Ben to the apartment. His father scurries past Ben and out the door.

REICH

Who was that?

TATE

My father.

REICH

How dumb can you get? You're not allowed to fraternize with a Dee-mo relative. Where'd you put your brains tonight, Tate?

TATE

Shut up! Just shut up!

They stare at each other. Ben relents.

REICH

I'm sorry.

TATE

You can't imagine what it's like. He was - someone I loved very much. I know it's hopeless, you can't bring them back after Demolition.

REICH

Forget it. We've got five days. What have you found out?

TATE

I was at a dinner party with Craye D'Courtney's personal physician. I got a good peep at him.

REICH

Dangerous...

TATE

He blocked carefully. But he's only a second, and I'm a first. D'Courtney will be at Maria Beaumont's, all right, though he's been warned not to travel. It seems that D'Courtney suffered a violent trauma recently... he's headed for emotional

CONTD

TATE (Contd)
bankruptcy. He must want very
badly to meet with you.

Ben starts for the door.

REICH
Maybe he's feeling guilty. But
I'll get him before the guilt
does.

TATE
(grim and scared)
We can't afford to fail - if we
do, it's Demolition.

INT MONARCH INDUSTRIES RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY

A LAB TECHNICIAN wearing an eye shield breaks open a
small cube before TWO LABORATORY SUBJECTS. A dazzling
purple flare takes over the screen.

VIEW PORTS

Ben Reich and some Monarch RESEARCHERS watch the experiment,
their eyes protected by the leaded glass. One of the
researchers explains.

RESEARCHER
The purple light is of the precise
frequency to act on the Rhodopsin
portion of the retina. As you can
see, it immediately blinds the
victim and also blanks out
temporal perception up to three
hours.

REICH
No permanent damage?

RESEARCHER
None.

REICH
I'd like to have a look for myself.

A glass partition opens and Ben walks into the lab. He
observes the two stunned laboratory subjects. They stand
motionlessly looking at him, but they don't see him.
The researcher comes up to Ben.

CONTD

RESEARCHER

They won't remember anything.

REICH

The capsules are everything you told me they'd be. What about the competition?

RESEARCHER

Our security sources tell us we have a six to eight month lead in this area.

REICH

Let me see those...

The researcher motions to one of the lab technicians, who hands over a bottle filled with copper capsules. Ben shakes some of them into his hand. He shakes too hard, and a number of the capsules spill to the floor. The technicians scramble to retrieve the valuable cubes.

REICH

Clumsy...

RESEARCHER

No problem, Mr. Reich.

While everyone is distracted, Reich palms and pockets two of the capsules.

EXT PSYCHSONGS, LTD.

INT GALLERY OF PSYCHSONGS

Ben is studying a collection of antique Victrolas when a young lady named DUFFY comes eagerly up behind him.

DUFFY

Ben?

She kisses him on the cheek, as if she's hoping for a more intimate response. He smiles slightly and gives her a brief squeeze.

DUFFY

I'm so sorry about -

REICH

(gruffly)

Over and done with. I'm not in mourning any longer.

DUFFY

Should have let me know you were coming - I could be free for lunch.

REICH

I can't be.

DUFFY

Oh. Am I dumb. I thought this might be a social call.

REICH

Strictly business, Duffy.

She smiles, too brightly.

DUFFY

What kind of business, sir?

REICH

Gambling. My recreational director tells me there's too much gambling going on at Monarch.

DUFFY

Keep a man in debt, he's afraid to ask for a raise.

REICH

I don't see it that way.

CONTD

DUFFY

So - you want a no-gambling type of tune to pump through your muzak.

REICH

Catchy. Not too obvious. More a delayed-action than a straight propaganda tune.

(Duffy nods)

For God's sake make it something worth hearing. I have to listen to a thousand people singing and whistling and humming it.

DUFFY

All my tunes are worth hearing.

REICH

Once.

DUFFY

That's a thousand extra on your tab.

REICH

(laughing)

What's the most persistent tune you ever wrote?

DUFFY

Persistent?

REICH

You know. Like one of those advertising jingles you can't get out of your head.

DUFFY

Oh, sure. I got one for you. I wrote it for an aspirin commercial, about a mathematician with a migraine. Hate to think of it even now. Guaranteed to obsess you for a month. It haunted me for a year.

REICH

Cut the hard sell.

DUFFY

This one sells itself.

CONTD

REICH

Let's hear it.

DUFFY

I wouldn't do that to you.

REICH

Come on, Duffy. Now I'm really curious.

DUFFY

You'll be sorry. Step into my viewing room.

INT VIEWING ROOM

A round console table with a vu-cube suspended above it. Duffy punches out a computer code. Within a few seconds the room is filled with a tune of utter monotony and agonizing, unforgettable banality. On the vu-cube a math teacher instructs his class in vector analysis while suffering from a terrific headache. CAMERA ZOOMS into his pain-filled eyes as we hear:

• Eight, sir, seven, sir;
Six, sir; five, sir;
Four, sir; three, sir;
Two, sir; one!
Tenser, said the Tensor.
Tenser, said the Tensor.
Tension, tension, apprehension
And dissension have begun.

REICH

(holding his ears)

Oh my God! How long does this go on?

Duffy mercifully blanks the vu-cube.

DUFFY

Warned you. That tune of mine will rattle around your skull for a month. And you better hang a sign around your neck to warn off all those peepers that work for you. One peep inside your head and they'll be infected too.

CONTD

REICH

Duffy, you know how to leave an impression a guy will never forget.

DUFFY

Shove it up your ass.
(with a charming smile)
Mr. Reich, sir.

CUT TO

INT JERRY CHURCH'S MUSEUM - DAY

Crammed and littered with the debris of time--a museum of Eternity. Jerry is an obsequious little man, scared to death of Ben Reich, and with good reason. He comes quickly down a long hall divided by slant beams of sunlight, blinking and wheezing in the dust he raises.

JERRY

Mr. Reich, Mr. Reich! What a pleasure to see you!

REICH

Why?

JERRY

I was deeply distressed to hear of your tragic loss. I was thinking of you just yesterday - and here you are.

He stares at Ben, unable to suppress a shudder, his mouth twitching in the semblance of a quizzical smile. CLOCK-WIPE as he attempts to peep Ben.

All Jerry can clearly get is Duffy's maddening jingle: Tension, tension, apprehension and dissension have begun. This is mixed in with images of the math teacher who has the headache, vectors, and a strange-looking gun. CLOCK-WIPE. Jerry steps back, wincing. Ben smiles.

REICH

Relax, Jerry. I don't mean you any harm. Looks like you're doing all right with this place.

JERRY

It's a living. Can I - offer you anything?

CONTD

REICH

You could do me a favor.

JERRY

What sort of -

REICH

Jerry, I want a gun. Something unique.

JERRY

A gun? But -

REICH

You have quite a collection.

JERRY

I'm licensed to exhibit them. But possession outside the museum is strictly forbidden.

REICH

We're going to bend the rules a little, Jerry.

JERRY

Mr. Reich, I don't think I can -

REICH

The way I bent the rules for you. Remember?

JERRY

Of c-c-c-course -

REICH

How close did you come to Demolition, Jerry?

JERRY

You k-k-know. But maybe I would have been b-b-better off -

REICH

Calm down, Jerry. It's a small favor to ask. You won't get into any trouble.

Jerry begins to laugh, and then to sob. Ben takes hold of him.

REICH

I'll take care of you. I took care of you once before..I could

CONTD

REICH (Contd).
have had you Demolished for
engaging in industrial espionage.
But I was sorry for you.

JERRY
Sorry! I lost my Guild status. Do
you have any idea what that means
to an Esper?

REICH
I want that gun, Jerry. As a gift
for a good friend of mine. Gus
Tate. Know him?

JERRY
A first. One of the top Espers.
I could have been -
(he cuts off the
thought)
Is Tate a collector?
(Reich nods)
What sort of gun did you say?

REICH
Keno Quizzard mentioned it to me
some time ago. He saw it here. A
knife-pistol made of steel.
Collapsible. Do you still have it?

INT WEAPONS ROOM OF THE MUSEUM

Jerry unlocks a case and reaches inside, withdrawing a
lump of tarnished steel. He presses a stud; the lump
springs open into knuckerlings, revolver and stiletto.
Ben whistles appreciatively and reaches for it.

JERRY
Careful. It's loaded.

REICH
(frowning)
That won't do. We don't want any
accidents...

Jerry again tries to peep Ben, but backs off from the
monotonous tune in Ben's head.

JERRY
No, no, we don't want any
accidents...

Jerry swings a cylinder out from the side of the revolver, displaying five chambered brass cartridges.

REICH

Better pull the heads off those cartridges.

INT WORKSHOP

Jerry finishes wrenching the bullets from the cartridges. He slides the now-harmless cartridges back into the chambers, snaps the cylinder home and hands over the weapon.

JERRY

I could be closed down for this. Worse.

REICH

I told you that you don't have anything to worry about.

Jerry clutches at Ben's sleeve. His face is taut with misery.

JERRY

I've given you what you want. Now help me - help me!

REICH

What's the matter, Jerry?

JERRY

You don't know what it's like! I have to be re-instated. I have to get back in the guilt. I want to be alive again!

REICH

You're alive.

JERRY

Barely. But I'm like a deaf-mute. Years ago they communicated by manual sign-language. That meant they couldn't communicate with anybody but other deaf-mutes. Understand? They had to live in their own community or they couldn't live at all. A man goes crazy if he can't talk to his friends.

REICH

So?

CONTD

JERRY

Some of them started a racket. They'd tax the more successful mutes for weekly handouts. If he refused to pay, they ostracized him. The victim always paid. It was a choice of paying or living in solitary until he went mad. You have ways, Mr. Reich. You can get me back into the Guild!

REICH

Impossible.

He walks away, leaving the shattered Jerry.

JERRY

For God's sake, help me! Help me, or kill me. I'm dead already! I just haven't the guts for suicide!

CUT TO

INT MARIA BEAUMONT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A multi-story, opera-Italianate affair with a huge atrium, dripping with Renaissance art. Some of Maria's party guests arrive in old-fashioned gondolas, by way of a canal that winds through the atrium. Others, like Ben Reich and Gus Tate, come down from hovering shuttle craft via lift beam.

Ben is dressed as Richard III and Tate as Freud. CAMERA GOES FROM FACE TO FACE as we clock-wipe to what is in each man's mind: Ben's thoughts are filled with the rhodopsin capsules, the concealed knife-pistol, the impending murder; Tate's head reverberates with the singing commercial (TENSER, SAID THE TENSOR). But as Ben visualizes more vividly the actual killing of Craye D'Courtney the commercial in Tate's mind is interrupted. WE RETURN TO A TWO-SHOT just as Ben pictures himself raising the gun to fire, and the blast that blows D'Courtney's head off.

TATE

For God's sake! Be careful, man. Your murder's showing.

Ben looks at him, grimacing; his lips begin to move.

CONTD

REICH
(barely audible)
One, sir; two, sir; three, sir!

TATE
That's better.

They arrive at floor level, amid the revelers. A willowy young man, an Esper secretary wearing the trademark collar, drifts toward them. His name is BARRY.

REICH
Why isn't he in costume?

TATE
He's one of Maria's peeper secretaries. He screens the arrivals for crashers. Keep singing...

SECRETARY (BARRY)
Why, Dr. Freud and King Richard, how good of you to come.

Right behind him is Maria Beaumont, who has just had pneumatic surgery and looks too good to be real, a female version of Doc Savage, Man of Bronze.

MARIA
Ben, darling!

She embraces him with the fervor of a hungry mantis.

MARIA
Ben, this is divine! I knew I could count on you!

Ben is afraid that she might come across the gun he is carrying. He disentangles himself gracefully, shooting a look at Tate over her shoulder. Tate shakes his head reassuringly. Maria glances at him.

MARIA
Dr. Tate! I'm honored, but you must promise no peeping tonight.

TATE
When in Rome...

MARIA
I hope you like my new body. I spent six hours in pneumatic surgery today! You'd never guess what it cost...but no peeping.

CONTD

TATE

You may depend on me, my dear.
But your mind is so filled with
erotic images it's difficult not
to feast on them.

MARIA

That sort of flattery will get
you everywhere. Come, I want you
to meet some of our dear little
celebrities -

She takes each of them by the arm and leads them deeper
into the throng of guests. Suddenly Gus is aware of
approaching danger and gives Ben a sharp glance. Ben puts
his hand to his mouth as if suppressing a yawn. His lips
barely move. Tension, tension, apprehension and dissension
have begun. A twin of the first secretary flits up to
them.

MARIA

Larry Ferrar, Ben. You've already
met Barry. They're identical, and
not a stitch of surgery, isn't
that marvellous? Larry's been
dying to meet you.

LARRY

Mr. Reich. Thrilled!
(to Maria).

Madame, you asked me to tell you -

Larry and Maria exchange knowing looks. Maria smiles at
Gus and draws Ben aside.

MARIA

Ben, darling. Craye D'Courtney's
just arrived. Give him time to
collect his wits -

REICH

Sure.

Barry, the first secretary, appears at Maria's elbow.
Ben's lips move again as Maria's attention is diverted.

BARRY

Madame. We have a slight problem.

MARIA

What is it?

Barry indicates a tall young man standing near a fountain.

GALEN CHERVIL - THEIR POV

RESUME PREVIOUS SCENE

BARRY

I've peeped him. He has no invitation. He's a college student named Galen Chervil. He bet he could crash the party. He plans to steal a porno picture of you as proof.

MARIA

(obviously delighted)
Of me!

Maria studies Galen, her interest focused on his well-built body, revealed by a skimpy costume.

BARRY

He's a clever boy, difficult to probe. But I have the impression he'd like to steal more than your picture.

Gus Tate is also studying Galen, and he looks sick.

MARIA

Would he!

BARRY

Shall I have him removed?

MARIA

No. Let him get his proof.

REICH

And it won't be stolen.

MARIA

Jealous! Shall we have something to eat - oh, just a moment, Ben, there's someone I must speak to.

Maria bounces away ecstatically; Gus moves close to Ben.

TATE

That's it. Let's call it a night.

REICH

What the hell are you talking about?

TATE

The Chervil boy - I know him. He's too good. I can block those numbskull twins all night, but not Galen Chervil.

CONTD

REICH

We'll never get a chance like this again. Stop squirming. I'll take care of that kid. You find out exactly where D'Courtney is. GET MOVING.

TATE

It's no good. I've peeped the twins. Maria's the only one who knows what suite he's in.

REICH

Well?

TATE

All she has on her mind is sex. I can't probe through it.

REICH

Where's the Chervil kid now?

TATE

By the buffet. What are you going to do?

REICH

You'll find out. Get close to Maria and stand by to peep her.

Tate moves to a gallery overlooking the canal where guests have begun to eat. They feed one another, a ritual originating in Oriental politesse but now debased into erotic play. Large dishes of exotic cuisine are passed around by servants. Wine goes mouth to mouth. Tate appears completely occupied with the feasting, but he keeps a close eye on Maria.

Ben approaches Galen Chervil, who is doing his best to look at ease. The boy is eating alone.

REICH

I'm Ben Reich.

CHERVIL

(impressed)
How do you do?

REICH

And you're Galen Chervil.

CONTD

Galen looks both startled and guilty, and starts to get up.

REICH

Relax. Maria already knows you're a crasher.

CHERVIL

I'll just be on my way -

REICH

Without the picture?

CHERVIL

Damn those twins! I thought I had them blocked. What am I going to, do without that picture? I've got two thousand riding on this stunt -

REICH

I'm not stopping you. See that arch? Go straight through a hundred feet and turn right. You'll find a study. The walls are lined with Maria's portraits. Help yourself. She expects her guests to steal them. Better get moving...

CHERVIL

Just one thing. What is that crazy song in your head?

They smile at each other. Ben feels secure.

REICH

Heard it the other day and I can't forget it.

CHERVIL

(wincing)

Neither can I.

REICH

Peep at your own risk. If you waste any more time, you're going to be two thousand poorer.

In his haste Galen almost upsets an elaborate food tray. Ben smiles, watching him weave his way toward Maria's study. Then he joins Maria.

CONTD

MARIA

(pouting)

I look around and you've disappeared. Who've you been feeding?

REICH

The Chervil boy. He asked me where you keep your pictures.

MARIA

Ben! You didn't tell him!

REICH

Of course I did. You know I'm jealous. He's on his way to get one now -

But Maria is heading for her study, a gleam in her eye, before Ben can finish.

DISSOLVE TO:

Maria returning from the study. Her face is relaxed, sated. Gus Tate trails behind her, and joins Ben.

TATE

Chervil cleared her head.

REICH

No more sex on the brain?

TATE

(nodding)

I don't know how you got away with it. You're broadcasting bloodlust on every wavelength.

REICH

Did you peep where D'Courtney is?

TATE

Yes. No servants. Only two bodyguards. Go through the west arch. Turn right. Up the stairs. Down the hall. Turn right again. There's a picture gallery. Use the door between the paintings -

REICH

Which paintings?

CONTD

TATE

(a quick smile)

The Rape of Lucrece and The
Rape of the Sabine Women.

REICH

Figures.

TATE

Behind the door is a moving
stair to an anteroom. That's where
the guards are. Past that is
the old wedding suite Maria's
grandfather built. D'Courtney's
there.

Maria rides a lift beam to a position a few feet above
the collected guests. Spotlights shine on her. She demands
and gets everyone's full attention.

MARIA

Darlings, we're going to have
so much fun tonight! We're going
to provide our own entertainment.
(groans)

Now don't be like that. We're
going to play a wonderful old game,
and best of all we're going to
play it in the dark.

Ben looks at Gus. The lights in the mansion begin to dim.
Maria holds up a tattered volume, opens it, turning the
pages slowly. She looks up.

MARIA

It's a game called Sardine. Isn't
that adorable?

Ben's face becomes taut; his hand touches the area where
he has concealed the gun.

TATE

(a savage whisper)

For God sakes keep singing that
song!

Ben's lips move silently as Maria reads from the game book.

MARIA

One player is selected to be IT.
That's going to be me. All the
lights in the house are turned
out, and IT hides anywhere. Each

CONTD

MARIA (Contd)
player who finds IT joins the Sardines until everybody is hidden. The last player, the loser, is left to wander alone in the dark.

Maria closes the book.

MARIA
And darlings, we're all going to feel very sorry for the loser, because we're going to play this funny old game in a wonderful new way.

As Maria's spotlight begins to fade, she strips off her gown and displays her astonishing nude body, a miracle of pneumatic surgery.

MARIA
We're going to play Sardine like this!

The spot blinks out. There's a roar of laughter and applause, followed by whisperings of cloth drawn across skin.

REICH
Keep those peeper secretaries out of my way.

TATE
What about Galen Chervil?

REICH
He should be gone by now.

Ben crosses the hall, bumping into naked guests at the west arch. He passes them and enters a music room, turns right, gropes for the stairs.

INT MOVING STAIRCASE - NIGHT

At the foot of the stairs Ben runs into more bodies; hands try to pull him down into the melee. He slips past them and rides the escalator up. At the top he is seized by a WOMAN who presses her body against him.

CONTD

WOMAN
Hello, Sardine.

She grimaces, pulling away from Ben.

WOMAN
Owww! What's that?

She touches the hard outline of the gun beneath Ben's costume. He slaps her hand away.

WOMAN
Clever-up, Sardine.
(she giggles)
Get out of the can.

Ben moves away from her; he turns right and finds himself in a vaulted gallery, empty and filled with a greenish luminous haze. In the gallery he opens a polished bronze door, rides another moving stair, taking the rhodopsin ionizer from his back pocket. At the anteroom door he breaks the copper cube and hurls it inside, averts his eyes. There is a cold purple flash. Ben waits a few moments, then rushes inside.

D'Courtney's bodyguards sit slumped on the floor, their vision destroyed, their time sense abolished.

Past them is a jeweled door like a peacock's fan. Ben opens it.

INT JUNGLE ROOM - NIGHT

An interior decorator's idea of what a clearing in the Amazon looked like a hundred years ago. There's a water-wall; sunlight beams down; unseen birds chuckle and chortle. Another wall is constructed of multi-faceted crystals; touch one and it rotates effortlessly, presenting a realistic jungle animal that seems to leap into the room.

Ben is momentarily fascinated, until Craye D'Courtney comes out of a sear bath, smiling, arms outstretched, lips moving soundlessly.

Instead of the virile man Ben expected, D'Courtney is old, ravaged by throat cancer. His appearance stuns Ben.

REICH
D'Courtney?
(the old man nods)
I'm Ben Reich. Don't you know me?

CONTD

D'COURTNEY

(smiling; whispering)

Ben...dear Ben...waited so long.
Can't talk now. Throat. Can't
talk.

He tries to embrace Ben, who pushes him away. Ben is more confused than ever.

REICH

What are you trying to do to me?
For the last ten years you've been
at my throat! You murdered my wife
and boy!

D'COURTNEY

(shaking his head in
bewilderment)

No, Ben. No.

Again he stretches out his arms to Ben.

REICH

Get away, you crazy son of a bitch!
I'm not giving you any more chance than
you gave them!

Ben pulls the knife-pistol, and it opens; D'Courtney groans and backs away. Ben seizes him, tries to force the muzzle of the pistol into the old man's mouth. As they struggle along the crystal wall jungle creatures realistically and alarmingly pop out at them. Then, suddenly, appearing through the synthetic water wall, BARBARA D'COURTNEY is in the room, nearly nude in a silk gown. She screams.

BARBARA

Father! For God's sake! Father!

She runs toward D'Courtney. Ben swings him away.

BARBARA

No, Ben, don't, he's -

There's an explosion, and a gout of blood spurts from the back of the old man's head.

BARBARA

...Father...

She shrieks and throws herself on Ben, slamming his head against the floor. She then kneels beside the dead man, snatches the weapon still protruding from his mouth.

CONTD

As Ben slowly gets off the floor Barbara stares at him, eyes glazing. Then she runs. Ben has a glimpse of the murder weapon in her hand. He starts after Barbara.

INT VAULTED HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lined with medieval suits of armor. As Barbara runs she trips a hidden alarm; a barrier of blinding, criss-crossed laser beams leap from the eye slits of the ranked helmets, stopping Ben. He takes a turn, into pitch darkness, finds a moving stair. As he goes down he perceives Gus Tate waiting for him below.

REICH

You son of a bitch! He had his daughter up there! Why didn't you let me know?

Gus stiffens with horror, his eyes wide and staring as he peeps Ben. He begins to tremble.

TATE

My God. Oh my God...

He begins sobbing.

REICH

Shut up! It isn't Demolition yet.

TATE

You'll have to kill her too!

REICH

We have to find her first. You've got her pattern from me. Cover the house.

Gus closes his eyes, scanning the house mentally.

TATE

She's gone.

REICH

She can't be!

TATE

I tell you, her pattern is nowhere in the house! We've got to get out of here too -

REICH

Wait a minute. Maybe nobody saw the girl leave. Where are the others?

CONTD

TATE

They're all-packed into the rumpus room, still playing Sardine. We're the last two wandering around.

REICH

This has to look good, Tate. Once we get out of here, we've got the rest of the night to find the D'Courtney girl.

He grabs Gus by the hand and pulls him toward the rumpus room.

REICH

(calling plaintively)
Hey...where is everybody? Maria!
Mariaaaa! Where's everybody?

Gus sobs again. Ben shakes him.

REICH

Play the goddam game. We'll be out of here in ten minutes.

INT RUMPUS ROOM - NIGHT

Dark. Sound of music, faint, like old-time carousel music but with a 2049 tempo. The door opens hesitantly, and Ben appears, the reluctant Gus behind him.

REICH

Where are you?

Muffled laughter. Then eyes begin to appear everywhere in the dark, moving swiftly as the music grows louder, eyes that stare unwinkingly at him before they vanish.

MARIA'S VOICE

Darling, you've missed all the fun. Come closer.

Ben, towing Gus, advances into the room.

REICH

Where are you? I've come to say goodnight.

MARIA

Now, Ben, don't be a poor loser.

CONTD

A spotlight picks out Ben. Voices howl in disappointment.

MARIA

Ben, you cheat, you're still dressed. That isn't fair. You've ruined our peepshow!

More lights come on. Centerpiece of the room is a carousel, but instead of horses this one has grotesque, outsized, painted and bejeweled nymphs and satyrs in compromising positions. The carousel is packed with naked party guests. Ben smilingly offers a hand to help Maria down from the slowing carousel. On the gleaming white lace of his cuff an angry red spot appears. In sturmed silence they all watch a second and a third drop appear. Then Ben and Maria look at the vaulted glass ceiling. Blood is spreading like a pall over a panel of opaque glass and dripping through a crack. Maria screams.

MARIA

That's blood. There's someone upstairs bleeding! Lights! Lights! Lights!

CUT TO

EXT BEAUMONT MANSION - NIGHT

Outside the mansion the body of Craye D'Courtney is being conveyed to a field pathology lab for detailed analysis when Lincoln Powell arrives. He is met by several DEPUTIES, one of whom briefs him on the murder.

DEPUTY

We've got a payload of inconsistencies. One, the killer's distorted pattern wasn't noticed by Maria Beaumont's secretaries. Two, we don't know who killed D'Courtney, or how he was killed.

POWELL

Where's his daughter?

DEPUTY

She was here, but she disappeared. Three, somebody robbed D'Courtney's bodyguards of one hour and we don't know how.

INT MANSION - NIGHT

Two ESPER COPS with electrodes on their heads are making peep-records of every guest as they are released to go home.

INT SALON - NIGHT

Ben Reich is waiting with Gus Tate and Ben's ESPer lawyer, JO QUARTERMAINE. Ben strides across the room to meet Lincoln Powell as he enters with DEPUTIES. Ben exudes a tremendous aura of charm and power. .

POWELL

Pleasure to see you again, Mr. Reich.

REICH

You know my lawyer - Jo. Quartermaine.

Powell nods and turns to Gus Tate.

POWELL

Because of your Guild status you're excused from questioning, doctor.

TATE

(nervous)

I know. I thought I might be able to help.

POWELL

Thanks. We can manage.

QUARTERMAINE

I want Tate here. There's to be no peeping, Linc. This has to be on Reich's level. Dr. Tate and I will see that it is.

POWELL

(turning to Ben)

What happened?

REICH

Don't you know?

POWELL

I'd like your version.

QUARTERMAINE

Why Reich's in particular?

CONTD

POWELL

Because he's the only man in
the house with two ESPers
sealing his mind. It's making
me a little suspicious.

REICH

(smiling)

You don't run the largest
conglomerate in the world without
building a stockpile of secrets
that have to be protected.

POWELL

Is murder one of them?

CONTD

REICH

We all know murder is impossible
in this day and age.

POWELL

Somebody doesn't think so.
(he points at Ben's
cuff)
How did that happen?

REICH

We were all in the rumpus room.
Blood started to drip through the
glass ceiling. I went tearing up
stairs to the jungle suite.

POWELL

You didn't have any trouble
finding the suite?

REICH

I've been a guest in this house
many times.

POWELL

You saw the bodyguards?

REICH

They looked dead. Like stone.
They couldn't move a muscle.

POWELL

How did D'Courtney look?

REICH

The back of his head was blown
away.

~~REICH~~

POWELL

And everybody was standing around
staring?

REICH

Some were in the other rooms of
the suite, looking for D'Courtney's
daughter.

POWELL

I thought nobody knew D'Courtney
and his daughter were in the
house. Why look for her?

CONTD

REICH

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

POWELL

What did you find?

REICH

That she wasn't in the house.
Maria said she must have killed
her father and ran.

POWELL

Would you buy that?

REICH

Who knows? The whole thing doesn't
make any sense. But if a girl is
crazy enough to go running naked
out of here, maybe she did have
her father's blood on her hands.

POWELL

Would you permit me to peep you
on all this for background and
detail?

REICH

You'll have to ask my lawyer...

QUARTERMAINE

And the answer is no. A man has
the right to refuse Esper
Examination without prejudice
to himself. Reich is refusing.

POWELL

Too bad. It might have explained
how Mr. Reich knew that Barbara
D'Courtney was naked when he never
saw her. Good evening.

Powell turns and walks away. Quartermaine and Gus Tate
look at Powell, astonished.

CUT TO

INT FIELD LAB - NIGHT

A mobile, fully-equipped crime lab. Linc confers with the First Deputy Prefect, BURNSIDE, and TWO TECHNICIANS, while a detailed, computer-monitored autopsy of D⁴Courtney's body is conducted by a robot medical examiner. Powell stares at the body.

POWELL

Could it have been suicide?

FIRST TECHNICIAN

Not a chance. There's no weapon.

POWELL

What killed him?

BURNSIDE

We don't know.

POWELL

Come on, fellas, he's got a hole in his head I could put my fist into.

SECOND TECHNICIAN

Entry above the uvula. Exit below the fontanelle. Death was instantaneous.

BURNSIDE

But what drilled that hole through his skull?

POWELL

Laser?

FIRST TECHNICIAN

No burn!

POWELL

Crystallization probe?

SECOND TECHNICIAN

No freeze.

POWELL

Nitro vapor charge?

FIRST TECHNICIAN

No ammonia residue.

POWELL

Acid?

CONTD

SECOND TECHNICIAN

Acid spray might needle a wound like that, but it couldn't burst the back of his skull.

POWELL

Thrusting weapon?

BURNSIDE

You mean a pick or a knife?

POWELL

Something like that.

FIRST TECHNICIAN

Have you any idea how much force is necessary to penetrate like this? Couldn't be done.

POWELL

A gun, then.

BURNSIDE

No chance here.

POWELL

Why?

FIRST TECHNICIAN

No bullet, nor any kind of projectile. Nothing in the wound. Nothing in the room. Not a trace.

POWELL

Have you got anything for me? Anything at all?

SECOND TECHNICIAN

He was eating candy. Found a fragment of gel in his mouth. ~~Max~~ Candy wrapping.

POWELL

So what?

FIRST TECHNICIAN

No candy in the suite.

POWELL

He might have eaten it all.

SECOND TECHNICIAN

There was no candy in his

CONTD

SECOND TECHNICIAN (Contd)
stomach. Anyway, he wouldn't be eating candy with his throat.

POWELL
Why not?

FIRST TECHNICIAN
Psychogenic cancer. He had it bad. He could barely talk, let alone swallow anything.

Powell smiles slightly and approaches the body.

POWELL
Well, we've finally got a real murder. And he intends to get away with it. He's already licked us on motive and method. Let's hope we can get something on opportunity.

BURNSIDE
Who's licked us?

POWELL
Ben Reich is the killer. He slipped up while I was questioning him.

BURNSIDE
Holy Christ.

POWELL
But we're a long way from convincing a judge. Call a staff meeting, Burnsey.

INT CONFERENCE ROOM AT WORLD POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

TWO DOZEN ESPER COPS have assembled. Powell addresses them.

POWELL
...Why were they playing 'Sardine?' Who suggested the game? Maria Beaumont's secretaries couldn't peep Reich because he had a song kicking around in his head. What song? Who wrote it? Where did Reich hear it? The guards apparently were blasted with some kind of visual purple ionizer. Check all the current research activity in that area.

CONTD

POWELL (Contd)

We must know what killed D'Courtney.
Try to learn something about
Reich's relationship with D'Courtney,
on a personal as well as business
level. Now -

A vu-cube lights up with a picture of Barbara D'Courtney.

POWELL

This is Barbara D'Courtney. She
was there at the time of the murder -
she may be an eyewitness. We have
to find her. Unfortunately we don't
have a pattern, so we do this the hard
way. And we don't have much time.
I think Dr. Augustus Tate and Reich
are in this together. So Tate must
have the D'Courtney' girl's pattern,
and he'll be looking for her too.

BURNSIDE

Too bad we can't do a pattern-trace
on Reich, just to keep him under
surveillance.

POWELL

We have to do this by their rules,
Burnsey. Reich has money, power,
and a renegade ESPer on his side -
but we'll still beat him.

CUT TO

EXT MONARCH LIMMY - NIGHT

Jetting silently above the post-midnight city. The limmy
is a hovercraft that can fly - a foot off the ground, or
five thousand feet in the air, rise vertically from a
rooftop pad or take off like a streak.

INT LIMMY - BEN REICH'S COMPARTMENT

Gus Tate has his head in his hands, moaning and sweating.

TATE

It's no good - this has been
too much for me! I can't think,
I can't work. Don't you realize
what we're up against?

CONTD

REICH

The entire goddam World Police.

TATE

Lincoln Powell saw through you right away. I can't play mind-games with someone of his caliber, he'll destroy me!

REICH

He's just another peeper - don't let his reputation scare you. I have ways to even the odds against Powell.

TATE

I need a drink.

REICH

No, keep your mind clear. You have to find that girl for me.

TATE

Alone? It's impossible.

REICH

You won't be alone, Gus.

CUT TO

INT KENO QUIZZARD'S ESTABLISHMENT

Even for a man with great personal flair, KENO QUIZZARD has a bizarre gambling house: an old ceramics factory half destroyed during the last war. A succession of fiery explosions fused the stock of glazes, splashing them in a wild rainbow reproduction of a lunar crater. The floor is a shimmering, singing, glassy lake. Great splotches of magenta, violet, green, burnt umber and chrome yellow were blazed into the stone walls. On various levels, in soundproofed glass rooms, old-fashioned gaming machines, including slot machines, are getting a good play.

INT QUIZZARD'S OBSERVATION DECK - NIGHT

Keno Quizzard enters with a smiling, statuesque, barely dressed young woman behind him. Quizzard is a giant, fat, with flaming red beard and white skin. He greets Ben Reich and Gus Tate, who can't take his eyes off the young woman.

CONTD

REICH

If you know what's good for you,
Keno, you won't try to peep me.
I'm poison.

QUIZZARD

(good humor)

As desperate as that? I don't
hanker for Demolition, Reich.

(to Tate)

Do you like her? Give her a
sovereign.

(Tate hesitates)

Give her a sovereign, Dr. Tate.

Tate does so. The young woman drops the gold sovereign
between her breasts. She closes her eyes, smiling. The
the left eye opens, spinning madly like the picture-
wheel of a slot machine. Yes appears in the left eye-
window. The right eye opens, spinning. Yes appears
there. Then her mouth opens. A deep, discouraging voice
says Nooooooo. Quizzard laughs uproariously.

QUIZZARD

Do you like her? Delightful toy.
A pneumatic robot. I'm thinking
of installing several of them.

REICH

What's the payoff?

QUIZZARD

Three cherries, of course. Now
then. How can I help you in your
hour of need?

REICH

What I have in mind is in the
bature of a mutual assistance
pact.

QUIZZARD

Indeed?

REICH

I hear you're in deep trouble
with the bonecrackers. You've
expanded too fast. You owe a
lot of money.

QUIZZARD

A matter of some distress. But
temporary. Keno always finds a
way.

CONTD

REICH

I think twenty million would
relieve most of your distress.

Keno's eyes widen.

QUIZZARD

Generous of you. I'm sure your
terms will be far more gracious
than those of my neighborhood
bonetracker.

REICH

I want to hire your entire network
of renegade peepers.

QUIZZARD

By the hour, or by the day?

REICH

Until the job is done. And the girl
is found.

QUIZZARD

What girl?

REICH

You don't need to know her name.
One thing: she could be in a state
of shock, holed up somewhere. Tate
will give you her pattern.

QUIZZARD

When she's found?

REICH

Bring her here. No one is to see
her. I mean no one. Then get in
touch.

Keno licks his lips hungrily.

QUIZZARD

I understand.

EXT ROOFTOP LIMMY PAD

Ben and Gus walk toward their limmy, one of xseveral,
where the chauffeur waits, his back to them.

TATE

It's dangerous. He never stopped
licking around the edges of my
mind to see what he could pick up.

CONTD

REICH

There's no choice. I have to use him.

(to the chauffeur)

My place.

But when the chauffeur turns around he is the Man With No Face, and again he aims a weapon at Ben's head: this time it is the knife-pistol which Ben used to kill D'Courtney. Ben cries out and stumbles back into Tate.

TATE

Have you gone crazy? Who are you talking to?

When Ben looks again the Faceless Man has disappeared. Tate peeps him.

TATE

Not again! Get hold of yourself, man, you're on the edge of a nervous breakdown.

REICH

Who is he? Why am I seeing him?

TATE

I'm...not sure. You know the answer, but you've repressed it. I can't probe deep enough to learn the truth.

Ben makes a mighty effort to regain his composure.

REICH

Forget it. I won't let this happen again.

TATE

It had better not happen. Psychologically I don't think you could survive.

CUT TO

EXT JERRY CHURCH'S MUSEUM - NIGHT

INT JERRY'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Jerry is absorbed in the vu-cube, receiving late news of the murder of Craye D'Courtney and the disappearance of his daughter. A flashing red alarm illuminates one side of the cube. Jerry presses a button on the vu-cube console. Lincoln Powell's face appears.

POWELL

Prefect of police. I'd like a few words with you.

Jerry flies into a panic; he hammers at the control board, blanking the vu-cube, turning out the lights. A panel in the bedroom wall slides open. Jerry slips inside.

EXT MUSEUM - POWELL AND DEPUTY ON THE DOORSTEP - NIGHT

They turn and look at each other.

DEPUTY

Jerry's got a guilty conscience.

POWELL

Wasn't that door hanging open a little bit when we arrived?

The Deputy kicks hard at the door beneath the lock and it springs open.

DEPUTY

You mean like that?

They go into the museum.

INT MUSEUM - NIGHT

Jerry, still panicked, is sneaking through moonlit rooms filled with antiquities.

POWELL'S VOICE

Jerry!

Jerry flicks on an emergency exit anti-grav beam and goes sailing toward a softport in the ceiling. Powell appears and with a glance cancels the beam. Jerry, high in the air, reaches for a light grid and clings to it, twenty feet above the floor.

CONTD

JERRY

Get me down! Get me down! I'll
fall - I'll hurt myself!

POWELL

You have a habit of making trouble
for yourself, Jerry.

JERRY

Leave me alone, Powell! Haven't
you done enough to me?

POWELL

I presided at your fitness trial.
You know you can't block me for
long. So just relax, Jerry, while
I peep you.

CLOSEUP OF JERRY'S STRAINED FACE

And CLOCK-WIPE to an image of Ben Reich standing by while
Jerry pulls the heads from the cartridges of the knife-
pistol. CLOCK-WIPE BACK TO

FULL SHOT - JERRY THRASHING IN THE AIR

JERRY

Help!

He loses his grip and plunges down.

LINCOLN POWELL

With a glance he restores the anti-grav beam.

FULL SHOT OF THE ROOM

Jerry slides gently down the remaining ten feet of the
beam and bumps to the floor. He is weeping with fear
and rage.

JERRY

You sons of bitches! Take me,
or get out of my museum and
leave me alone!

POWELL

We have all we want, Jerry.
Keep yourself available. Good
night.

CONTD

Powell and the Deputy walk away.

DEPUTY

I don't get it. If Reich intended to murder D'Courtney with that knife-pistol, why did he have Jerry pull the slugs from those cartridges?

POWELL

And if he did use that particular weapon, where is it now? You want to know something, Dan?

DEPUTY

What's that?

POWELL

Reich is beginning to impress me.

CUT TO

CLOSEUP OF AN ATTACHE CASE MARKED "MONARCH RESEARCH LABORATORY" - NIGHT

Ben Reich opens the case with a coded card. Neatly packed inside is an arsenal of exotic weapons. He holds up another of the rhodopsin ionizer cubes for Tate's inspection. PULL BACK FOR A TWO SHOT.

REICH

You already know what these can do.

Next is a plain black box with cat's eye studs and adhesive grippers.

REICH

Meet "The Shaker." It creates shattering harmonics in every substance known to man: steel, diamonds, flesh. And this little beauty -

Ben shows Gus something that looks like a large mechanical fly with sucker-like discs attached to metal legs. He activates it.

REICH

- is called a neuron scrambler. Watch.

CONTD

The neuron scrambler flies from the palm of Ben's hand, whirling through the air almost faster than the eye can follow, emitting a distinctive buzzing sound. Gus watches, fascinated.

REICH

Peep me.

TATE

What?

REICH

Peep me.

Gus shrugs and tries to concentrate, turning away from the neuron scrambler, which is in a holding pattern at the other end of the room. As he peeps Ben, the neuron scrambler buzzes angrily and suddenly flies straight at him. It attaches itself to Gus's forehead. Gus is stunned. His eyes roll back in his head. He gasps for breath.

REICH

The neuron scrambler charges the nervous system with a low-induction current. You can't think, speak or breathe.

Ben uses a recall gadget to lure the scrambler back to him.

REICH

The scrambler is ~~attracted~~ attracted by the steep levels of brain-wave energy characteristic of ESPers.

Gus sinks into a chair to recover.

TATE

God - I thought I was going to die!

REICH

Sorry, Gus. I wanted you to experience the scrambler so you'd know what it can do. Believe me, Lincoln Powell will be just as helpless as you were.

EXT CITY - MONORAIL STATION - MORNING

ESPer cops monitor crowds pouring into the city for work. They have three-dimensional photos of Barbara D'Courtney for reference.

A YOUNG WOMAN who might be Barbara gets off a train. TWO COPS watch her closely. MEANWHILE

TWO RENEGADE ESPERS

have also spotted the girl, but they are wary of the ESPer cops.

FIRST RENEGADE

We'll have to risk it.

GO TO HIM and CLOCK-WIPE as he peeps: What we see is a shimmering electromagnetic pattern. CLOCK-WIPE back to the peeper.

FIRST RENEGADE

It's not her. Come on.

CUT TO

EXT ESTATE BY A LAKE - MORNING

INT SAUCER-SHAPED GREENHOUSE

An old gardener named CHESNEY has begun his day, watering exotic shrubs and flowers that are unearthly in color and design, grown from seeds long dormant on waterless planets, smuggled to earth. Some of the rare ones propagate in gas-filled cases. CHESNEY has a pet with him: a leopard-spotted chimpanzee with a leopard's muzzle, a mutant.

Chesney peers into one of the glass cases, and detects a blossom in the midst of swirling gases.

CHESNEY

Would you look at that, Willis! Two years and she's finally bloomed. Mr. Crenshaw, he'll be pleased when he comes around again. 'Course that'll be four or five months, who knows if she'll still be in bloom. Maybe I oughta send him a letter. Naw. How's he gonna get a letter, way out there in the solar system? You know something, Willis, them seeds he brought back last time, they might be ten million years old - old as the universe. Might be no

CONTD

CHESNEY (contd)

human eye 'cept mine ever seen
a blossom like that. Now don't
that make our day, Willis?
Willis, where'd you go?

Willis begins making a fearful racket in another part of the greenhouse - part chimpanzee squeal, part feline roar. Chesney hastens to see what the trouble is.

In an area devoted to giant orchids Chesney finds, curled up and deeply asleep inside one of the orchids, the nude figure of Barbara D'Courtney.

CHESNEY

Oh-oh, now what've we got here?
One of Mr. Crenshaw's pretty little
things, left over from his last
visit? Naw. That was ten months
ago. I would've noticed her before
this. And no clothes. Better get
her dressed, first thing.

He begins to take off his long gardening coat, calling to Barbara.

CHESNEY

Hey, girl! You can't sleep there,
that orchid'll spoil. You get up
now and put this on.

Barbara opens her eyes and stares unresponsively at Chesney. He reaches in delicately and takes her by the hand, tugs ineffectually while keeping his eyes averted. She won't budge. When he lets go of Barbara, her hand remains suspended in the air where he left it.

CHESNEY

Oh-oh. This ain't gonna be so
easy, Willis.

INT CHESNEY'S QUARTERS - DAY

His rooms are spare, bright, functional and cold, like the rooms of all low-income people in 2049. Barbara sits at a table, wearing his long gardening coat. Her eyes are fixed and dilated. Willis crouches nearby. Chesney spoon-feeds Barbara carefully.

CHESNEY

What am I going to do with her, Willis? She won't tell me her name. She don't say anything. Probably hasn't heard a word I said. Mr. Grenshaw's not here to help me. I can't call the police 'cause of you. I ain't supposed to have a mutant pet. I tell you Willis, all I got is worries. Now maybe...yeah, Doc. The Doc will know what I oughta do.

Chesney puts down the spoon and goes to the door.

CHESNEY

I'll be right back. You see nothin' happens to her, Willis.

EXT TREEHOUSE - DAY

A vast, multi-level treehouse with a winding stair to the gallery. Chesney toils up the stairs and raps on the door.

CHESNEY

Doc! You in there? It's Chesney.

DOC

Go away!

CHESNEY

Doc, it's real important.

DOC

I'm working - can't be disturbed.

CHESNEY

Doc, I got a girl in my room -

DOC

Congratulations. What are you bothering me for?

CONTD

CHESNEY

Well, she's sick or something.

DOC

Then call a doctor and leave me alone.

CHESNEY

But you're a doctor. You can peep -

There are sudden heavy footsteps. The door swings open. Doc is a huge, paint-splattered man. He holds a palette knife, tubes of color. His eyes are wide with anger.

DOC

I told you never to say that - to me or anyone else.

CHESNEY

I'm sorry, Doc. I just don't know what to do.

DOC

Do you know what happens if another peeper tumbles to me?

CHESNEY

No.

DOC

They'll make me join the Guild and serve mankind. I don't want to serve mankind. I want to serve myself. Anything wrong with that?

CHESNEY

No, but, Doc, this girl don't hear or talk or nothing. I thought if you just took a little peep, then you could tell me who she is and I could call her folks to come get her.

CLOSEUP - DOC

CLOCK-WIPE to a vision of Barbara D'Courtney, sitting at Chesney's table, beautiful and lost. CLOCK-WIPE BACK to Doc.

DOC

Bring her up here.

TWO SHOT

CHESNEY

You mean you'll help?

DOC

Yes. Yes! Just make sure no one sees you.

INT DOC'S STUDIO - DAY

Barbara D'Courtney sits in a chair beside a large unfinished canvas. Doc stands before her staring into her lifeless eyes. Chesney and Willis watch intently. The studio is filled with large canvases - mostly realistic depictions of political assassinations. Caesar Lincoln, the Kennedys, other men we don't recognize.

DOC

It's incredible. She's catatonically frozen.

CHESNEY

Did you get her name?

DOC

She's Barbara D'Courtney.

CHESNEY

The girl on the cube?

DOC

Yes. The D'Courtney murder. Ben Reich killed D'Courtney.

CHESNEY

How do you know?

DOC

She saw it. It's locked in her head.

Doc begins to lay out his tools and colors.

CHESNEY

Shouldn't we call the police? They're all looking for her.

DOC

Let them look.

CHESNEY

But she knows who did the murder.

CONTD

DOC

And I'm going to paint it. All these years I've painted what I've read about and seen pictures of. But when I'm inside her head, I'm there. I can smell the sweat and blood. Feel the gun go off. See the moment of death in D'Courtney's eyes. It will be the greatest painting ever done. All this other stuff is junk. No real feeling. But here is murder - raw and fresh. It's incredible.

CHESNEY

Do you think her folks will be worried about her?

DOC

Her folks are dead.

CHESNEY

There's got to be somebody -

DOC

Get out of here and get me some food.

He throws a couple of sovereigns at Chesney. Chesney, followed by Willis, goes to the door. He looks back. Doc is sketching wildly. The faces of D'Courtney and Reich begin to emerge.

INT SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Chesney, without Willis, stands in front of an automatic check-out machine. His purchases are being totaled. Nearby two thug-like women appear. Chesney feeds sovereigns to the machine. His food package appears. He picks it up and leaves. The two women leave their shopping carts and follow him.

EXT DOC'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Chesney, holding the food package, knocks.

DOC

Go away.

CHESNEY

It's me, Doc, I brought the eats.

CONTD

DOC

Leave the package outside.

CHESNEY

Is she okay?

DOC

Yes. Yes. Now leave me alone.

CHESNEY

We got to do something about her,
Doc.

DOC

We'll talk about that tomorrow.

Chesney shrugs and leaves the package of food, goes back down the spiral stairs.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT THE GALLERY - A FEW HOURS LATER - NIGHT

The door opens a crack. A hand reaches out to take the food package. There's a high-pitched hum. Doc's body falls behind the door. His hand falls limply on the package. A fat jeweled hand holding a flameflash pushes the door open.

INT DOC'S STUDIO - NIGHT

An ugly red-eyed thug of a woman we saw in the supermarket steps over Doc's body and enters the studio. She is immediately attracted to a huge painting of Ben Reich blowing out the back of D'Courtney's head. Next to the portrait Barbara D'Courtney sits staring blankly straight ahead. The woman motions for Barbara to follow her. Barbara remains still. The woman takes her by the hand and pulls her out the door.

EXT KENO QUIZZARD'S GAMBLING PALACE - NIGHT

INT QUIZZARD'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

As befits a man of means, the apartment is filled with antiques. Barbara D'Courtney, dressed in something expensive and revealing, is sitting on the edge of a chaise. Her expression is as blank as ever.

THUG-WOMAN

She's hot, Keno. Maybe too hot.

QUIZZARD

What's she worth to a man facing Demolition...twenty million?
Ha! He'll pay more. Get word to Reich.

EXT CRENSHAW ESTATE - MORNING

Willis, Chesney's mutant chimpanzee, skips over a low wall and goes chittering across the street to a big park.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT GREENHOUSE - MORNING

Chesney is anxiously searching for his pet.

CHESNEY

Willis? Willis, you better answer me! This isn't funny.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT PARK

Chesney, with a leash in his hand, is plaintively beating the bushes and peering up into trees.

CHESNEY

Willis? Come back, Willis! I'm not gettin' one thing done today, and it's all your fault.

He stops and listens, hearing his pet indistinctly behind a thick hedge. Chesney goes crashing around one end of the hedge and comes face to face with

ESPER COP

Who has a tight grip on the wayward mutant.

TWO SHOT

Chesney backs off, frightened.

CONTD

CHESNEY

I can explain. I was just mindin'
him for somebody else.

CLOSEUP OF THE COP

Peeping Chesney. His eyes widen in astonishment.

CUT TO

EXT WORLD POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

INT COMPUTER ROOM - DAY

Lincoln Powell, Burnside, and OTHERS on Powell's staff have assembled to re-stage the D'Courtney murder, as they perceive it, for MOSE. The Beaumont house has been reconstructed in miniature, peopled with animated, three-dimensional models of Ben Reich, D'Courtney, his daughter, etc. TV cameras record the presentation. A COMPUTER TECHINICAN types additional information for MOSE.

We join the re-enactment as Ben Reich blinds and stuns the Beaumont guards, then enters the jungle suite.

Again Reich meets and struggles with D'Courtney, thrusts the knife-pistol into D'Courtney's mouth. Again Barbara appears through the water wall just as Ben shoots D'Courtney. She struggles with him, retrieves the knife-pistol, and runs. Ben follows, but is stopped by the laser-guards in the hallway.

POWELL

All right, that gives MOSE the picture. Now let's get an opinion. First, Opportunity. Maria Beaumont arranged a secret meeting, at Craye D'Courtney's request, between Ben Reich and D'Courtney. Reich knew where to find him. The Sardine game provided a perfect opportunity.

MOSE

How did Reich know they were going to play Sardine?

POWELL

Reich bought a book with a description of the game and sent it to Maria.

CONTD

MOSE

How did Reich know she would play the game?

POWELL

He knew she liked games. And Sardine was the only legible game in the book.

Pause. Then Mose speaks in his cultured voice.

MOSE

I'm satisfied with the evidence on Opportunity, Lincoln.

POWELL

Okay, we'll proceed to Method. How did Reich knock out those guards? Burnsey?

BURNSIDE

Rhodopsin ionizer. It came out of a Monarch lab. I've got the empiric processing formula ready for MOSE.

He hands the formula to the TECHNICIAN, who types it for MOSE.

POWELL

Now the murder method.

He takes a pistol from a case, somewhat like the gun used to kill D'Courtney.

POWELL

I borrowed this from our weapons museum.

He displays the gun for one of MOSE's video eyes. Then he takes a pair of pliers and removes the bullet from one of the shells.

POWELL

This is what Jerry Church did to the cartridges before he gave the gun to Reich. Supposedly it was safe.

MOSE

How can a cartridge kill without a bullet?

CONTD

POWELL

Reich reloaded it.

BURNSIDE

(shaking his head)

There was no trace of a projectile
in the wound or the room.

POWELL

Yes, there was. That bit of candy
gel in D'Courtney's mouth.
Remember? And no candy in the
stomach. Watch.

Powell takes an eyedropper and fills a gel capsule with water. He presses it into the open end of the cartridge above the charge and places the cartridge in the gun. There is a two-inch thick lucite panel at one end of the room. Powell raises the gun and blows a substantial hole through it.

POWELL

You can shoot an ounce of water
with a powder charge. You can
shoot it with enough velocity to
blow out the back of a man's head
if you fire through the soft roof
of the mouth. That's why Reich
had to shoot D'Courtney through
the mouth. The lab boys found that
bit of gel but nothing else.
The projectile was gone.

They all look expectantly at MOSE.

MOSE

You have made an excellent case
for Method, Lincoln. Please
continue.

POWELL

Now for the Motive. Ben Reich
and Craye D'Courtney were business
rivals. D'Courtney Cartel has been
pressing Monarch Industries for
a merger. Monarch held off until
their industrial satellite became
operational, giving them a big
lead over D'Courtney in the
mining of the asteroid belt.
But the satellite was damaged
by a runaway drone shuttle.

CONTD

POWELL)Contd)

In the accident Ben Reich's wife and son were killed. When I investigated the accident, I peeped that Ben Reich held D'Courtney responsible for the tragedy; he was convinced that D'Courtney sabotaged the operation of the satellite. For this reason Ben Reich decided to kill Craye D'Courtney. It was an act of revenge.

Silence from MOSE. The silence goes on a little too long. Powell and Burnside exchange glances.

MOSE

Sorry, Lincoln. Motive is insufficiently documented. Peeped data is not admissable. You speculate that Barbara D'Courtney not only witnessed the murder but took the murder weapon - perhaps to protect herself.

POWELL

That's right, Mose.

MOSE

The girl is your case, Lincoln. Without her, probability of conviction is only %12.63. Thank you for a most interesting presentation.

POWELL

Thank you, Mose.

CUT TO

EXT KENO QUIZZARD'S GAMBLING PALACE - DAY

Ben Reich and Gus Tate arrive; Gus is carrying money in one attache case; Ben has his lethal weapons pack with him.

INT KENO QUIZZARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Keno confronts Ben and Gus. The thug-woman stands by, staring intently at Gus.

CONTD

KENO

She's in quite good condition, really, considering what she's been through.

(he turns on Gus)

Now you must stop your probing, Dr. Tate. It's a nuisance for Chooka and I to be constantly blocking you.

(to Ben)

I think we must reconsider what the girl is worth to you.

REICH

(to Gus)

Something wrong?

TATE

With the girl. But they're too strong for me -

KENO

We're wasting time -

REICH

Take me to the girl, Keno. Then we talk a new deal. Maybe.

Keno winces and glances at the weapons pack Ben is carrying. CLOCK-WIPE as he tries to peep Ben. All he hears is One, sir; Two, sir. Ben smiles grimly.

CUT TO

INT DOC'S STUDIO - DAY

Chesney sits weeping quietly, too upset to speak. Lincoln Powell views the half-finished painting of the assassination of Craye D'Courtney. Then he gently turns his attention to the old man.

POWELL

Nobody's going to hurt you. But I want to know every move you've made for the past twenty-four hours.

CLOCK-WIPE to rapid-fire images in the old man's befuddled head. When we COME TO THE THUG-WOMEN IN THE SUPERMARKET, FREEZE FRAME AND BLOW UP THE FRAME, CLOCK-WIPING BACK TO LINCOLN POWELL. He glances at Burnside.

CONTD

POWELL

Quizzard's molls. They must have
peeped the old man.

(Burnside nods)

Pick up the girl's pattern from
him, and we'll get over to Keno's.

CUT TO

INT QUIZZARD'S APARTMENT - DAY

CLOSEUP OF BARBARA D'COURTNEY

And PULL BACK to reveal Ben and Gus studying her, with
Keno Quizzard and the thug-woman in the BG. Ben gently
turns Barbara's head so that she is looking directly
into his eyes. But there's not a flicker of recognition,
of life.

REICH

What's the matter with her?

TATE

Catatonia. The most severe case
I've seen. She's a vegetable.

Ben turns wrathfully to Keno.

REICH

You expected a payoff for this?
She's of no use to anyone, Keno,
including the cops.

TATE

Ben - you're wrong! She has the
murder locked in her head. There's
still a chance she could recover -
and send us both to Demolition.

REICH

How much of a chance?

But Gus has his mind on other things: along with Keno
and the thug-woman he has peeped danger in the streets
below.

EXT QUIZZARD'S GAMBLING PALACE - DAY

Lincoln Powell arrives with Burnside and a dozen other
ESPER COPS.

CONTD

INT GAMBLING PALACE - DAY

Employees are in an uproar as Esper cops flood the place.

INT QUIZZARD'S APARTMENT - DAY

Keno presses a button and a wall-mounted sculpture splits apart, revealing a softport escape hatch.

KENO

Get her out of here! The rathole -
quick!

As Ben pulls Barbara from the chair she's sitting in,
Gus stops him.

TATE

They've got her pattern by now!
You can't get away with her.
Ben - do what you have to do.
Save us!

REICH

No.

TATE

Kill her! Or it's Demolition,
Ben.

Keno picks up the weapons pack which Ben has left un-
attended and slams a door on them. Ben is still struggling
with Gus.

REICH

Gus, let go!

TATE

You killed once - you can do
it again! what does it matter?
Look at her, you'll be doing her
a favor!

REICH

Gus, listen to me!

He succeeds in gaining control of Gus.

REICH

Keno's got the shaker. Now move!

EXT APARTMENT - DAY

Keno slaps the shaker against the wall and pushes the
plunger that activates it. He backs away. There is
pandemonium below as ESPer cops try to battle their

CONTD

way upstairs. He pulls the thug-woman along with him as the hallway begins to vibrate.

KENO

Let them come. They won't find anything now.

INT QUIZZARD'S APARTMENT - DAY

Shaking horridly; ear-splitting sounds as the vibrations in steel, wood, glass and plastic become more intense. Ben succeeds in pushing Barbara through the softport. She goes sliding down a long twisting tunnel made of steel. Gus remains standing in the middle of the room, hands clasped to his head, screaming. Everything in contact with the floor begins to screech and break apart. The floor is cracking. Ben tries to get to Gus, but there is no time. He turns and dives through the softport. Behind him WE HEAR THE THICK, GRAVID SOUNDS OF BURSTING FLESH.

INT MAZE - DAY

A series of blind alleys and catacombs, walls of melted glass fused with wild colors, an endless Rorschach pattern. Ben picks himself up and locates Barbara, yanks her to her feet, gets an arm around her and half-carries her through the maze, looking for a way out.

TWO SHOT - BEN AND BARBARA

As Lincoln Powell would visualize them, following their pattern from another part of the building.

INT UNDERGROUND GARAGE

Keno Quizzard's limmy stands poised for a quick takeoff through a softport. The floor glows faintly with light. Ben lets go of Barbara's hand and runs to the limmy. The cockpit is lit up, the engine purrs softly.

REICH

All set to run with my money, huh, Keno?

CONTD

He attempts to put the limmy in drive, but the controls are stuck.

LINCOLN POWELL'S VOICE

I made a couple of adjustments,
Mr. Reich. The computer won't
react until I release control of
it.

Ben, half in and half out of the limmy, glances back over one shoulder at Powell. His hand slides into his coat pocket and comes up with a neuron scrambler. He thumbs it into action and lets it fly.

The scrambler buzzes toward Powell, who watches it calmly; suddenly there is a mid-course correction and the scrambler homes in on Barbara instead. It strikes her forehead.

Barbara is released from her deep psychosis. She turns her head rapidly, eyes wide with alarm.

BARBARA

(screaming)

Father! For God's sake, Father!

She starts forward, then stops, struggling with imaginary arms that hold her. She fights and screams, her eyes still blank and staring, then stiffens and presses her hands to her ears as WE HEAR FAINTLY ON THE SOUNDTRACK THE ECHO OF A SHOT. The two men stare at her. Powell approaches Barbara as she screams again.

BARBARA

Father! Father!

She pantomimes bending over the dead man, wrenching the knife-pistol from his mouth. She screams again. Ben is transfixed, ashen. Powell touches Barbara, and as he does so she straightens abruptly, hitting him in the face with an elbow, stunning him. He falls.

INT LIMMY - CONSOLE

The computer clicks away, and the limmy's controls slip into drive.

GARAGE - AS BEFORE

Barbara D'Courtney is frozen in a crouch, holding her

imaginary dead father, retreating once again into catatonia. Lincoln Powell starts to rise. Ben Reich gets into the limmy and jets away through the softport.

INT HOSPITAL - DAY

Barbara D'Courtney lies deeply asleep in a hospital bed, attended by Lincoln Powell and a hospital STAFF PSYCHIATRIST. Lincoln looks on the verge of exhaustion from long hours of peeping Barbara.

PSYCHIATRIST

I don't see how you can keep this up. Why don't you quit for a while? Her condition won't change. She'll be the same tomorrow as she is today.

POWELL

No. Have to keep going. I want to get it all.

He stares at Barbara, peeping deeply. CLOCK-WIPE TO

PEEP-SCENE - CRAYE D'COURTNEY

As a much younger man. He is down on all fours on a lawn in front of a huge house, playing with a two year old boy, riding the child on his back. Behind them D'Courtney's first WIFE beams. The image grows cloudy.

POWELL

Shaking his head wearily.

POWELL

Loved his son. Then why - ?

PEEP-SCENE

Tarot cards being dealt. Craye D'Courtney, still young, sits thunderstruck as a FORTUNE TELLER explains certain portents to him.

POWELL

POWELL

Idiot! Why would a man as powerful as D'Courtney believe such drivel? But he must have believed. He -

PEEP-SCENE - INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

CLOSE on the face of the weeping, hysterical little boy in the first Peep-scene. PULL BACK to show him sitting

CONTD

in the back of the limousine, flanked by a GOVERNESS and a stern-looking, gray-haired MAN. CUT TO

PEEP-SCENE

Barbata D'Courtney crying, getting up and running away from a much older Craye D'Courtney, whose face is lined with suffering.

POWELL

POWELL

Damn! But why couldn't she get to Reich, tell him the truth before -

PEEP SCENE - BEN REICH'S ESTATE

Barbara D'Courtney appears to Ben holographically.

BARBARA

Hear me, Ben. It's so important.

REICH

(savagely)

Get the hell away from me!

And he runs across the lawn, as if afraid of her.

BARBARA

No, Ben, come back!

Barbara's image comes twinkling after him. Suddenly Ben whirls, having taken up a strategic position. His foot touches a hidden alarm. As Barbara catches up to him a force field springs up around him like a lawn sprinkler; her image shatters against the field, and dissipates. Her voice trails off to the stars.

BARBARA

I'm so sorry for you, please believe me...

POWELL

He sits back, used up, rubbing his forehead.

POWELL

She tried. Poor girl. She tried to save both men. But she failed.

A door opens; Burnside looks into the room.

CONTD

BURNSIDE

Linc, Dr. Akins is here.

EXT HOSPITAL GROUNDS - DAY

Powell and Burnside walk with AKINS.

AKINS

Craye D'Courtney was under my care for more than two years. I felt I was making some progress. But he was already a dying man, consumed by guilt.

BURNSIDE

What did he feel guilty about?

POWELL

Ben Reich is Craye D'Courtney's son.

BURNSIDE

What?

POWELL

When the boy was two years old D'Courtney heard a fortune-teller's prophecy that his son would grow up to kill him.

BURNSIDE

Prophecy? That's ridiculous. Why would a man like that listen to a fortune-teller? He had everything -

POWELL

Wealth and power, and the abiding fear that he didn't deserve it, that somehow he would lose what he'd worked so hard for.

AKINS

A common syndrome. And I've treated many successful men. The more powerful, the more insecure they seem to be. That's why such childish claptrap appeals to them: the idea of a nemesis, a blind fate tipping the scales against them.

CONTD

POWELL

So D'Courtney gave his son to another man to raise - a banker named Lewis Reich. In time D'Courtney remarried and had a daughter. His son grew up to be his rival in business.

AKINS

You could call it a self-fulfilling prophecy. With his genes, Ben had to be a success.

POWELL

Eventually his sense of shame and guilt overcame D'Courtney.

AKINS

He developed psychogenic cancer...

POWELL

And confessed everything to Barbara. He desperately wanted a reconciliation. But by then Ben Reich was convinced he had to murder D'Courtney. There was no way Barbara could prevent what happened -

BURNSIDE

What can we do about Reich?

POWELL

All the evidence of the murder is still in Barbara's head...

AKINS

Her condition is not hopeless. Eventually she'll recover. But any attempt to make her consciously recall the murder of her father will plunge her back into a psychotic state, perhaps forever.

BURNSIDE

So Reich is off the hook. We can't touch him.

POWELL

A confession would help.

CONTD

BURNSIDE
Tell me another one.

POWELL
Or we could catch him in the
act of committing another murder.

BURNSIDE
Who would he kill?

POWELL
We have one advantage over Ben
Reich; we know the truth about
Barbara's mental condition, but
he doesn't.

Burnside stares at Lincoln, understanding what he is
getting at.

BURNSIDE
It's tricky, Linc. Too tricky for
Mose to buy.

POWELL
The hell with Mose. One way or
another I'm going to get Ben
Reich.

CUT TO

EXT BEN REICH'S ESTATE - DAY

CLOSEUP OF BEN ON HORSEBACK, galloping a fiercely
through woods and across a couple of difficult steeplechase
jumps. Finally he allows the winded horse to stop and
slides from the saddle, perspiring, trembling, a
haunted look in his eyes. He walks the horse in cooling-
out circles. Suddenly Barbara D'Courtney appears
holographically to him. Ben is so startled he loses
control of his horse. Barbara looks quite normal to
his disbelieving eyes.

BARBARA
Will you listen to me now?

REICH
You - I thought -

BARBARA
I left the hospital three days
ago. I was in shock for a while -
you know all about that. Don't
look so frightened, Ben. The

CONTD

REICH

You told them -

BARBARA .

Nothing.

(a contemptuous smile)

Why should I jeopardize my future that way?

REICH

What do you mean?

BARBARA

You only knew my father by reputation. I knew the reality. He had no heart and no conscience. I wanted you to kill him. Now he's dead, and we're all better off.

REICH

My God -

BARBARA

Heartless, Ben. Grasping, cruel, despicable. He left me nothing. Not a sovereign to my name. I couldn't care less that he's dead.

REICH

What do you want now?

BARBARA

I want money. A lot of it. You're going to pay now, for getting away with murder. For freedom.

REICH

Your father would have been proud.

BARBARA

Shut up! I don't want to hear his name again. All I want is my reward...for not sending you straight to Demolition.

REICH

How much?

CONTD

BARBARA

We'll discuss that. When we meet again. This transmission has gone on too long. It's an expensive code, but it could be broken.

REICH

Where do you want me to meet you?

BARBARA

The Danforth house. Know it?

REICH

How soon?

BARBARA

I'll be there in an hour.

CUT TO

EXT A FASHIONABLE OLD STREET - DUSK

INT DANFORTH HOUSE

Ben Reich stands in the four-story foyer, looking up into a shaft of sun. The house is well-furnished with antiques, but has an air of abandonment, as if it has been un-lived in for some time.

REICH

Barbara? Barbara D'Courtney?

No answer. Ben begins to prowl through the house. As he does so, it becomes eerily familiar: an archway, a moving staircase, a gallery just like the one in Maria Beaumont's house. It is as if he is walking through a nightmare, and his face reflects this dread: yet he can't stop, he must go on, calling for Barbara, hearing nothing but his own grotesquely echoing voice.

Before long he is in the room where Craye D'Courtney's two bodyguards sit slumped on the floor, stunned by the rhodopsin ionizer. Ben lifts his eyes from the guards to the door to the jungle room.

INT JUNGLE ROOM

Once again Ben finds himself face to face with Craye D'Courtney. He is consumed by hatred. Reaching into a pocket, he comes up with the knife-pistol. He presses the stud, and the weapon opens up.

CONTD

He struggles with Craye D'Courtney. Again Barbara comes through the water-wall. But this time her words are not obliterated by the gunshot.

BARBARA

He's your father!

Ben looks from Barbara to the dead man in his hands: instead of D'Courtney he sees the Man With No Face, now dripping blood. Ben's mind snaps. He looks again at Barbara. She flickers and winks away. The room he is in is four walls and a bare floor, nothing more.

Ben glances at the body in his arms, and sees D'Courtney's ruined head once again. He cradles it tightly, looking around. He looks into the eyes of Lincoln Powell, and begins to sob hysterically.

REICH

I killed my father. I killed
my father. I killed my father!

Lincoln Powell advances across the bare floor toward Ben; we see now that Ben's arms are empty. And Powell has the confession he needed. In fact Ben won't shut up about it.

REICH

I killed my father. I killed my
father...

CUT TO

EXT WORLD POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

INT COMPUTER ROOM

Lincoln Powell walks slowly into the elegant Victorian room, pours himself a drink of whiskey from the decanter, suffers the appraising scan of blue light as MOSE takes his measure.

MOSE

You're unhappy today, Lincoln.

POWELL

Don't know why I should be.

MOSE

Shall I make a guess?

POWELL

How about a game, Mose? Dig
something really challenging

CONTD

POWELL (Contd)
out of that tin memory box,
it's been weeks since I -

MOSE
Ben Reich goes to Demolition
tomorrow.

POWELL
Is it tomorrow? I'd forgotten.

MOSE
You'll be there?

POWELL
It's a privilege I've never
exercised. Never wanted to.
I always thought the less I
knew about Demolition, the
better. This time -

MOSE
This time you feel a personal
interest. But no sense of
satisfaction.

POWELL
What the hell? Maybe it should
have been different, this time.
Maybe - this isn't a case for
Demolition.

MOSE
I'm surprised at you, Lincoln.
Ben Reich confessed to murder.

POWELL
He didn't have much choice. I
threw a telepathic fix at him
even a brother peeper couldn't
have resisted. And Reich was
already breaking down, subconsciously
he must have had a hint of the
truth as soon as he saw D'Courtney.
But he killed him anyway. Discharged
the hatred and resentment of a
lifetime - and assumed a load
of guilt worse than anything
D'Courtney had to bear. You know
what I think, Mose?

CONT'D

MOSE

Yes. But why don't you go ahead and say it, Lincoln?

POWELL

Ben Reich confessed to murder. Made an easy job of it for us. But all his life he was in a rage. His love for his own son kept him in balance despite his bitter rivalry with D'Courtney. But when he lost his son he became psychotic. Sure, he planned a "perfect" murder - but gave himself away at the first opportunity. He really wanted to be caught, and punished.

MOSE

That isn't our concern.

POWELL

You're not paying attention, Mose!

MOSE

Lincoln. Do I deserve that?

POWELL

Okay. Sorry.

MOSE

Our concern is the preservation of society. Disruption and disorder must be dealt with in prescribed ways.

POWELL

Mose, Ben Reich is a brilliant man. Even now, despite the breakdown he suffered, he could be salvaged. It was a damned clever plan, Mose! It could have worked, except for the psychological pressure he was under.

MOSE

His case has been disposed of. I was satisfied with all the particulars.

CONTD

POWELL

Demolition makes no sense! A hundred years ago cops used to catch people like Reich just to kill them. But if a man has the nerve and ingenuity to get away with murder, why destroy him? We could hold ~~smx~~ on to him, straighten him out, turn him into a plus factor. Mose, if you throw away all the daring ones, all you have left is a society of sheep.

MOSE

My concern is not the quality of the society in which you live, Lincoln. I pass judgment on a strictly empirical basis. I found Ben Reich's emotional state at the time he committed the murder to be irrelevant.

POWELL

Damn it, arguing ~~you~~ with you is like arguing with a -

MOSE

Yes?

POWELL

Mose, I got him. That was my job. But I don't like the way I got him.

MOSE

I was satisfied with Ben Reich's confession.

POWELL

Find a loophole for him, Mose.

MOSE

The public morality must be served.

POWELL

Get him off!

MOSE

Ben Reich goes to Demolition tomorrow.

CONTD

POWELL

It's wrong.

MOSE

Demolition.

POWELL

Wrong!

He hurls his glass, smashing it, and stalks from the room. A long silence. Then:

MOSE

You shouldn't leave without saying goodbye, Lincoln.

CUT TO

BEN REICH

Floating naked in a black void as if he is lying on a liquid bed, or an ocean. There is stark fear in his face. Thin plastic tubes are attached to his head. Liquid drips slowly through the tubes..He screams like a trapped animal. TILT UP to a view port overhead. Lincoln Powell, his emotions tightly under control, stands beside a DEMOLITION TECHNICIAN, who explains the process to Lincoln. As he does so, CAMERA TILTS BACK DOWN TO BEN and begins to revolve slowly around him.

TECHNICIAN

When a man is Demolished, his entire psyche is destroyed. The drug is now seeping into his cortical synapses. It washes slowly down, switching off every circuit, extinguishing every memory, destroying every particle of the pattern that has been built up since birth. And as the pattern is reversed, each particle discharges its portion of energy, turning the entire body into a shuddering maelstrom of dissociations. But this is not the ultimate pain; the horror is that consciousness is never lost. The mind is aware of a slow backward death until it too disappears...

THE CAMERA CONTINUES TO REVOLVE AROUND BEN as he appears to spiral down and down into oblivion.

INT ENVIORNMENTAL PLAYROOM - DAY

A vast room filled with a snowy landscape. CAMERA DRAWS SLOWLY CLOSER TO A FIGURE building a snowman. It's Barbara D'Courtney. She sings softly to herself as she plays.

EXT HALLWAY

Lincoln Powell and Burnside walk toward the environmental playroom.

INT PLAYROOM

Now Barbara is sledding down a slope, laughing, calling to imaginary playmates. Her face is that of a happy child. PAN AWAY FROM BARBARA TO POWELL AND BURNSIDE as they enter the room.

BARBARA - THEIR POV

She is unaware of their presence.

BURNSIDE

(stamping his feet)
Christ, it's cold in here.

POWELL

It's all an illusion, Burnsey.

BURNSIDE

(sneezing)
That's no illusion.

POWELL

It's a fix done by an ESPer child fantasist, augmented by thermal and sonic special effects.

Barbara laughs and calls to an unseen friend.

POWELL

She's been administered a new drug which will make her catatonic wish to escape come true. It dissociates the mind from lower levels, sends it back to the womb, lets it pretend that it's being born all over again. She's gone through infancy. She'll go through childhood and adolescence in about another six months, and reach maturity.

CONTD

BURNSIDE

Isn't she cold?

POWELL

It's exactly what she wants. She's continually peeped by the child fantasist. He adjusts the room to whatever Barbara desires at the moment. In this day and age, nothing is permanent.

Without warning the environment changes, giving way to palm trees, a swimming pool. Barbara is poised at the end of the diving board.

BARBARA

Hey, Uncle Linc! Watch this jackknife!

She splashes into the pool. Burnside glances at Powell, who is smiling.

BURNSIDE

Six months to maturity. Then what?

POWELL

She'll be her old self. Reconstructed. No trace of psychosis. No memory of how her father died.

BURNSIDE

Will she remember Ben Reich?

POWELL

Basic memories aren't tampered with. She knows she has - had - a half brother, named Ben. She never really knew him, but still she thought and dreamed about him for years. He was someone to look up to.

BURNSIDE

She'll want to see him.

POWELL

I know.

CONTD

BURNSIDE

She can't ever see him.

POWELL

I know.

BURNSIDE

She'll blame you.

CUT TO

EXT CITY PARK - DAY

Lincoln Powell walking with Barbara D'Courtney. They have their arms around each other in a casual, friendly way. Barbara is laughing. She has progressed to age 16.

BARBARA

Lincoln, I've had such a wonderful time to-day. I don't want to go back to the hospital. It's so boring there!

POWELL

Only a couple of weeks ago. Then your treatment will be finished.

BARBARA

Then I can be with you! Always! Can't I?

POWELL

If that's what you want. But you may change your mind. Today you're sixteen. In two weeks you'll be 24 years old. You'll have a different outlook, a new set of values - you may not give me a second glance.

BARBARA

But I love you, Lincoln! That part of me won't change. Ever!

POWELL

(an indulgent smile)
We'll see.

They reach his car, get in and drive away, past tall buildings. CAMERA GOES TO ONE OF THE BUILDINGS, CLIMBING SLOWLY, LOOKING IN ON GREAT LONG EMPTY HALLS. On one of the upper floors a dee-mo is patiently scrubbing a long

CONTD

hall with a rotobrush, a shadowy distant look on his face. The dee-mo is Ben Reich, and there is nothing in his eyes to indicate he has ever had a life that didn't center on this menial work. CAMERA GOES TO THE WHIRLING BRUSH.

FADE OUT.