

The Golden Years

Episode 1

"Time And Time Again"

by

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Final Shooting Script
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ACT I

BLACK SCREEN

A single acoustic guitar playing David Bowie's *Golden Years*.

WHITE LETTERS ON BLACK:

Run for the shadows in these golden years.
--David Bowie

Hold and then FADE IN:

EXT. A WIRE FENCE - DAY

At the same time we dissolve to this fence, that single guitar dissolves into a more conventional rock and roll version of the Bowie tune and the credits begin.

The fence we're looking at is constructed of wire. Strands of barbed wire alternate with strands of smooth wire. The smooth wire looks harmless, except that each smooth strand runs through a porcelain conductor and the low humming sound we hear should leave no doubts in our mind that it is electrified. The entire fence is maybe thirty feet high.

The camera begins to track slowly left along this fence as the credits continue. As it tracks, we see the corpses of small animals- a squirrel, maybe a couple of birds, a woodchuck lying at the base of the fence. They bear mute witness to just how hot the charge in the wires really is.

The camera tracks past a sign. We might not have time to read all of it, but we'll get the gist:

DANGER! HIGH VOLTAGE! KEEP OUT!

The camera speeds up; now it's like being on a train and watching the sights go by. We pass another sign. Again, we won't have time to read all of it but we'll get the general idea:

FALCO PLAINS TESTING STATION
U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE
THIS IS A CLASSIFIED LOCATION

NO ADMITTANCE WITHOUT SECURITY PASS

Past this sign, the camera stops. We're looking through the fence and seeing nothing which would seem to warrant such warnings. There are meadows filled with grasses now past their prime--it's autumn--flowers, and a few groves of trees hot with fall colors.

The camera swivels left, so that we see the fence on the right of the frame and a narrow county road, two-lane blacktop, in the middle of frame. To the left, more trees overhang the road.

A little way down from the camera we see a break in the fence. A road leads onto the Falco Plains Testing Station here. At the junction of the two roads is a security station. Beyond it, a barrier, like at a toll-booth, bars the road. Coming up the county road toward the junction and the security station is a figure on a bicycle.

EXT. THE MAN ON THE BICYCLE - CLOSER - DAY

This is HARLAN WILLIAMS, our main character. Harlan is seventy, but we could easily mistake him for sixty-five, maybe younger. He has good color in his cheeks and a look of ruddy health. He's clearly enjoying the crisp fall day. He wears blue jeans, a comfortable checked sport coat with patches on the elbows (clearly an old campaigner, but well-loved), and a motoring cap. He swings in at the Falco Plains access road.

EXT. THE SECURITY STATION - DAY

There is a gadget sticking outside the sliding door of the little security station that looks like one of those automated bank teller gadgets where you put your check or receive your money. Above it is a small TV monitor. Harlan stops by this gadget and the security guard, an Army sergeant named RICK HAVERFORD, steps out of the sliding door. He's wearing a sidearm.

RICK

Hey, Harlan!

HARLAN

How you doin', Rick?

Rick grins. He likes Harlan.

RICK

Doin' good. I like day duty. You?

Harlan looks around with honest appreciation.

HARLAN

Fine. I like the fall. I want to die in the fall... hear that wind outside the window when I go. A fall wind always sounds like it's traveling somewhere. I like that.

RICK

You're a little young to be thinkin' about punching out, Harl.

HARLAN

I'll be seventy-one come November 9th, Rick. That's not too young.

Rick, who is about forty, clearly feels a little uncomfortable with this sort of conversation.

RICK

Yeah, you'll bury us all. You want to sign in?

HARLAN

Have I got any choice?

RICK

(grins)

Not on this ship you don't.

Harlan stands with his bike between his legs, takes his wallet out of his coat, and removes a card. He slides it into a slot in the protruding gadget. His card disappears.

EXT. TV SCREEN - CU

HARLAN WILLIAMS
CIV. TECH NO. 10884
CUSTODIAN/3 CL
PLEASE PUSH ENTER HARLAN WILLIAMS

EXT. HARLAN AND RICK

HARLAN
Machines that say please make me
nervous.

He pushes a button on the console.

EXT. TV SCREEN - CU

ENTER THUMBPRINT PLEASE

EXT. HARLAN AND RICK

There's a rounded space on the gadget for a thumb. Harlan puts
his there.

EXT. TV SCREEN - CU

ACCEPTED

EXT. HARLAN AND RICK

Harlan's card comes back out. Harlan takes it. Beyond the two
men, the barrier swings up.

HARLAN
I guess I'm still me.

RICK
I guess you are, Harl.

HARLAN

Have a good one, Rick.

Harlan pedals along the Falco Testing Station access road and past the upraised barrier.

EXT. MONTAGE, FEATURING HARLAN - DAY

During this montage, we finish the credit roll. In a series of lap dissolves, we see Harlan riding up the access road, which curves through lovely fall meadows and little bundles of trees. He's enjoying his ride very much, sensing everything. The sound of the fall wind, which blows his hair is very clear; it mingles with the theme music.

Intercut with these images of an elderly man enjoying the fall early morning are more disturbing images: video cameras on automated swivels hidden in bushes or mounted on trees; other electric eye cells on posts; the barrel of a machine gun sticking out of a clump of laurel and field asters; a series of small radar dishes; something that might be a pillbox. We also see barbed wire drifting in and out of the bushes at the side of the road. This place looks bucolic and peaceful, but it is heavily monitored and fortified.

Credits end as Harlan breasts a hill on his bike and disappears from sight on the far side.

EXT. THE FALCO PLAINS TESTING FACILITY, MEDIUM - LONG

It's large, gray, anonymous, and quite forbidding. It looks about as much like an agricultural testing station as Raquel Welch looks like a Sherman tank. What it really looks like is a nuclear power station. At the left end of the block of buildings is a cement tower without windows. It looks like a cement grain silo. To one side of the facility is a large parking lot full of cars.

Coming down the access road toward the Testing Station is a figure on a bike—Harlan.

INT. THE SILO

The camera is looking up through struts and wires toward the roof. It slowly pans down, and at ground level we see a lot of lab equipment: oscillators, control boards, and an interwoven, but converging, network of translucent tubes.

There is a low steady hum of powerful equipment. Now we are looking at a very sophisticated lab setup which combines state-of-the-art computers with that crisscrossing network of tubes. All the tubes eventually join into a single, bigger tube.

The camera zooms slowly in on the cage at the end of this single tube. Inside are a number of white mice.

INT. A CONTROL BOARD - CU

There are dozens of switches, dials, and meters. A hand comes down and starts flicking the switches. As each one is flicked, the hum increases. Some really large pieces of equipment are being powered up. Above each switch is a meter and a small bulb. As the hand flicks each, the needle in the meter jerks, then falls back to zero. Each light glows green.

INT. DR. TODHUNTER - MOUSE CAGE

TODHUNTER is about fifty-five. He looks Puritanical and self-contained. He wears small rimless spectacles. He is dressed in a white lab coat. He is looking at the mice with great intensity. Above him we see the hollow shell of the silo.

With one hand Todhunter caresses the tube which ends at the glass top of the cage. This caressing gesture is both absent and rather sexual—he's like a contented man stroking his lover's breast.

TODHUNTER

Tell me when you're clear across the board!

INT. MAIN CONTROL PANEL

Both men are studious, in their mid-twenties. Grad student types who wear lab coats like their boss. JACKSON is flicking the switches; REDDING is making notations on a clipboard.

JACKSON

(calls)

I will, Dr. Todhunter!

(to Redding, in a
lower voice)

He's like a kid on prom night.

REDDING

Take it easy, man.

JACKSON

Don't tell me that. You know what
we're playing with here.

REDDING

We're not playing. This isn't any
game.

Jackson pauses and looks at Redding.

JACKSON

Yeah. I know it and you know it. I
just wonder if he knows it.

INT. TODHUNTER - AT THE CAGE

He is caressing the tube with a little more urgency now. Although he's a man who keeps a tight rein on every emotion, we see a sparkle of excitement in his eyes. He looks down at the mice.

TODHUNTER

Soon.

EXT. FALCO PLAINS PARKING LOT - DAY

That humming sound is faint, but audible.

Harlan bikes in, finds an empty space, and dismounts his bike. He looks toward the installation. He frowns slightly.

EXT. FALCO PLAINS INSTALLATION, HARLAN'S POV

It's not quite in focus.

EXT. HARLAN - CU

Still frowning, he closes his eyes and massages them gently.

EXT. THE INSTALLATION, HARLAN'S POV

For a moment it remains out of focus and then comes clear.

EXT. HARLAN

He starts across the parking lot toward an entrance.

EXT. ENTRANCE, WITH HARLAN

There's another of those gadgets like automated tellers here.

SPEAKER VOICE

(female)

Voice identification, please.

HARLAN

Harlan Williams, tech number 10884.

Custodian Third. Just like yesterday.

Harlan puts his thumb on the indented spot. A moment later there is a buzz. Harlan opens the door and goes inside.

INT. LAB - MICE IN THE GLASS BOX - CU

The power-up hum is louder. The mice are agitated; they jump around in the cage.

INT. LAB - DR. TODHUNTER

He's watching the antics of the mice and smiling. Not a very nice smile.

INT. CONTROL BOARD - JACKSON AND REDDING

Jackson is still flicking switches, Redding still making notes on his clipboard.

INT. THE CONTROL BOARD - CU

Jackson's hand flicks a switch near the end of the board. The needle jumps and then falls back, like all the others, but instead of turning green, the light turns red.

INT. THE CONTROL BOARD - JACKSON AND REDDING

They both look dismayed.

JACKSON

Oh-oh.

REDDING

It's just a secondary override--

JACKSON

I know what it is.

(calls)

Dr. Todhunter!

INT. LAB - TODHUNTER - BY THE GLASS CAGE

He's annoyed at being interrupted in his contemplation of the mice.

INT. CONTROL BOARD - JACKSON

JACKSON

I've got a red light on a secondary override.

INT. THE LAB AREA - WIDER BUT FEATURING TODHUNTER

TODHUNTER
(very annoyed)
Oh dear God.

He starts back toward the control console.

INT. CONTROL BOARD - JACKSON AND REDDING

REDDING
Now you've done it, Ollie.

INT. A LONG HALLWAY LINED WITH LOCKERS

Harlan Williams comes down this corridor, whistling a tune. We still hear that steady hum of equipment. All of the lockers are padlocked. Harlan reaches one of them and twirls the combination. He finishes and pulls the lock with the confidence of long experience, but the padlock remains closed. Frowning, he tries again. Still no luck.

HARLAN
(to himself as he
works the lock)
23... 79... 6...
(long pause)
81?

He thinks.

HARLAN (CONT'D)
No, it's 18, 18, not 81.

For a moment he looks disquieted, almost frightened. Then he gives the combination dial a spin and starts again.

INT. THE LOCK - CU - WITH HARLAN'S HAND

HARLAN
(voice)
23... 79... 6... 18.

We see him turn the combination dial more slowly this time, lining each number up carefully with the calibration line.

INT. HARLAN - AT THE LOCKER

He hesitates a moment, a little tense. He's been running this same series of numbers for a long time and his face tells us he doesn't want to think he's forgotten it; forgetting is what old people do. He nerves himself, then pulls the lock. The hasp pops up with a click. He smiles, relieved, and swings the locker door open. He starts pulling out a janitor's uniform: gray twill pants and shirt, plus plain black work-shoes.

INT. LAB CONTROL PANEL

Todhunter is pissed. He shoves Jackson aside and flicks the bad switch up and down several times. The light comes back on stubbornly red each time he flicks the switch back up.

JACKSON
(apologetically)
Dr. Todhunter, I--

TODHUNTER
Be quiet.

He flicks the rest of the switches. There are about ten. After each flick, the meter-needle flicks and a light above glows a reassuring green. Now there's green across the board, except for that one troublesome red. While Todhunter is bent over the board, Jackson and Redding exchange a glance that says they wish they were anywhere else.

TODHUNTER
(flat)
Gentlemen, we have a green board.

JACKSON
(after a pause)
I'm sorry, sir, but we don't. For the record, sir, we have a red on secondary override delta.

TODHUNTER

Secondary override delta is fine.
We have a green board, I tell you.

REDDING

But Dr. Todhunter—

TODHUNTER

Shut up, Redding. You're an intern.
That means you keep your eyes open
and your mouth *shut*. Understand?

REDDING

(boiling)

Yes, sir, Dr. Todhunter.

JACKSON

(terribly uncomfortable)

Dr. Todhunter, the regulations
specify—

TODHUNTER

This is a secondary override switch,
Jackson! Do you follow me?

INT. THE MICE IN THE GLASS CAGE - CU

Agitated by the noise (or by some premonition of the malign
fate rapidly approaching), they are still romping around
agitatedly.

TODHUNTER

(almost screaming, o.s.)

DO YOU FOLLOW THIS LINE OF REASON-
ING OR NOT?

INT. DRESSING AREA OF A SHOWER ROOM

He's got on his uniform pants and shoes. His street clothes
are neatly laid out nearby. He hasn't put on his gray twill
shirt yet; he's carefully tying his shoes. Above his pants he
wears an old-fashioned strap-style T-shirt.

LOUDSPEAKER

(voice)

Harlan Williams. This is for Harlan
Williams, 10884.

Startled, Harlan looks up at the speaker.

LOUDSPEAKER (CONT'D)

Please report to Administration
immediately. Repeat; please report
to Administration immediately,
Harlan Williams.

He looks both thoughtful and a little worried. He slowly
continues tying his shoes.

INT. FALCO'S ADMINISTRATION SECTION

The sound of typewriters and word processors. On the frosted
glass of the upper door we can read the word ADMINISTRATION
backwards.

The door opens and Harlan, now dressed in custodial gray,
comes in. He moves slowly across the room and the camera pans
to follow, showing us lots of desks. Secretaries work at
typewriters and VDTs. They are in institutional rows, but at
the far end, like a teacher at the head of a class of studious
pupils, is MRS. ROGERS. She is about forty-five, and sexy in a
cold ice-queen sort of way.

Harlan goes to her desk.

She's probably aware of Harlan's approach but remains bent
over a stack of papers.

HARLAN

Hello, Mrs. Rogers.

She turns a page. Harlan waits. Finally she looks up.

MRS. ROGERS

(icily)

Major Moreland wants to see you.

HARLAN
(taken aback)
Major Moreland? Why—

MRS. ROGERS
Immediately.

She bends over her papers again. Harlan looks at her doubtfully, then starts away from the desk. Beyond is a door which reads MAJOR JOHN MORELAND, CHIEF OF PERSONNEL. Mrs. Rogers looks up.

MRS. ROGERS
Knock before you go in.

HARLAN
(salutes)
Yessir!

Mrs. Rogers looks at him sourly.

He hasn't been smarting off so much as whistling in the dark. Now his smile fades a little and he turns toward the door. He gets ready, then knocks faintly. No response. He knocks louder.

MORELAND
(voice)
Come!

Harlan goes in and closes the door behind him. Mrs. Rogers looks up and toward the door with a sour little smile of satisfaction. She knows what's up... and approves.

INT. OFFICE OF MAJOR JOHN MORELAND

MORELAND sits behind his desk with his feet cocked up on it. He's wearing an Army uniform—sort of—but he's very much at ease: no tie, collar loosened. He's about forty, and the complete paper-pusher. He's also thoroughly hateful. At the present moment he is leafing through a file—Harlan's—with an expression of contented satisfaction.

Harlan closes the door and approaches the desk, a little unsure about how to behave. He looks as if he wishes he had a cap to twist in his hands. Moreland doesn't look up, only turns another page in the file.

HARLAN

Major Moreland?

Moreland doesn't look up.

MORELAND

Sit down, Williams.

There's one chair in front of the desk. Harlan sits in it, look-ing more anxious than ever. Moreland turns another page in the file, then another.

HARLAN

Did you want to see m--

Moreland slaps the file down on his desk in a quick, calculated gesture, drops his feet to the floor, and leans toward Harlan, pinning him with his gaze.

MORELAND

You're seventy-one years old,
Williams.

HARLAN

Well, seventy, actually. I won't be
seventy-one until--

MORELAND

Until seven years ago, mandatory
retirement age for Civilian Tech
employees in government installa-
tions like Falco Plains was sixty-
five. Did you know that?

HARLAN

Yes.

MORELAND

Now civilian employees get a choice:
(MORE)

MORELAND (CONT'D)

retire at sixty-five or go on working--
subject to a yearly checkup, that is.
It's a policy I don't approve of.
Young blood is the key to success in
any business, Williams, and that in-
cludes government business. There are
young men who come in here every day
of the week, looking for jobs. Any
jobs! Men with families, men who--

HARLAN

Men who would be happy to start at
the minimum wage. About six bucks an
hour less than I make, I reckon.

MORELAND

(coldly)

Money is not the issue here.

HARLAN

Well what is?

Moreland flicks a sheet from the file across the desk to
Harlan and smiles a cold, satisfied smile.

MORELAND

This.

Harlan picks it up.

CU on the file in his hands. It's a computer printout. We see
a long column on the left which shows all the things for which
Harlan was checked: heart, lungs, hearing, reaction time, and
so on. We won't get a chance to read all of it, but we get the
idea it's soup to nuts. The middle column on the computer page
shows a numeric value. On the right, we see the words
ACCEPTABLE LEVEL printed over and over again in a vertical
column. Except, near the bottom--and here the camera zooms in:

VISUAL ACUITY 91 UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL

HARLAN

I don't understand.

MORELAND

It means that when you had your physical in September, Mr. Williams, you flunked your eye test. It's not as though you're *blind*, it's just that your vision is now below the levels set by the Department of Defense for--

HARLAN

(angrily)

How much below?

MORELAND

Just over six percent.

HARLAN

Six percent!??!

MORELAND

Your hearing is apparently as good as the printout indicates. It's your eyes that--

HARLAN

So I'll get glasses!

MORELAND

And I think that's a fine idea. But you'll get them on your pension.

Harlan stares at him, unable to accept it.

MORELAND (CONT'D)

You're seventy-one, you know.

HARLAN

Seventy!

Moreland adopts a patient tone; he becomes the Good Dad explaining the facts of life to a small child... but he is also clearly relishing Harlan's dismay.

MORELAND

Mr. Williams, your vision is deficient.
The regulations are perfectly clear on
this point, just as they are on all
points--

HARLAN

To hell with the regulations!

Moreland is shocked. In his world, such a statement is
blasphemy.

MORELAND

I'm sorry, Mr. Williams.

His smile indicates he's nothing but.

HARLAN

This isn't the end of it.

He tosses the printout contemptuously back on Moreland's desk.

MORELAND

What do you mean?

HARLAN

I mean I can read. I follow all
the employee updates. I can retake
the damned eye examination if I want
to. It's the law.

Moreland smiles, complacent.

MORELAND

Yes, indeed. And we believe in the
law here. We believe in it and we
follow it to the letter. You have
until...

He consults a sheet in the file.

MORELAND

...November 9th. Your birthday.
Just about a month. Retake the eye
exam, by all means. Be my guest.

HARLAN

I don't need to be your guest. It's my *right*. Just tell me one thing.

MORELAND

If I can.

HARLAN

Why in the hell are you so happy about this?

MORELAND

You want the truth? Man to man?

Harlan just stands there, angry and upset. Underneath it all, he's also terribly frightened.

Moreland gets up and walks to his window. He looks out with his hands clasped behind his back. He probably thinks he looks like General Patton but what he really looks like is a pompous little jerk.

MORELAND (CONT'D)

The old way was cleaner. You turned sixty-five and chop.

He brings one hand down in a chopping gesture and then returns it to behind his back.

HARLAN

Chop. I see.

Moreland really isn't listening. His face is rapt: the face of a petty bureaucrat dreaming of a world where all papers are in order and nothing is ever punched, folded, spindled or mutilated.

MORELAND

But the *real* reason is that people get stale, Mr. Williams. When I was a kid, my mother would buy a beef roast for Sunday dinner at least once a month. It really cost too much for her budget, but dad loved

(MORE)

MORELAND (CONT'D)

a good roast beef more than anything in the world. My mom would bring that roast to table on Sunday, and my dad would carve it-I can see him now, just as clear as day.

Moreland smiles sentimentally. Harlan is perplexed. He's asked Moreland why he's being kicked out and Moreland is talking about roast beef.

MORELAND

On Monday, my two brothers and I would get cold beef sandwiches in our lunch-pails. Tuesday night we'd have a casserole. On Wednesday night it was chipped beef on toast. And on Thursday--

HARLAN

Major Moreland, I don't have any idea what you're talking about.

Moreland turns back from the window and looks at Harlan with a sympathy so bogus it's really sort of repulsive.

MORELAND

On Thursday, Mr. Williams, if there was anything left of that roast, my mother threw it away. By then we were glad to see it go. My dad didn't make enough money so we could afford to just chuck meat into the garbage, but my mother knew that meat only keeps so long. After awhile it gets randy. And randy meat can make you sick.

There is a silence between the two men. Moreland is looking at Harlan as if he were a laboratory specimen. Harlan is struggling with dawning rage and incredulity.

HARLAN

(finally)

You're a jerk. Do you know that?
A total, worthless jerk.

MORELAND

It's been my experience that when people start saying such things, Mr. Williams, meaningful discussion has come to an end. Mrs. Rogers will have the correct forms, should you care to pursue this.

He goes to his desk, sits down, and returns Harlan's file to a drawer.

HARLAN

(shouts)

I am *not* a roast of beef!

INT. THE SECRETARIES IN THE ADMINISTRATION SECTION

They all look up and toward Moreland's office. A tiny, rather cruel Cheshire Cat smile touches Mrs. Rogers' lips.

INT. MORELAND'S OFFICE

Moreland looks at him with cool contempt.

MORELAND

Of course you are, Mr. Williams. In the end, that's all *any* of us are. Just so much left-over beef.

Harlan gapes at him. The man is clearly insane.

HARLAN

It's not over. I meant that.

MORELAND

(doesn't look up)

Fine. Good morning, Mr. Williams.

INT. THE ADMINISTRATION WING

All the secretaries stare at him, as he comes out the door. We can tell from his uncomfortable expression that he feels every stare. He makes his way to Mrs. Rogers' desk. The Cheshire Cat

smile flirts around the edges of her lips again. She knows what all this is about, and she wants Harlan to know she knows.

MRS. ROGERS
(sweet contempt)
May I help you, Mr. Williams?

HARLAN
(with difficulty)
I need some forms. I don't remember the numbers.

INT. THE SILO CONTROL BOARD - ECU

The shot features that stubborn red light. The humming sound of heavy equipment remains very loud.

A hand--it belongs to none other than Dr. Todhunter--comes into the frame. He thumps the light with the side of his thumb. It flickers a brief green... then back to red.

Wider, revealing Todhunter, Redding and Jackson.

TODHUNTER
(furious)
There. You see? It's a bad wire in the go/no-go. Probably twenty-nine cents worth of trouble. No more.

JACKSON
Yes, but the regulations--

TODHUNTER
Oh, will you stop quoting the rule-book at me!

Todhunter thumps the light again. Each time Dr. Todhunter's thumb hits the light, it flickers green. It goes back to red after each thump, however.

Todhunter's eyes are bulging, his whole face is knotted; perhaps we see spittle flying from his lips. There should be no doubt in our minds about one thing: this man is insane.

TODHUNTER

Do you see the light flicker green
when I tap it, Dr. Jackson? Is this
a symptom one would associate with a
faulty go/no-go switch? Do you believe
I just might have a point here?

Jackson and Redding exchange a worried glance, and then
Jackson looks back at Todhunter.

JACKSON

Yes, I agree that the chances are 99
in a hundred that we've got a faulty
switch, but we're also dealing with an
untested molecule fusion process here
that requires a great deal of power
and--

TODHUNTER

(suddenly cold)

Very well. We'll abort. But in my
description of this particular Gold
series test--this Gold series non-test,
I should say--I'll be careful to spell
your name right, Dr. Jackson.

Jackson and Redding look at each other, eyes wide, faces
scared.

Jackson reaches down and thumps the light. It stays green a
little longer, then goes back to red.

Redding gives Jackson a look that says, 'Please, man, this guy
is crazy.'

REDDING

(softly)

It is just the light, Tommy.

For a moment no one speaks. It's all up to Jackson, and he's
assessing his options carefully.

JACKSON

Fine. It's the light.

Todhunter, like a child who has gotten his way after a tantrum, is immediately transformed. He smiles and slaps Jackson on the shoulder.

TODHUNTER

Very good, Dr. Jackson! Sanity! Let's not waste any more time.

He strides back toward the cage of mice at the end of the central glass tube, his lab coat once more flying out behind him. His wild grin and scary enthusiasm should make us think of Victor Frankenstein just before jump-starting the monster.

JACKSON

(low)

Man's crazy.

REDDING

(also low)

Yeah? I never would have guessed.

JACKSON

What if it's not just the light?

Redding doesn't reply. Todhunter is at the cage. He's caressing that glass tube again.

TODHUNTER

(calls)

Commence primary sequence, gentlemen!

Jackson looks at Redding once more- a kind of despairing 'Are you sure?' look.

REDDING

(low but fierce)

Go on, Tommy!

Jackson starts to flick switches. That sound of humming power starts to get even louder. The board shows flashing lights, digital read-outs, computer-generated diagrams.

The glass tubes begin to glow, a very faint green.

Todhunter is still stroking the main tube, into which all the others feed, smiling, looking down at the mice. There are about ten of them. They are hopping around faster than ever, obviously upset.

Jackson and Redding look both scared and awed. The humming of equipment is even louder. Their attention is directed up toward the network of glass tubes. That green glow is brightening.

Todhunter looks at the mice, then around at the tubes. The big one, the one the others feed into and which eventually feeds into the cage, isn't glowing yet. Todhunter still has his hand on it.

TODHUNTER

(yells)

Secondary sequence!

Jackson is looking down at the board like a man who has been hypnotized.

The needles are going back and forth like crazy on most of the dials. There's a long row of green lights, except for that one red light near the end.

Redding nudges Jackson.

REDDING

Go on, Tommy!

Jackson is like a man awakened from a dream. He begins to flick other switches on the board. That hum of power cycles higher.

The network of tubes is glowing brighter green than ever.

JACKSON

More power than a supernova. God help us if it goes wrong.

REDDING

Nothing is going to go wrong.

INT. THE HALLWAY BY HARLAN'S LOCKER

We still hear the power-hum, quite loud. The silo is nearby. Harlan ignores it. He's sitting by his open locker, studying a printed form.

CU on the form:

EMPLOYEE REQUEST FOR REPEAT PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Below are lots of questions and a big blank where the employee is supposed to fill in his reasons for wanting a repeat exam. For a moment all this remains in focus, then it blurs as Harlan's POV of the Falco Plains site blurred earlier. He rubs his eyes furiously.

HARLAN

(low)

Damn!

Another janitor dressed in industrial gray fatigues approaches Harlan's locker. His name is BILLY DeLOIS. He's about twenty-three, and not terribly bright. He's pushing a dolly loaded with cans of industrial sealer and brushes.

BILLY

Hey, Harlan, how ya doin'?

Harlan stuffs the form into his locker in a hurry and slams it shut.

HARLAN

Well, the day's got to get better.
That's one thing.

BILLY

We're still gonna do the floor in the
rec area, ain't we? I got the seal.

(indicates the cans)

Charlie and Roger and Phil are already
up there.

HARLAN

(his mind far away)

Yeah. Sure we are.

BILLY

We opened the windows like you said.
'Cause of the fumes.

HARLAN

Good, Billy. That's good.

Billy listens to the humming sound, then grins.

BILLY

Sounds like the Mad Scientist finally
got it working. Whatever it is.

HARLAN

(still in his own
thoughts)

Yeah.

BILLY

Dr. Todhunter is really a weird guy,
you know it? He talks to himself. I've
heard him. Lots of times. And wow, can
he get mad! One time I was scrapin' a
piece of chewin' gum off the floor with
my putty knife and he come along and
stumbled over my leg. Almost fell. He
gave me a reamin' out like I never
heard since I was in the second grade,
and...

Billy looks more closely at Harlan, who has taken the padlock
from his locker and is looking at it thoughtfully.

BILLY

Harl?

HARLAN

I reversed the last number of my combina-
tion this morning, Billy. It's been 18
for... well, almost eighteen years. That's
how long I've been here. But I dialed eighty-
one, and when it wouldn't open, for a minute
there I kind of blanked.

BILLY
(doesn't get it)
Harl? You all right?

Harlan seems to wake up. He puts the lock back in its place, closes the hasp, and gives the combination a twirl.

HARLAN
(smiles)
I'm fine. I'll be right up, Billy.
Just want to wash my face.

BILLY
Okay, Harl. I'll tell the boys.

He starts pushing the dolly up the corridor. Harlan calls after him.

HARLAN
Remember--Number Two elevator. Can't tie up and other three if they're really testing this time, and not just playing with their switches.

BILLY
Okay, Harl!

And he goes on up the hall.

Harlan's mask remains in place for a moment, and then he drops into depression again. Biking up the county road, he was a man of seventy who looked sixty-two. Now he looks his age and more.

INT. THE SILO, A PANNING SHOT

The sound of the machines is much louder. The tubes are glowing a brighter and brighter green. The camera pans past their various junction points to the main one. It has also started to glow, but it's a faint glow as yet. The camera pans along it to Dr. Todhunter, who looks nuttier than ever.

TODHUNTER

(bellows)

Tertiary sequence, right now! All re-cording equipment should be on!

Jackson and Redding are concentrating on the board, both flicking switches. Machine sounds cycle up louder.

The recording machines are in another part of the testing area. There are perhaps half a dozen machines, each extruding a paper readout that looks like the result of a lie-detector test or an EEG reading.

The dials on the control board jump wildly. The secondary override light is bright red.

The mice hop wildly about in their cage, and now we can see a green glow beginning to filter into the cage like mist.

INT. WASHROOM - A MIRROR - CU

The hum of machinery is still there, but very muted. The sound of running water is followed by a splash.

Harlan appears in the mirror, beads of water like sweat on his face. He examines himself closely. With his fingers he traces the creases by his eyes. He looks frightened. Harlan abruptly turns off the water and leaves the room by a nearby door.

INT. SILO

The tubes are brighter green than ever. The green is also deepening in the mouse cage. Dr. Todhunter is fanatically excited. Jackson and Redding, at the board, are tense but excited. Suddenly the loud, powerful hum is replaced, in part, at least, by a protesting, unpleasant squeal. Startled, the two men look down at the control board. The light to the left of the red one suddenly goes from green to red.

JACKSON

(cries)

Dr. Todhunter, I have a red on primary
delta override!

Todhunter is staring at the green glow as if hypnotized.

JACKSON

Dr. Todhunter--!

Sparks and smoke suddenly fly. A moment later there is a small explosion. A couple of panels fly out. We see a complication of wires obscured by smoke and sparks.

Jackson and Redding are so scared they're shitting peach-pits.

REDDING

Overload, Dr. Todhunter! Overload all
across the board!

Todhunter is still caressing that green tube and peering into the cage. Now a siren begins to whoop and Todhunter looks around at last, but groggily, like a man coming out of a deep dream.

On the control board, half the lights are red; more are turning red all the time. Smoke is pouring out of the board. Suddenly a dial blows out.

REDDING

Shut it down! He's on another planet.

Jackson freezes, looking from Redding to Todhunter to the board, momentarily unable to make a decision.

CU on the double doors at the far side of the silo. Written on them:

HYDROGEN TURBINES - CLASSIFIED
NO ENTRY WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION

The doors suddenly blow open. One, in fact, is torn right off its hinges. Smoke billows out.

The network of glass tubes begins to shatter.

REDDING

(screams)

Shut it down! You want to die? Shut it
DOWN!

Jackson leans over the board and begins to flick switches. The siren goes on whooping. Jackson looks around at Redding, frightened.

JACKSON

No response on the primaries. We burned
out busses as well as the overrides.

REDDING

Then shut it all down! Pull the plug!

JACKSON

Do you know how long it will take to
power up if I--

REDDING

*Don't you get it? This place is gonna go
sky high!*

He shoves Jackson aside.

Todhunter looks up, frightened, at the network of glass tubes. More of them--almost all of them--blow up.

Todhunter starts running away from the big tube and the control board, heading for a door across the silo. There's an EXIT sign over it. Dr. Frankenstein has turned out to be just another chicken-shit now that the chips are down. Behind him, the big tube explodes. Shards of glass fly all around Dr. Todhunter.

FADE TO BLACK

ACT II

INT. FALCO PLAINS - HALLWAY

He comes running toward his side of the silo door at the sound of the alarm. He stops about twenty feet away where there is a fire extinguisher and one of those alarms that say BREAK GLASS IN CASE OF EMERGENCY. Harlan breaks the glass and grabs the fire extinguisher off the wall. Then he runs toward the door.

INT. THE SILO

A bank of equipment blows out. Fire rages in the wiring behind it. The mouse cage breaks but the mice themselves are fine. They jump to the floor and skitter away.

Redding smashes the glass covering a switch with a legend beneath it which reads INSTALLATION SHUTDOWN--EMERGENCY ONLY. He pushes the button.

INT. THE HALLWAY

As Harlan reaches the door, fire extinguisher in his hands, all the overhead lights go out, leaving him in dimness.

INT. FALCO GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND STENO POOL

The overhead fluorescents go out. Computer screens go blank. Secretaries look up, uneasy. We can hear the sound of the alarm--it's faint, but audible. Must be hooked up to an emergency circuit.

INT. MAJOR MORELAND'S OFFICE

Moreland has his feet cocked up on his desk and is reading a girlie magazine. Now he drops his feet to the floor.

MORELAND

What the bloody hell--?

INT. THE HALLWAY

Harlan's approaching the door when it slams open in his face, knocking him flat. The fire extinguisher rolls out of his hands and down the hall. Dr. Todhunter practically tramples Harlan in his panicky rush to get away. Harlan gets up, dazed. His nose and lips are bleeding. The door through which Todhunter has escaped the silo swings shut.

HARLAN

Dr. Todhunter?

Todhunter doesn't look back. He's reached the stairs and takes them two at a time, his lab coat flying out behind him.

INT. SILO CONTROL ROOM

Jackson and Redding are standing tensely in the smoking ruins of the lab as the sound of overstressed equipment begins to slowly cycle down.

JACKSON

I think we did it.

REDDING

Yeah. I think maybe we did.

They look at each other, as if afraid to breathe, then grin at each other.

JACKSON

Whooo!

REDDING

Yo!

They embrace, slapping each other on the back.

Long shot across the silo from the panel area. We're looking toward the turbine room. Suddenly there is a tremendous explosion. We see equipment flying everywhere and then the screen whites out.

EXT. FALCO PLAINS INSTALLATION

A large piece of the silo blows out.

INT. THE HALLWAY

The door blows explosively open and the light of this explosion has a definite greenish tint. Harlan flies backward in a blast of light, smoke, and strange greenish particles. He hits the wall and slides down it, unconscious... or dead.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A SMALL HOUSE ON A PRETTY SMALLTOWN STREET - NIGHT

The town is, of course, Falco, New York. The street is probably named after some tree. And the name on the mailbox is WILLIAMS.

An olive-colored sedan--a government car and probably Army--pulls up to the sidewalk. A man and a woman get out of the back seat. The man, LIEUTENANT VESTER, carries a slim briefcase. He's an ornamental aide.

The woman is dressed in business clothes--cold but sort of sexy. Her hair is pulled back, her makeup is minimal, her hemline at the knee or below, but she's got a smoldering look of sexuality simmering under the surface. This is TERRILYN SPANN, an immensely capable, immensely believable, immensely desirable, immensely dangerous woman. She can look kind and sympathetic, or as cold as an ice-maker. Cross her path and she can send you to heaven... or make you sorry you were ever born. Terry Spann's specialty is cleaning up messes--like the one which just occurred at Falco Plains.

The pair goes up the walk, Spann in the lead. She rings the bell.

INT. WILLIAMS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

GINA is sixty-eight, three years younger than Harlan. Like him, she doesn't look her age. Once she was a radiantly beautiful woman. Now, as she approaches her seventies, she

must settle for being merely lovely. She's vacuuming. On the TV a soap opera is playing. The sound of the doorbell.

GINA
(startled)
God! The cookies!

She hurries through a doorway.

INT. WILLIAMS HOUSE - KITCHEN

It's as pin-neat as the living room. Gina grabs a stool, stands on it, and pulls a canister down from the top shelf of a cabinet. As she does, the doorbell rings again.

GINA
(calls)
Be right there!

She opens the canister and removes a small stash of folded bills. She takes two and returns the rest.

GINA (CONT'D)
(to herself)
And if you forgot the mint cookies,
ladies, I'll strangle you with your
own neckerchiefs.

She puts the canister back, closes the cupboard door, and gets off the stool. She has performed all these acts as easily and gracefully as a woman of twenty-five. She hurries back toward the door and out of frame.

INT. WILLIAMS HOUSE - THE FRONT HALL

GINA
Here I am! I hope you remembered the
mint cookies, because they're the ones--

She opens the door and stops talking suddenly.

GINA (CONT'D)
(nonplussed)
Oh. Excuse me. I thought...
(laughs)
I thought you were the Girl Scouts.

SPANN
Mrs. Williams? We've come from Falco
Plains.

GINA
(slowly dawning realization)
What's wrong? Is my husband all right?

SPANN
May we come in, Mrs. Williams?

She's trying to control herself--and doing a pretty good job
of it--but fear has become terror.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE FALCO PLAINS FACILITY

Featured is the gaping hole in the base of the silo.

INT. THE SILO LABORATORY

There is a green, smoky atmosphere Through this drifting green
smoke we see ruined lab equipment, shards of glass from the
overhead tubes, and control panels with their coverings torn
off. We see snarled wires, some still snapping off sparks.

Now four soldiers and LIEUTENANT McGIVER come through this
green fog like ghosts. They are wearing white suits, hoods,
and respirators. The FIRST SOLDIER is holding out a pole with
a flat round plate at the end of it; it looks like a metal
detector.

FIRST SOLDIER
(radio voice)
Negative radiation, Lieutenant.

McGIVER

(radio)

Be damned strange if there was. That
wasn't what they were playing with.

SECOND SOLDIER

(radio)

What were they playing with?

McGIVER

(radio)

None of your business, soldier.

THIRD SOLDIER

(radio)

Lieutenant McGiver!

McGiver looks around at the control panel. It's overturned,
with a snarl of wires coming out of its guts. From beneath it
we can see a pair of legs- Redding's.

We see the soldier through his transparent faceplate. He looks
horrified, sickened.

THIRD SOLDIER

(radio)

Oh, my God.

Jackson is sprawled against the wall, dead--cooked.

FOURTH SOLDIER

(radio)

It's a guy. You've never seen anyone so
dead.

McGIVER

(radio)

Then help us here!

The FOURTH SOLDIER joins the others. They wrestle the control
panel away from Redding. Redding stirs and moans.

McGIVER (CONT'D)

(radio)

Let's get him out of here! You and you!

He points to first and second soldiers.

McGIVER

(radio)

Help me pick him up!

FIRST SOLDIER

(radio)

Sir, if he has a broken back, we could--

McGIVER

(radio)

--kill him, I know. On the other hand, I doubt very much if this place is doing him any good.

They all look at a ghostly wreckage drifting with green smog. All the surfaces we see are covered with a light green dust; some sort of fallout.

McGiver gets Redding's legs. The first and second soldiers each take him by an arm and a shoulder. Redding moans loudly. His face is smeared with blood and green dust. His eyes flutter open and he looks around, bewildered.

McGIVER

(radio)

You're going to be all right, friend.

REDDING

(weak, low, hurt)

Can't hear you.

McGiver nods, and makes a thumb-and-forefinger circle: everything's jake. Redding nods. They start moving him toward the door through which Todhunter escaped. The camera tracks with them.

REDDING (CONT'D)
Secondary delta override...

His eyes close, then open again. The soldiers look at each other, puzzled and pitying.

REDDING (CONT'D)
We had a no-go light. Dr. Todhunter...

McGiver looks down at Redding closely.

McGIVER
(radio)
What about Dr. Todhunter?

REDDING
(weak)
Still can't hear you, man.

McGiver leans very close to Redding and pushes aside his radio mike with his chin. His voice is muffled but audible.

McGIVER
What about Dr. Todhunter?

REDDING
(weakening fast)
Told us to go ahead anyway. Ordered us.

McGIVER
(muffled; no radio)
I want to make absolutely sure I'm understanding you, mister. You had a red light on the board and Todhunter told you to go ahead anyway?

REDDING
(his eyes close)
It was like... like he was crazy...

Redding has either passed out or is passing out. McGiver uses his chin to shove his mike back into position.

McGIVER

(radio)

Come on. Let's get him out of here.

They start to move toward the door again.

EXT. AN UPSTATE NEW YORK COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

This is, in fact, the same road we saw Harlan Williams riding along not so long ago. The government car we saw pulling up to the Williams house sweeps past the camera.

INT. THE CAR

Vester is at the wheel. The two women ride in the back seat.

GINA

You're sure he's all right?

Terry Spann can radiate charm and sincerity when it serves her purpose and this is most definitely one of those times.

SPANN

According to the last report I had,
your husband was in the infirmary,
awake, alert, and very much okay.

GINA

Thank You, God! Thank you, Mary!

SPANN

He has a slight concussion, but other
than the dislocated elbow he probably
sustained when he hit the floor, he's
fine.

GINA

God put His hand in front of my Harl.

SPANN

Yes.

(beat)

(MORE)

SPANN (CONT'D)

Mrs. Williams, I know how concerned you are for your husband at this moment, and I sympathize--Lieutenant Vester and I both sympathize...

He grimaces. Gina may not know a snake-oil salesman when she meets one, but Vester does.

SPANN

...but I would be remiss in my duty if I didn't remind you that your husband was injured in the course of a highly classified operation. He'll receive compensation for his injuries. But you're not going to talk about this, Mrs. Williams, not to anyone.

Gina is confused, but she clearly wants to like and help Spann who has, after all, brought her good news... of a sort.

GINA

I guess I can keep my lip zipped, Ms. Spann.

SPANN

Terrilyn. Terry, to my friends. And I'm sure you can.

She looks pleased. No problem here, that expression says.

EXT. THE CAR, FROM BEHIND - DAY

It goes whipping up the road through the blazing autumn trees.

EXT. FALCO PLAINS

Establishing.

INT. A HALLWAY

We are looking down at double doors. Across the frosted glass panels is the word INFIRMARY.

Now white-suited orderlies wheel Redding into frame and toward those doors. Redding is on a gurney which is enclosed in a plastic bubble. But just to be safe, the orderlies are wearing the same white suits as the soldiers.

Redding is unconscious. We can still see that green dust on his skin and shredded lab coat. He's in bad shape.

The orderlies push him through the double doors.

INT. THE INFIRMARY

There are twelve beds in here, arranged in two rows. Only one is occupied right now, and that occupant is Harlan Williams. He is in the bed furthest from the camera, by the window, cranked up to a sitting position, wearing a hospital johnny. There's a bandage--not quite a turban--wrapped around his temples. His left arm is in a sling. He's looking out the window.

In the f.g. of the shot are the double doors (we can read INFIRMARY backwards). The orderlies are bringing Redding, encased in his plastic bubble, through this. To the left of the orderlies is another door, unmarked. They wheel Redding rapidly toward this.

Harlan turns from the window just in time to see them reach it. One of the white-suited orderlies opens the door; the others push the gurney through.

HARLAN

Hey! Hey, you guys!

They take no notice. They push Redding's gurney through the door and are gone.

Harlan looks troubled, upset, unsure. After a moment he reaches down for a gadget that lies in his lap and picks it up. It's a call-button. Harlan pushes it repeatedly, then waits. Nothing happens and no one comes.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

(softly)

Damn.

He pushes the call button again.

This is a reverse from the window side of the bed. The camera holds on Harlan, then pans up to a TV camera mounted in one corner of the room.

INT. A NURSE'S STATION OFF THE INFIRMARY

There are two nurses here--the older one is the HEAD NURSE, currently reading a magazine. She's sort of a battleaxe. The younger one is a pretty TRAINEE. There's a desk, a coffee-maker, and three video screens showing the infirmary. On all three screens we see Harlan pushing his call bell insistently.

SOUND: A soft, continuing chime. The Trainee starts to get up.

HEAD NURSE

Sit down, sweetheart.

TRAINEE

But he--

HEAD NURSE

He's fine and we have orders. If we follow them, we'll be fine, too. Don't worry. He can reach the bedpan if he needs to go wee-wee.

She picks up her magazine again.

INT. THE INFIRMARY

Harlan gives up on the call button and drops it back into his lap. His look is intermingled worry disgust, and uncertainty.

INT. THE OUTER OFFICE OF GENERAL CREWES

This is a plush room with modern decor, modern lighting, modern paintings on the wall and a modern secretary behind the

reception desk. The latter is DARLA KEYNES, a blonde with haughty features and a figure to match.

SOUND: Soft Muzak.

The outer door opens and Dr. Todhunter, now dressed in a suit, enters. He's gotten over his fright and is his normal self: a pompous, arrogant asshole. He ran away, but that's no problem; Todhunter has already blocked that from his memory.

TODHUNTER

I'm here to see General Crewes.

DARLA

Hello, Dr. Todhunter. Have a seat, please.

TODHUNTER

(standing)

I said I'm here to see the General.
Buzz him.

DARLA

When the General wants you, Dr.
Todhunter, he'll buzz you.

Todhunter looks furious, but after a moment he sits down. He's fuming.

The camera pans up and we see a camera looking down.

INT. THE OFFICE OF GENERAL CREWES

GENERAL CREWES is a man of about fifty-five. He looks tough. Behind his desk, a huge picture window shows us a scenic view behind the Falco Plains installation: woods flaming with color.

The entire right wall is comprised of television monitors. There are twenty, five rows of four. At the touch of a desk switch, oak paneling which matches the other walls will slide down, covering the monitors. But now we see Harlan Williams, who has started to doze off, on three of the monitors. We see

Todhunter on a fourth. Others show the parking lot, the road, the security booth, etc.

Todhunter is sitting ramrod straight, but there's a side-to-side flicker in his eyes which is more Captain Queeg than General Patton. Crewes sits, observing him for a moment.

CREWES

(soft)

You divine ass.

INT. INFIRMARY

Harlan is sleeping now. The camera holds on him for a moment and then pans up to the window. Outside we see the parking lot. Pulling in is the government car containing Vester, Terry Spann, and Gina.

INT. CREWES'S OFFICE - VIDEO MONITOR

Todhunter looks more impatient than ever.

TODHUNTER

(radio pickup)

Dammit, I had an appointment!

DARLA

(voice)

And I'm sure the General will be
with you as soon as he possibly can.

During this last speech the camera pulls away to give us all of Crewes's office.

A chime sounds. Crewes looks at a monitor centered on Spann. She's standing outside what looks like a solid wall.

CREWES

(to himself)

It's the Ice Queen. What a treat.

He pushes a button on his desk console. Another section of oak paneling slides up, revealing a steel door, nakedly utilitarian.

CREWES (CONT'D)

Say the secret word and win a
hundred dollars, Terrilyn.

She's on the landing of a stark hallway that ends here. Above her head is one of the ubiquitous TV cameras. She's relaxed, smiling a little. She and Crewes are old sparring partners. They will bump each other, often hard, but below the bumps there's a bedrock of mutual respect... and Crewes would love to get her in the sack.

SPANN

I believe the secret word today is
carpet.

He pushes a button below a dark strip. The word that lights up is CARPET. Crewes pushes another button.

FADE TO BLACK

ACT III

INT. FALCO PLAINS - CREWES'S OFFICE

Spann approaches Crewes and holds out her arms. Crewes holds out his. They embrace. Kiss each-others' cheeks. Behind Spann's back, Crewes is giving her the finger. Behind Crewes's back, Spann is doing the same thing. Spann breaks suddenly free of the embrace and grabs at Crewes's middle finger and Crewes does exactly the same thing at the same time. They end up facing each other, gripping middle digits. This is a helluva lot more aggressive--and intimate--than air kisses. They both look embarrassed (and mildly turned on).

SPANN

(lets go first)

You don't change much, Lou.

CREWES

You either, Terry. You either. You brought the woman?

SPANN

You bet.

CREWES

She cool?

SPANN

Beautifully cool.

CREWES

You want to go non-reg for a minute?

SPANN

You bet.

Crewes opens a drawer, produces a bottle of whiskey and two glasses. He pours each of them a knock.

CREWES

This is a mess.

SPANN
(lifts her glass)
I'll drink to that.

They do. Crewes looks toward the monitors. Spann follows his gaze. Todhunter is sitting there ramrod straight, pompous and offended by the wait.

CREWES
That man is crazy. He also happens
to be a genius.

SPANN
(skeptical)
Whatever you say, pal.

CREWES
He's on the edge of a breakthrough
so monumental that... well, never
mind.

He looks up at another monitor. We see Gina Williams approaching the bedside of her sleeping husband. She sits beside him and kisses his cheek with great love.

CREWES (CONT'D)
What happened was caused by a technical malfunction. Abetted, of course, by Todhunter's instability.

SPANN
You know that?

CREWES
For a fact? Not yet. But I know
Todhunter.

SPANN
What kind of problems do we have?

Crewes points toward the monitor showing Harlan (asleep) and Gina. Spann follows his thought.

SPANN (CONT'D)
Shouldn't be much of a problem.

Crewes looks cruel, implacable.

CREWES

Let's make sure he's not, shall we?

SPANN

You know me, Lou--I live to serve.

CREWES

Yeah. Right. Time to talk to the good doctor.

He pushes a switch on his console.

DARLA

(voice)

Yes, General Crewes?

CREWES

Send in Dr. Todhunter, dear, would you?

The camera pans up to the monitor showing Harlan, sleeping, with Gina sitting at his bedside. She has a rosary in her hands.

CROSS-FADE TO:

INT. INFIRMARY

Harlan is sleeping. The camera's view widens to include Gina. She's still telling her beads. She's looking at them, not Harlan, so she doesn't see his eyes open. He looks at her with great love. He puts a hand gently over hers. She looks at him and smiles with similar love.

GINA

You're awake!

HARLAN

Didn't ever really go to sleep. Old battleaxe down the hall brought me a
(MORE)

HARLAN (CONT'D)

pill. I told her I didn't want it.
She told me that didn't matter.

GINA

(anxiously)

How bad are you hurt, Harl?

HARLAN

Not bad. Worst of it's my back.

GINA

Your back? Ms. Spann told me you had
a concussion and a dislocated elbow--

HARLAN

Ms. Spann? Who's she?

GINA

A woman who works for the government.
That's all I know, except I think she's
in charge of keeping secrets. She didn't
say anything about your *back*.

HARLAN

Probably because she wasn't there when
that bastard Todhunter ran over me.

Harlan smiles. It's a grim and rather cynical smile.

HARLAN

Guess he must have remembered an appoint-
ment he forgot. Must have been an impor-
tant one, too, because he was running like
hell was on his heels.

GINA

Are you sure you're all right?

HARLAN

Fine... considering I got fired and then
blown up, all before coffee break.

GINA

Fired!

HARLAN

Well, let go. I flunked the eye test
on my last physical.

(beat)

I'm not giving up, though. I got a
right to retake it, and I'm gonna.

GINA

(frightened)

Are you sure you're all right, Harl?
I'm not sure I understand what you're
talking about.

Harlan pulls her close, hugs her, kisses her.

HARLAN

That's all right. I do. And it's going
to be all right.

He kisses her again, more passionately.

GINA

(breathlessly)

Your neck... Terry Spann said--

HARLAN

Feels fine right now. So do you.

He pulls her onto the bed. They kiss again.

INT. NURSE'S STATION/HALLWAY

CU on Harlan's video monitor. He's got both of her feet up on
the bed now, and what's going on looks pretty hot.

The pretty young trainee is filling out forms on a clipboard.
The Head Nurse is watching Harlan and Gina make out. The
expression on the Head Nurse's face is mingled disgust and
contempt.

HEAD NURSE

That's disgusting!

The Trainee glances up, looks momentarily startled, then smiles.

HEAD NURSE

Next thing you know, he'll be jazzing
her right there!

TRAINEE

(sarcastic)

I guess he hasn't had time to notice
they're on Candid Camera.

HEAD NURSE

(still shocked)

He's *seventy*!

TRAINEE

If it really offends you, Helen, put a
towel over the monitor.

HEAD NURSE

(huffily)

I'll do no such thing!

TRAINEE

Why not?

For a moment she doesn't know, and flounders.

HEAD NURSE

It's... It's against regulations!

TRAINEE

Oh.

She goes back to her clipboard, oblivious of the making out on the monitor. The Head Nurse gets some papers of her own, but in a moment or two she's watching again, horrified, disgusted-but fascinated.

INT. INFIRMARY

HARLAN

You see? I'm alive as I can be.

GINA

And just as randy as ever, by the
feel of you.

She laughs. He kisses her again, then draws back.

HARLAN

I love you, Gina.

GINA

I love you, t--

She frowns, looking at him closely.

HARLAN

(joking)

See anything green?

GINA

As a matter of fact, I do.

She wipes his face where there is a small smear of that green
dust.

GINA (CONT'D)

Look.

She holds out her hand. There is green dust on the pads of her
fingers.

HARLAN

It's that stuff that came out when
the lab blew.

GINA

Harlan, exactly what happened?

HARLAN

Todhunter was getting ready to run
some kind of big test and the silo
alarm went off. I grabbed the fire
extinguisher, hit the general alarm,
and ran down. That's when Todhunter
ran over me on his way to his big

(MORE)

HARLAN (CONT'D)

appointment. I started to get up.
There was a big bang. If the door
hadn't swung almost closed, I might
have really gotten hurt. As it was,
the door almost came off its hinges.
And I got this green stuff all over
me.

Gina has grown progressively more frightened during this narrative. Now she gets off the bed and tugs Harlan's hand.

GINA

Come on. Get up. If you're lively
enough to make out, you're lively
enough to take a shower.

HARLAN

Honey, that was the first thing they
did.

GINA

And if I'm still wiping that stuff
off your face, they did a damned poor
job of it. Get up.

HARLAN

(good-naturedly)
God, I hate a pushy woman!

But he gets up, wincing as he swings his feet over the edge of the bed.

INT. THE NURSES' STATION

The Head Nurse is staring at the monitors like a hawk. The one which was showing Harlan's bed is now blank. The wider shot shows Gina assisting her man down the aisle between the empty beds, toward the door.

HEAD NURSE

Oh, wait a minute!

The Trainee looks up, amused.

TRAINEE

Are they jazzing yet?

HEAD NURSE

I don't know *what* they're doing, but
I'm putting a stop to it right now.

INT. OFFICE OF GEN. CREWES

Todhunter has been ushered in and given a drink, but he still looks like a man with dogshit on his shoe. Crewes is looking at him, but Spann isn't. Spann is looking at the bank of monitors.

TODHUNTER

I want to tell you, General Crewes,
that I don't appreciate being left to
cool my heels like a common cr--

SPANN

Louis.

TODHUNTER

(looks at Spann)

And why this woman is attending this
meeting is totally beyond my--

SPANN

Pardon me, doctor.

(to Crewes)

Something interesting appears to be
developing in your infirmary, Lou.

Crewes looks up.

On one of the monitors we see Gina supporting Harlan slowly down toward the doors of the infirmary. But now The Head Nurse, the resident dragon-at-the-gates, bursts in, followed by the Trainee.

The camera moves slowly in on this one screen.

SPANN

Give us some sound, Lou.

INT. THE INFIRMARY

HEAD NURSE

I'm sorry, Mrs. Williams, but your husband isn't to be out of bed until--

GINA

I'm going to stick him in the shower, that's all. Then he can go back to bed.

HARLAN

(to Head Nurse)

I'm fine, Missus--really.

The Head Nurse barely glances at him.

HEAD NURSE

He was showered prior to admission. If you'd like to see his chart--

GINA

And whoever was in charge of it ought to be shining shoes over at the bus station in Troy. Look at this!

She rubs her fingers briskly across Harlan's cheek.

HARLAN

(winces)

Ouch! Have a care, mother.

Gina ignores him as well. She holds out her fingers out to The Head Nurse. There is green dust on her finger-pads. The Head Nurse is coldly unimpressed.

HEAD NURSE

So?

GINA

So this isn't brass polish.

HEAD NURSE

I'm afraid my orders specify--

GINA

Take your orders and stick 'em where
the sun doesn't shine, sis.

INT. CREWES'S OFFICE

SPANN

(delighted)

Go, sweetheart! Give 'em hell!

Todhunter is now watching the screen. He could be remembering that one witness to his cowardly retreat is still around: Harlan.

TODHUNTER

Are you going to put a stop to that
before those two women start pulling
each-others' hair?

CREWES

What do you think, Terry? Break it up
or let them work it out by themselves?

SPANN

Oh, let 'em work it out. It looks to
me like Gina Williams came to kick ass
and chew bubble-gum... and she's all
out of bubble-gum.

Nevertheless, she looks thoughtful. If she had the idea that the Williamses were doormats, she was wrong... and she knows it. Terrilyn Spann is doing a little re-evaluation here.

CREWES

Okay. Let's get down to business.

He pushes a button on his desk and the oak paneling starts to slide down over the bank of monitors.

INT. THE INFIRMARY

The Head Nurse looks mad enough to do something unwise. She reaches for Gina as Gina passes, but the Trainee stops her.

HEAD NURSE

My regulations specify he's not to leave his room!

TRAINEE

You want to get into a hair-pulling contest with a seventy-year-old lady? Come on, Helen, the shower's just down the hall. And she's right. They *should* have gotten all that green stuff off him.

HEAD NURSE

She just sweeps in here and--

TRAINEE

I'd better follow them. She could take a wrong turn and end up in the parking lot.

HEAD NURSE

(gives in)

Oh, go ahead!

The Trainee hurries out the door. The Head Nurse fishes in the pocket of her uniform, comes out with a pack of cigarettes, and lights one.

HEAD NURSE

(crossly)

Whole place has gone to hell.

INT. CREWES'S OFFICE

TODHUNTER

I suppose you're recording this.

CREWES

(smiles)

Every word. On three different machines.

TODHUNTER

What, exactly, is it that you want in advance of my report?

Spann leans forward. She looks exactly like what she is: a cynical government whore who would be happy to stroke your balls or cut them off, depending on her orders.

SPANN

What we want are the things that won't be in your report.

TODHUNTER

I have nothing to hide.

SPANN

Everybody has something to hide, doctor.

CREWES

(gently)

Tell us what happened, Richard. Tell us all about it.

INT. THE DRESSING AREA OF THE SHOWERS

Harlan and Gina enter, and as they approach the bench, Harlan reaches for the bow-knot at the neck of his johnnie. He winces with obvious pain.

GINA

Let me help you, doll.

The Trainee enters.

TRAINEE

Can I help?

HARLAN

(brightly, to Gina)
Can she?

GINA

(not amused)
If you could just give us some
privacy!

TRAINEE

Please, Mrs. Williams. I'm on your
side.

GINA

(softens)
Thank you. I only want to pop him in
the shower and get the rest of that
funny green dust off him.

TRAINEE

(smiles)
I'll be right outside the door. If
you need help, just call.

GINA

Thank you, dear.

The Trainee leaves.

HARLAN

Shoot! Could have been just like
Penthouse magazine!

GINA

Shut up, you old goat.

She pulls the bow-knot string at the johnnie's neck. The johnnie pools around his feet. We see more of that green dust around his ankles. She sees it too, and her expression is troubled. A shower head sprays water, drowning the camera lens. Water splashes Harlan's face. He registers surprise as he sees Gina unbuttoning her dress and shrugging it off. She begins to push her slip straps off her shoulders.

HARLAN

What in the hell are you up to?

GINA

I'm going to soap whatever you can't reach.

HARLAN

(blissfully)

There's a *lot* I can't reach.

They laugh, then kiss while the water runs over them. It's a pleasant, geriatric version of that famous beach scene in *From Here to Eternity*.

She's standing by the far door, smiling fondly.

TRAINEE

Oh boy, to be young again.

FADE TO BLACK

ACT IV

INT. OFFICE OF GENERAL CREWES

CREWES

Anytime you're ready, Richard.

Dr. Todhunter gives in to the inevitable and does his best to look accommodating.

TODHUNTER

There was an explosion.

SPANN

No kidding.

TODHUNTER

General Crewes, I cannot tell you how much I object to this woman's attitude.

CREWES

(dryly)

Terrilyn, I'd like to keep anything with no direct bearing on this morning's event out of the record... and I'd also like to keep you and Dr. Todhunter from scratching each-others' eyes out. Okay?

Terrilyn Spann raises a placatory hand and nods.

CREWES

(back to Todhunter)

Go on.

TODHUNTER

Well, my guess is that we lost a cooling unit. We were twenty seconds into Production One.

SPANN

If you'd been much further into Production One--or in Production Two--this place would currently be somewhere in the jet stream. Am I correct?

TODHUNTER

(snaps to Crewes)

For the last time, General, I must object to these irrelevant--

SPANN

That isn't irrelevant, and you know it.

CREWES

If we could just take this a step at a time, Terry?

Spann settles back in her chair and waves for Todhunter to go on.

TODHUNTER

A light green gas had begun to fill the tertiary and secondary feeders. I had noted a bare glimmer in the main tube when Jackson--I believe it was Jackson--told me we had a red no-go light on the secondary delta override.

CREWES

Prior to that you had a green board?

TODHUNTER

Of course we had a green board! Do you think, General Crewes, that I would have ordered a start-up on four hydrogen accelerators without one?

SPANN

I know you wouldn't, Doc, and I'm hoping to have that statement verified very soon.

Todhunter looks suddenly startled, shocked. Then he understands (or thinks he does) and relaxes a little.

TODHUNTER

The telemetry records. Of course. Always assuming there was no EMP to wipe the boards.

SPANN

The pulse almost certainly *did* wipe the boards, so I imagine we're out of luck there.

Todhunter is relieved by this but trying not to show it.

TODHUNTER

That's too bad.

Terry speaks casually but is watching Todhunter very closely.

SPANN

Actually it's from Redding that I'm hoping to get confirmation.

Todhunter's more than shocked; he's rocked.

TODHUNTER

Redding? But I thought he was...

CREWES

Dead?

Todhunter looks rather trapped. A fine dew of perspiration has broken out on his forehead.

TODHUNTER

I suppose I just assumed...

CREWES

(curiously)

Why would you assume that, Richard?
You yourself are fine--not so much as a scratch.

TODHUNTER

(quickly)

I can explain that! I--

SPANN

I'm sure you can, Doc. I'm sure you can.

TODHUNTER

Redding... is he... conscious?

CREWES

No.

TODHUNTER

That's too bad.

Terrilyn stretches, outlining a spectacular figure, and crosses her legs elaborately. Todhunter expresses interest in spite of himself. Anyone would: she's a piece of work. Cold, maybe, but perfect.

SPANN

Yes, isn't it?

TODHUNTER

I'd like to remind you both that I was halfway across the room. I didn't actually see that the board was green; I merely--

SPANN

But you were *told* you had a green board?

TODHUNTER

(brief pause)

Yes.

CREWES

If you had a green board, what went wrong?

TODHUNTER

The same thing that *always* goes wrong when the government's footing the bill. Shoddy workmanship, bad wiring, bad solenoids, bad switches, bad--

SPANN

There will be a team of DSA investigators in tonight. If your equipment malfunctioned, Doc, they'll find it.

Todhunter jumps up and begins to pace around the office. He speaks in the nagging, disconnected tones of a man whose elevator no longer goes all the way to the top floor.

TODHUNTER

This is not the first time something like this has happened, gentleman. If you'd like other examples--

SPANN

Save the sermon, Doc.

Okay, that's it. As far as Richard Todhunter is concerned, it's everybody out of the pool. He puts his hands on the arms of Spann's chair and bends over her until he's almost kissing distance... except you don't bare your teeth when you're getting ready to kiss someone. In any case, Terry Spann doesn't seem worried. A little startled, and interested, but that's all.

TODHUNTER

Shut up, you stupid bitch. We are playing here with enormous forces for enormous stakes. The government knows this and has sanctioned it. It has knowingly sanctioned the risks of the experiments along with the experiments themselves. After twelve years of theoretical work in the field of hydrogen acceleration, hydrogen fusion, and accelerating streams of collapsing molecules, I have two aborts and one explosion to show for my time, not to mention the loss of two lives. And why? Because the equipment is shoddy, the equipment is defective, *the equipment doesn't work*. Do you hear me? Are you following this line of reasoning?

SPANN

Are you done?

TODHUNTER

I think so, yes.

SPANN
(wide-eyed, sexy wonder)
That was... *thrilling!*

Todhunter barks a sound of contempt and whirls toward Crewes.

CREWES
(wearily)
Terry, I want you to apologize for
that last crack.

TODHUNTER
An apology is not suf--

CREWES
(roars)
Shut up and sit down. Richard!

It is Todhunter's turn to look surprised. He backs up a step,
and after a moment he does sit down.

CREWES
Terrilyn?

SPANN
(easily)
Sorry, Doctor Todhunter. I was out
of line.

TODHUNTER
You certainly were.

Todhunter takes off his glasses, massages his temples briefly,
then puts his glasses back on.

TODHUNTER (CONT'D)
I really must ask you to excuse me,
General. I know you have your job to
do, but all of this will be in my re-
port, and I've had a very trying day.

CREWES
I understand and I sympathize... but
(MORE)

CREWES (CONT'D)

there *is* one more question that needs to be put before I let you go and get some well-deserved rest, however.

Todhunter looks up, watchful again.

CREWES (CONT'D)

How was it, Richard, that one of your technicians was killed, the other was badly injured, and yet you escaped without a scratch?

What's he going to say? I don't think any of the three people in this room know for sure.

INT. FALCO PLAINS EMERGENCY ROOM

Redding is on an examining table. The bubble has been cut open and lies deflated on either side of him. His clothes are shredded, his face and hands horribly burned. Most of the green dust has been wiped off him, but we can still see swatches of it here and there, and little drifts of it in the folds of his clothes.

Now he begins to breathe in harsh gasps without opening his eyes. A MALE NURSE stands at a bank of monitoring equipment. The readouts start to go crazy. The Male Nurse turns and looks at Redding as he takes two more big harsh gasps and then goes into a convulsion. The Male Nurse hurries over and holds him down just before Redding can jackknife off the table.

MALE NURSE

Doctor Ackerman! Stat! Stat!

INT. A SCRUB AREA JUST OFF THE E.R.

DR. ACKERMAN has been scrubbing. Now he turns and heads toward the door into the E.R. at a trot. His hands, still wet, drip on the floor. The camera follows him through as he arms the door open.

The Male Nurse is desperately holding onto Redding. A horrible death-rattle is now coming from Redding's throat. Thick greenish curds of foam drizzle from the corners of his mouth.

Redding convulses once more as Dr. Ackerman reaches the table and then he collapses, mouth open. All at once gauges which have been monitoring Redding go flatline.

MALE NURSE

I'll get the crash-wagon.

He starts away, but Ackerman stops him with two words.

ACKERMAN

Don't bother.

The Male Nurse stares from Redding to Ackerman, confused.

ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

He was dead when the GI's brought him in here. He just hadn't stopped breathing yet. Now he has.

We pan slowly down to Redding's convulsed form.

ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

Let's get him in a body-bag. The autopsy will have to wait until the investigatory team gets here from Langley.

Sound of footfalls on tile--Ackerman walking away.

The Male Nurse walks over to the data bank and begins to flip switches. The lights begin to go out, the digital gauges to go black.

INT. CREWES'S OFFICE

SPANN

Well, Doc?

Todhunter speaks slowly and hesitantly--like Captain Queeg.

TODHUNTER

As I say, it all... all happened very fast.

(he swallows)

Redding--no, no, it was Jackson. Redding didn't really pull his weight when things got hairy... *Jackson* yelled we had a red light on the primary delta override--

SPANN

I thought you said it was a *secondary* delta override.

TODHUNTER

Yes, of course. I'm confused. Tired and confused. It *was* the secondary, *then* the primary.

CREWES

Richard, properly speaking, your place was at that board with the other men, wasn't it?

TODHUNTER

(dreamily)

At first I thought they were... were cheering.

SPANN

Cheering.

TODHUNTER

Yes. And then there was a small explosion, like a firecracker. I saw... one... um, no... two of the instrument panels blow out. I saw that and yelled at them to shut down at once...

Todhunter speaks faster now, and with more confidence. As he does so, the camera moves slowly in to CU.

TODHUNTER (CONT'D)

...but they froze. Watching them was like watching a bird hypnotized by a
(MORE)

TODHUNTER (CONT'D)

snake. Then the doors of the turbine room blew open and I yelled for them to shut down before we lost a turbine. That woke Jackson up, but Redding was useless. Completely useless. He never moved. And that was when... um, was that when? Yes, that's when I ran for the fire extinguisher.

SPANN

(totally incredulous)

Dr. Todhunter, I don't think you--

Todhunter looks around like a man awakened from a deep dream.

TODHUNTER

Hmmm?

CREWES

All right. You ran to get the fire extinguisher. Fine. *Did* you get it, Richard?

TODHUNTER

No. You see... what saved my life... what saved my life was... was...

He trails off and looks blank.

SPANN

What was it that saved your life, Doc?

TODHUNTER

Why, the door swung shut behind me! That was what saved my life! The door swung shut behind me and then I looked the other way and the big explosion came.

SPANN

After the door had swung shut.

TODHUNTER

Almost shut. It... it shielded me, you see. But when the explosion came it blew open again. I was knocked against the wall. The next thing I remember was someone shaking my arm and asking me what happened.

CREWES

And that's it.

TODHUNTER

As you say, that's it. I want to make it perfectly clear that because Redding froze--

SPANN

(softly)

He might say *anything* to save his ass, right, Doc?

TODHUNTER

Absolutely! That's absolutely four-oh on Mr. Redding!

CREWES

What about the janitor, Richard?

TODHUNTER

(honestly confused)

What janitor?

Crewes and Spann look at each other.

INT. THE INFIRMARY

Harlan is sleeping. Gina sits beside him, gently stroking his hair and looking at him with all the love there is in the world.

The camera moves in past Gina to a CU on Harlan, and keeps moving in, to the side of his face, to his ear. In, in, in, to a maximum ECU of Harlan's earlobe. We're so close that the

pores in his skin look like craters. And here we see one tiny fleck of green dust.

FADE TO BLACK.

ACT V

INT. A VIDEO SCREEN

On it we see Crewes's outer office, complete with the decorative Darla. Todhunter crosses in front of her desk, so ramrod straight he looks like he's got a poker rammed up his ass. Darla buzzes him out.

INT. CREWE'S OFFICE

Crewes has loosened his tie; Terry Spann has undone her stock tie and unbuttoned the top two buttons of her silk dress-for-success blouse. The two of them exchange stunned, unbelieving looks and then Crewes starts pouring fresh drinks.

SPANN

Whoo.

CREWES

Yeah. Drink?

Terry looks doubtful.

CREWES (CONT'D)

This is strictly medicinal, Terry.

SPANN

Since you put it that way, Louis, make it a double.

Crewes pours and hands Terry her glass. They both drink.

CREWES

That was quite a performance.

SPANN

If only that was all it was.

CREWES

What do you mean?

Terry gestures toward the TV monitors, now uncovered again. On one we see Harlan sleeping with Gina still keeping watch beside him.

SPANN

The janitor. When the good doctor came in, we *talked* about him. But by the end of our little tête-à-tête, Todhunter had talked Williams right out of existence, hadn't he?

Crewes knocks back the rest of his drink. He is very reluctant on this point, but facts must sometimes be faced.

CREWES

Yeah.

SPANN

I read a story once about a guy who came to see one of the original Manhattan Project scientists. He came to plead with the scientist to stop working on the atomic bomb because, he said, mankind wasn't ready. Do you know the story?

CREWES

No. Terry, are you ever going to go to bed with me?

SPANN

Doubtful, Louis, but not impossible... if you dig the wax out of your ears and listen, that is. The scientist told the visitor not to be ridiculous. Said you can't stop progress. "If we don't do it, pal, someone else will." Get it?

CREWES

I'm familiar with the argument. *Extremely* familiar.

SPANN

I thought you were. Only this scientist had a retarded son, you see, and when the scientist came back to the room after going into the kitchen to get his visitor a glass of water, he found that the guy was gone... and he'd given the kid a .38 revolver as a going-away present. Do you know what the scientist yelled out the door after he took the pistol away from his son?

CREWES

"Come back soon?"

SPANN

Very funny, Lou, but your chances of hustling me into bed just went down. No, he yelled, "What kind of crazy damned fool puts a loaded gun in the hands of an idiot?"

CREWES

Charming, but what's the point?

SPANN

The point is that your retarded child just walked out of here... and I think he's still got the gun.

CREWES

Richard Todhunter is probably the most brilliant practical physicist now working for this country's government, Terry.

SPANN

I don't doubt it. No one in the private sector would be crazy enough to hire him.

CREWES

Terry--

SPANN

Okay, he's brilliant. He's also the retarded child in the story I just told you. Only the Shop, in its inscrutable wisdom, has given him his own missile silo instead of a revolver. He almost killed us all, Louis. You know that, don't you?

CREWES

It may not have been that close.

SPANN

With the telemetry cooked in the pot, we'll never know, will we? But tell me this--do you think he really ran heroically for a fire extinguisher? To stop what could have been a Stage One implosion?

CREWES

Hell, no. It would have been like a man running after a bucket of water to put out a forest fire.

Crewes stands up, goes to Terry, and pulls her to her feet.

CREWES (CONT'D)

Now, Terry, if you really don't want to begin sampling the delights of the Kama Sutra with me, I think I better do some work, because that thing I smell burning is probably my behind, and--

Terry Spann looks thoughtfully up at the monitor where Harlan is still sleeping.

SPANN

There's going to be a board of investigation as a result of this morning's little adventure, you know.

CREWES

I know. Believe me, I know. Why else am I trying to shuffle the most beautiful woman in the Shop out of my office before she wants to go?

SPANN

Tell me something, Louis--just between you, me and the gatepost. What's going to happen when Harlan Williams tells the investigators that your pet genius was so anxious to get away that he knocked him flat and then trampled him? Because that's what happened, and we both know it.

Crewes looks long and thoughtfully at the televised image of Harlan Williams before turning back to Terry.

CREWES

What makes you think we'd ever be crazy enough to ask him the question in the first place, Terrilyn?

For once, Spann looks utterly shocked.

SPANN

My God, Louis, we are going to have at least a token investigation here, aren't we? If we're not, tell me now and save me a lot of time and effort!

Crewes suddenly realizes that Spann has not fully understood the facts of the situation and sets out to make them clear to her.

CREWES

Listen carefully to me, Terry, and you may be able to save yourself a long dip in an extremely large pot of boiling water. Do you follow?

SPANN

(cautiously)

I'm listening.

CREWES

God, I hope so. Todhunter has produced a particle acceleration process. It causes hydrogen particles, cooled to within less than a degree of absolute zero, to approach the speed of light.

SPANN

Or exceed it, in theory.

CREWES

Or exceed it, yes. We don't know if these particles simply collapse, or if they follow the Einsteinian imperative and travel backward in time, like tachyons. Nor does it matter for our purposes. Either way, they produce *incredible* amounts of energy and offer keys to any number of locked doors. Among them is the old science fiction idea of faster-than-light travel. How'd you like to still be around when the first man stepped on the first planet of another star, Terry?

SPANN

Or maybe it'll be a woman. Do you know what my old daddy used to say, Lou?

CREWES

Nope, but I'm sure you'll tell me this one, too.

SPANN

He used to say "You can spread crap with a pitchfork, but that don't mean I have to walk in it."

CREWES

What a wise and witty man he must have been.

SPANN

You bet. And with all due respect,
you know what Gold Series is *really*
about following the mess this morning:
Todhunter's stability.

CREWES

No--it's about our sacred fannies,
pretty, lady. Are you looking for a
quick trip to that nifty little Club
Med the Shop keeps on Maui? The one
where you buy everything with beads,
including all the sex and drugs you
want and the only two catches are the
place is surrounded by electrified
barbed wire and the vacation never
ends?

SPANN

(long beat)

Like that, is it?

CREWES

Grow up, Terry. You *know* it's like that.

SPANN

All right, you're the boss.

CREWES

Thank God you finally remembered.

She stands up.

SPANN

I do my job. I always did. I guess
I'll end up on Maui sooner or later.
There are worse places. I'm out of
your hair, Louis. Just let me tell
you once more: you got a guy here I
wouldn't even give anything sharp to
write home with, and you're letting
him play with a process that could
turn all of upper New York State
into one big crater.

Louis Crewes puts his arms around Terry. He kisses her warmly, but any real sexual heat has dissipated--the job comes first. But we get a clear sense that these two are old friends. They go back a long way. He gives her fanny the sort of pat one athlete gives another.

CREWES

Christ, you just go on getting more beautiful.

SPANN

Keeping secrets must agree with my complexion.

CREWES

Uh-huh. Enough with the grab-ass. Listen to me. Yeah, we're probably going to whitewash the chickenshit son of a bitch. And what we expect from you--what I expect from you--is team play. Do you hear me, Terry? Team play.

SPANN

Louis, what if I could prove to you that Todhunter *knew* he had a red light and went ahead with the experiment anyway?

It's Crewes's turn to look shocked.

CREWES

Say *what*?

Terry walks him across to the concealed door. She looks satisfied by Crewes's reaction.

SPANN

Then it *would* change things?

CREWES

What in God's name even put the idea into your head, Terry? I know you're
(MORE)

CREWES (CONT'D)

not exactly a member of his fan club,
but--

SPANN

Maybe just one red light, Louis. Just one. The secondary delta override, for instance. Not after the test-run started, but before. Suppose I could prove it started there, before the test-run and everything else just fell over like a row of dominoes?

CREWES

It's way too thin, Terry.

He pushes a button, and the steel door clicks open.

SPANN

Yeah, it's thin... but did you see his face when I really started to bore in? He looked like a kid with his hand caught in the jam jar. Then there was his reaction when I told him Redding was still alive. Not exactly overjoyed, was he?

CREWES

No.

SPANN

In fact, he almost broke his back rushing to discredit the poor guy.

Terry steps through the door, then turns back to Crewes.

SPANN (CONT'D)

I don't care what you're up to here, Louis, but I hate the idea that you've got a crazy guy in charge of it. If I was able to find proof that Todhunter went with a red board, would you recommend his removal from the Gold Series?

CREWES

Bring me the proof and we'll see.

SPANN

Be straight with me, Louis, the
shock'll do your system good.

CREWES

(long beat)

All right, for whatever it's worth,
yes. I would recommend his removal.
Would my recommendation be taken? I
don't know. Are you going to start
with Redding?

Terry pushes a button just out of our sight and the metal door
starts to slide down.

SPANN

Where else is there?

The door comes down, cutting her off from view.

EXT. FALCO PLAINS - NIGHT

The installation is brightly lit, and there's an extra light
this evening: a ragged cone spilling through the hole in the
silo.

INT. FALCO PLAINS - EMERGENCY ROOM

ECU on Redding's dead face. The sound of a zipper being zipped
and Redding is gone, neatly zipped into a body-bag. The body,
we see, is on a gurney cart.

ACKERMAN

Put him in the locker next to his buddy.

HEAD NURSE

Yes, doctor.

(beat)

Will the autopsies be here, or--

ACKERMAN

I don't know. I understand there's a DSA team of investigators arriving here by helicopter in about twenty minutes. It's up to them and General Crewes. I hope they take him. There are... peculiarities. Go on, now.

HEAD NURSE

Yes, doctor.

She wheels the gurney through a door at the far side of the room. The door swings shut. Ackerman sighs deeply, reaches inside his surgical greens and brings out cigarettes and matches. He lights up.

SPANN

(voice)

I think I'll take a picture and send it to the Surgeon General.

Ackerman looks up at the doorway of the ER. Now wearing tight, faded jeans and a pullover sweater, Terry leans in the doorway, looking both relaxed and efficient... but she is disappointed to learn Redding died without talking.

Ackerman sits on the examining table where Redding died, smoking unrepentantly.

ACKERMAN

(sour)

If it isn't Terry Spann, my favorite DSA cutie. Put bamboo splinters under anyone's fingernails today, Terry?

SPANN

(joining him)

Nah--I hate these slow days. Peculiarities, I heard you say. Did Mr. Redding die of peculiarities, Doc?

ACKERMAN

Are you asking in your official capacity, Terrilyn?

SPANN

Does it matter?

ACKERMAN

I guess not. I don't know who he belonged to when he was alive, but I'd guess Tech Second Horace Redding belongs to the Shop now that he's dead.

SPANN

I don't work for the Shop. I work for the Department of Scientific Affairs. In fact, I don't have much use for the Shoppies. I'd like to keep this business just between us chickens, if that's okay with you.

ACKERMAN

How are you going to go about that?

SPANN

That's my worry, Doc. *Did* he die of... peculiarities?

ACKERMAN

Redding died of burns and shock. Nasty, but not peculiar.

SPANN

So what was?

Ackerman goes toward the door into the scrub area. Terry follows.

INT. THE SCRUB ROOM

Terry stands just inside the swing doors. Ackerman crosses to the sink, turns on the water, snuffs his cigarette, then tosses it in the waste can.

ACKERMAN

What if I tell you to get your pretty little butt out of here?

SPANN

Oh, come on, Dr. A, don't be a party pooper. Talk to me and I guarantee your name won't show up in my report.

Ackerman considers then, then nods.

ACKERMAN

Redding was clearly dying when he was brought in. Nevertheless, I made a thorough examination. In the course of it, I noted six scars. The oldest was on the left forearm. Judging by the striae--small horizontal breaks in the scar-tissue--I'd say it was the result of a cut suffered when Mr. Redding was six to eight years old. Second scar was located under the lower lip--

SPANN

Are you working your way up chronologically?

ACKERMAN

Yeah. Third scar was clearly the result of an appendectomy performed when Redding was about fourteen. Fourth, and much more recent, a large burn scar on the lower right calf. Probably a grease burn.

SPANN

Or napalm.

ACKERMAN

He was there?

SPANN

Yeah. He was there. What's the big deal about this guy's scars, Doc?

ACKERMAN

Just wait, will you? Scars five and
(MORE)

ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

six were small--very small--surgical incisions on the patient's testes.

SPANN

Vasectomy?

ACKERMAN

(nods)

Uh-huh.

Ackerman turns to the sink and starts washing his hands.

SPANN

Don't tease me, Doc. I take it badly.

ACKERMAN

Shortly before he died, I noticed the scar on his leg was gone.

SPANN

He had a napalm scar and it *disappeared*? You're nuts!

Ackerman walks over to Terry and confronts her.

ACKERMAN

No. I'm not nuts, but what's happened is. Why the hell do you think I didn't want to talk about it? If I didn't have the man's records to back me up...

SPANN

A napalm scar, and it's just gone? You're positive?

ACKERMAN

Check for yourself.

SPANN

Oh, I will. Believe it, Doc.

ACKERMAN

The vasectomy scars are also gone.

SPANN

Holy God! How?

ACKERMAN

I haven't the slightest idea, and
I'm not sure I want to know.

SPANN

What about the other scars? Fore-
arm? Lower lip? Appendectomy?

ACKERMAN

Those are present and accounted for.
And now, if you'll excuse me--

He starts out through the doors.

SPANN

Where are you going?

Ackerman speaks courteously enough but doesn't stop.

ACKERMAN

I believe I'm going to get drunk,
Terry, and you are not invited.

He leaves. Terry stands thoughtfully, looking out into space.

INT. THE FALCO PLAINS MORGUE -- TOTAL DARKNESS

There's a click of an opening door and Terry comes into a small room not much bigger than a large wardrobe closet. The place is doing double duty: body-drawers on one side, fresh meat for the company kitchen on the other. We see a couple of cuts hanging from hooks, and shelves with hamburger, turkeys, chickens, chops and so on. On the other side are three sliding drawers.

Terry goes over to these. She looks uncomfortably chilly, even in her sweater. We can see her breath. She pulls the first drawer out a little way. Empty. She pushes it back in and tries the second. There's a body-bag. Terry pulls the drawer halfway out. A strip of tape running across the zipper reads TECH 1ST JACKSON, CHARLES. Terry pushes it back in. She pulls

the third drawer halfway out. Bingo. The ID strip reads TECH 2ND REDDING, HORACE.

Terry slowly pulls the drawer the rest of the way out, then pulls off the ID tape and sticks it to the facing of another drawer for later replacement. Then, slowly, she pulls down the zipper.

We don't see what she sees in this shot, but we see the shock and terror which flood her face. Her eyes widen with horror.

The burns stand out clearly against Redding's skin, rendered unnaturally white by death and refrigeration. Nasty. But what has so shocked the case-hardened Terry Spann is Redding's eyes. They are closed... but illuminating the lids from the inside is a pale green light that shifts and moves.

Terry slowly reaches forward and rolls up the dead man's left eyelid. Redding's frozen eyeball blazes a bright, shifting green. It's the same color as the light in the glass tubes before the accident. The same color as the dust.

SPANN

(softly)

My Jesus.

INT. THE INFIRMARY

We are looking at them from the nurses' station. The Head Nurse is writing a report. The Trainee is reading Ms.

The infirmery doors open and Gina Williams comes striding out. She's got herself under control, but we can tell she's terribly upset.

GINA

You two. Come in here right now.

TRAINEE

What's the trouble, Mrs. Williams?

GINA

I want you to come and look at him.
Then I want a doctor to tell me what's
wrong with him. Then I want him the
hell out of here and in a *real* hos-
pital.

The Head Nurse takes a fast look into the monitor that shows
Harlan's bed.

Harlan appears to be sleeping normally, and nothing seems
amiss. The key to this shot is that all the lights in the
infirmary are on.

HEAD NURSE

He looks fine. Gloria?

GLORIA, the Trainee, is already looking at a number of read-
outs.

GLORIA

His numbers are fine--great, in fact.

HEAD NURSE

(a tad bitchy)

I think you had better go home, Mrs.
Williams. This afternoon's... exer-
tions... seem to have worn you out.

GINA

Get in there and look at him. *Right*
now.

GLORIA

I'll come, Mrs. Williams.

GINA

(to The Head Nurse)

No. You'll *both* come.

She waits grimly, and at last The Head Nurse and Gloria get up
and follow her.

INT. HARLAN'S ROOM

Close by where Gina stands is a bank of light switches. During the following dialogue, the women keep their voices pitched low so as not to wake Harlan.

HEAD NURSE

What's gotten your panties in a bunch, anyway?

GINA

I was sitting with him, and it was starting to get dark. I must have dozed off myself, because when I woke up it was dark. I turned on the lights on my way out to get you. Now I'm going to turn them out again so you'll see what I saw when I first woke up. Watch him.

Gina hits the bank of light switches with the heel of her hand, turning them all off.

HEAD NURSE

Great. Just gr--

Suddenly The Head Nurse's eyes widen. She starts to cry out. Gloria, who has also seen, grabs her arm, keeping her quiet.

GINA

(grim)

You see?

There is a faint blush of green on Harlan's closed eyelids... very faint. What really draws our eyes is the hand lying on the coverlet. The nails on this hand are all glowing a bright green.

Harlan turns over, toward the window, hiding the hand.

GINA (CONT'D)

What's wrong with my husband?

The Head Nurse can only shake her head numbly.

GINA (CONT'D)

Get the doctor.

In spite of her iron control, the first frightened tears spill down Gina's cheeks.

EXT. THE FALCO PLAINS HELIPAD

The camera is looking straight down from above. The helipad is brightly lit by arc-sodiums. We see a figure stroll toward the center of the landing circle painted on the middle of the pad. Terry looks like a woman moving toward the middle of a bull's-eye.

The wind flaps her jacket collar and ruffles her hair. She looks like a woman with a lot to think about.

LIEUTENANT MCGIVER

(voice)

Pardon me--

Terry turns toward the voice.

MCGIVER

May I have a word with you, ma'am?

SPANN

Is it important, Lieutenant McGiver?
I've got a chopperful of DSA people
landing here in five minutes.

MCGIVER

I think it might be very important.

SPANN

All right. Would you care to join me
on Ground Zero, Lieutenant?

McGiver strolls to the center of the bull's-eye and stands talking with Terrilyn Spann.

SOUND: Approaching helicopter.

EXT. NIGHT SKY OVER FALCO PLAINS

A big Huey, so lit up it looks like E.T.'s mothership, is approaching. The camera follows it as it lubdubs its way toward the pad.

Terry looks excited. Her eyes are blazing.

SPANN

Are you sure about this, Lieutenant?

McGIVER

As sure as I am of my own name.

Terry now has to raise her voice to be heard over the roar of the approaching helicopter.

SPANN

I'm going to repeat the essence of what you just told me! Stop and correct me if I get anything wrong! Okay?

Their clothes are rippling wildly now. A bright spotlight spears them as the chopper starts downward.

McGIVER

Yes, ma'am. But don't you think we'd better get off this bull's-eye?

SPANN

(laughing; ironic)

Too late, Lieutenant. I think we're pasted to it now!

Nevertheless, she takes his arm and leads him to the edge of the pad again as the chopper settles. They are talking as they go. The chopper lands behind them.

They still have to shout to make themselves heard.

SPANN

Who else in your party heard what Redding said?

McGIVER

I don't know if anyone did, ma'am.
I leaned down very close to catch it.
He was weak and we were in our--

SPANN

But you're willing to repeat all this,
Lieutenant?

McGIVER

Yes, ma'am!

SPANN

Testify to it if necessary?

Behind them, the copter's engine dies and the rotors start to slow.

McGIVER

Yes, ma'am!

Terry can at last lower her voice.

SPANN

But you won't do *anything*, soldier,
until I give you the word.

McGIVER

No, ma'am, I sure won't.

SPANN

Very good. And thank you.

McGiver flashes her a grateful, relieved smile.

McGIVER

Thank you, ma'am.

He starts back toward the installation. Spann is smiling as she turns toward the helicopter. It's not a very pleasant smile.

SPANN

Dr. Todhunter, I am going to cook
you just like a Christmas turkey.

EXT. THE HELIPAD

Men are getting out of the chopper, some in uniforms, some in suits. Most carry briefcases.

Terry crosses to meet them.

INT. HARLAN WILLIAMS, SLEEPING

Harlan rolls over in bed toward the camera. Both of his hands are visible. The camera moves slowly in on those eerily-glowing nails, holds, and then

FADE TO BLACK

ACT VI

EXT. THE FALCO PLAINS INSTALLATION

It looks much as it did when we first saw it, except for the hole in the silo, and that is being repaired. There are scaffoldings up and workmen are moving about on them. They look like ants repairing a damaged hill.

INT. A VIDEO SCREEN IN GENERAL CREWES'S OFFICE

Terrilyn Spann is standing outside that seemingly solid wall. General Crewes is at his desk. He pushes a button on his desk console.

CREWES

Say the secret word and win a hundred dollars, beautiful.

INT. SPANN, OUTSIDE THE HIDDEN ENTRANCE

SPANN

How about cover-up?

CREWES

(sour)

Some day you'll make one joke too many, Terry. There are funny guys like you on the bottom of Lake Saranac wearing cement hush puppies.

INT. SPANN, OUTSIDE THE HIDDEN ENTRANCE

SPANN

The word is Chicago.

He presses the button and the word CHICAGO lights up. He pushes another button. A buzz sounds and the paneling slides up and Terry comes in. She sits down.

CREWES

You want to go non-reg for a minute?

SPANN

I'll pass. When are they due?

CREWES

The investigatory team?

(looks at his watch)

1300 hours.

SPANN

If those guys are DSA investigators, I'm Boxcar Willy. They're from the Shop. The question is, are we going to give them Todhunter or not?

CREWES

If Todhunter's as crazy as you think, Terry, that isn't a decision we'll have to make. If he acts like he did when he was in here the day before yesterday--

SPANN

What if he cons them? They want to be conned and you know it.

CREWES

What is this, Terry, PMS? It's their football now! You should be glad--

SPANN

(furious)

You still don't understand that your dear doctor's as crazy as a flea in a bottle of tequila. And you can just can that tired old sexist crap, Lou. I'm so sick of it I could puke!

General Crewes is taken aback.

CREWES

Hey, whoa, slow down!

Terry gets up, walks away, broods... then turns back and gives Crewes a charming, sexy smile. She can be very charming (and very sexy) when she wants to be.

SPANN

As a matter of fact, Louis, it is one of those sensitive days, so stand clear. Where's the hearing? Here or the conference room?

CREWES

Conference room. This place is too small.

(pause)

Besides, if we had it here, I'd want to fumigate the place after they left.

SPANN

(grins)

Sometimes I think your heart is still in the right place.

Crewes produces the bottle.

CREWES

By God, I'll drink to that!

EXT. A RANCH - STYLE HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY

A handsome place somewhere near Falco Plains. Gorgeous fall foliage flames on the hills.

TODHUNTER

(voice-over)

I didn't have the slightest idea anything was wrong until Jackson yelled that we had a red light on the board. I didn't have--

INT. THE LIVING ROOM OF TODHUNTER'S HOME

It's done in Early American Prison Camp. There's no TV, no rugs, no prints on the walls. In the middle of the floor there is a rocker. There's no other furniture in the room.

TODHUNTER

(louder, approaching)

--the slightest idea anything was
wrong until Jackson yelled--

Todhunter appears. He is wearing only a pair of boxer shorts and a pair of slippers. He is pale and his hair is a tangled mess.

TODHUNTER (CONT'D)

--that we had a red light on the board.
It was very hard to hear.

Todhunter sits down in the rocker. His eyes are blank and spooky.

TODHUNTER (CONT'D)

I didn't have the slightest idea anything was wrong until Jackson yelled that we had a red light on the board. It was very hard to hear.

He begins to rock. Slowly at first, then faster. The camera moves into ECU on his blank robot face.

TODHUNTER (CONT'D)

(rocking faster)

It was very hard to hear. It was very hard to hear. I know my proper place was by the board, but I was excited and determined to observe the results of the experiment. I was excited and determined. I was excited and determined.

Now Todhunter is nearly spewing words, but his voice is still expressionless, his eyes as blank as empty windows.

TODHUNTER (CONT'D)

I didn't have the slightest idea anything was wrong until--

SHOCK CUT TO:

INT. TODHUNTER'S HOUSE

He's now dressed in a dark suit and conservative tie. His hair is perfectly combed. He seems perfectly at ease, although aware of the situation's gravity. Now he is speaking in a calm, persuasive voice.

TODHUNTER

--Jackson yelled that we had a red light on the board.

INT. FALCO PLAINS CONFERENCE ROOM

This is a large room with wall-to-wall carpeting, track lighting, and photomurals of Falco Plains on the walls. They show the installation at its PR best in all four seasons.

Two videocams record the action.

Todhunter is seated at one end of the long conference table. At the far end sits General Crewes. On his left sits Terrilyn Spann. There are about ten others: they all look like lawyers or FBI agents, with one exception. This is JUDE ANDREWS. He's no scientist, no politician, no lawyer. He looks more like a young Charles Bronson. His face is expressionless, almost dead. His hands are folded neatly in front of him. He's the only man from the "investigatory team" not wearing a tie. He's also the only one without a briefcase or a legal pad on which to make notes.

SHOP INVESTIGATOR #1

Did you call for an immediate shutdown?

TODHUNTER

No. It was very hard to hear. At
(MORE)

TODHUNTER (CONT'D)

first I thought Mr. Jackson was cheering, but I wanted to be sure. I yelled, "Say again!" The second time I heard him and called for them to dump the board.

SHOP #2

Which they did at once?

TODHUNTER

Well...

SHOP #3

Oh, let's cut to the chase. Jackson and Redding froze, right?

Now he is being Saintly Dr. Todhunter, wanting to protect the courage and reputations of his dead techs even as he casts doubt on them.

TODHUNTER

Well, I can't draw that conclusion from my own personal observation...

His face fills with phony sadness.

TODHUNTER (CONT'D)

My guess is that if they had moved to dump the board at once, there would have been no explosion... but I am not without blame here, gentlemen.

Surprised murmurings. Todhunter nods gravely.

TODHUNTER (CONT'D)

My place was at the board with those two men, but I was excited and determined to observe the results of the test. After I verified the fact that we had a green board, I walked over to Production. That was a dereliction of duty. I admit it... but

(MORE)

TODHUNTER (CONT'D)

you must understand that this was to have been the first real test of a process to which I have given half my adult life. *I wanted to see what happened.* I was excited. Excited and determined. And my irresponsible behavior may have cost two fine men their lives.

Todhunter bows his head, winningly modest and grief-stricken. Most of the men around the table look sympathetic and admiring. Jude Andrews, however, looks neither.

Crewes is flabbergasted. Terry looks reluctantly admiring. She speaks under cover of the bibble-babble.

SPANN

(low)

That was an Academy Award-level performance.

CREWES

(low)

Shut up, Terry.

He looks calmly around, totally in control.

JUDE ANDREWS

Tell us about the fire extinguisher.

His voice is as expressionless as his face. Todhunter glances in Jude's direction. For the first time, he looks a trifle off-balance.

TODHUNTER

I beg pardon?

ANDREWS

I want to hear how you intended to damp a runaway hydrogen turbine with a class-4 chemical fire extinguisher.

TODHUNTER

(shaken)

Well--

Spann watches intently. Maybe the doctor will blow some lines after all.

ANDREWS

(very soft)

Tell us, Doctor. We are all ears.

The first few drops of perspiration have broken on his forehead. He opens his mouth, but no words come out.

EXT. THE HOME OF HARLAN AND GINA WILLIAMS

GINA

(voice-over)

You are just as crazy as a loon,
Harlan Williams!

INT. THE WILLIAMS BEDROOM

This a pleasant, sunny room, decorated with a certain middle-class panache. There's a Virgin Mary on Gina's bureau (her rosary is beside it) and a picture of Jesus baring his bleeding heart on one wall.

Harlan stands in front of a full-length mirror on the back of the door in a pair of semi-dress slacks (going-to-the-doctor slacks, in fact) and a J. Press shirt. The shirt is hanging open. Harlan's left arm is still in a sling, and he can't manage the buttons with just his right hand. The bandage on his head has been reduced to a large sticking plaster on his left temple.

Gina, in a house-dress and curlers, is standing beside him. She looks mad enough to spit.

HARLAN

(good-natured)

So you've been telling me for the
last fifty years, darlin'. Now are

(MORE)

HARLAN (CONT'D)

you going to give me a hand or am
I going to see that eye-doctor with
my shirt hanging open?

GINA

And you would, wouldn't you?

HARLAN

Yep.

GINA

And go riding one-handed on your
bike if I wouldn't take you in the
car.

HARLAN

No ma'am! I'd call a taxi! I may be
crazy but that doesn't mean I'm
stupid!

Gina makes a disgusted noise and begins to button Harlan's
shirt with quick angry gestures.

GINA

Why are you so anxious to go back
and take that eye-test again? So
that Dr. Todhunter can finish the
job of blowing you up?

HARLAN

Oh, I don't think you have to worry
about that. They're having some
kind of big hearing this morning. I
think they're going to take away
the Nutty Professor's Tinkertoys.

He's tucking in the right side of his shirt. Gina tucks in the
left side, and the back. When she speaks again, she has
softened somewhat.

GINA

All the same, Harl. You're seventy-
one years old--

HARLAN

(a trifle sharp)

Not until November 28th.

GINA

Split hairs all you want to. You aren't just *getting* old anymore; you made it. Don't you think it's about time you hung up your jock?

HARLAN

(slowly, thoughtfully)

I didn't think so. Tell you the truth, it never crossed my mind until that fat major called me in and told me I was done. Then I got my Irish up.

Gina stands on tiptoe and kisses him.

GINA

Yes, that's what it was... and I know what it's like. Those two nurses in that damned infirmary got mine up. All right, Harlan, take your test again. Just don't be too disappointed if you fail again. And promise me something, you old coot.

HARLAN

What, mother?

GINA

Have him dilate your eyes and take a good look in there. Then ask him if he sees anything green.

INT. THE WILLIAMS LIVING ROOM

Harlan and Gina walk in. It's a comfortable room, and we get a better look now than in our first brief visit. There are lots of kid-pictures on the walls. Harlan and Gina have three children: DOUGLAS, now forty-five; FRANCESCA (or FRANCIE),

forty-one, and THOMAS, the "baby of the family" at thirty-four. On the living room walls we see them in all their stages of development, from infancy to the grown men and woman they now are. If we notice anything strange, it is that FRANCIE is always wearing dark glasses. Francesca Williams Moore is blind.

Meanwhile, Harlan and Gina continue their... well, people who have been married as long as these two call them "discussions."

HARLAN

It's over, Gina! It was a short-term reaction to the dust, that's all! Dr. Ackerman gave me a clean bill of health.

GINA

Of course he did! He works for *them*! I just wish you'd go see another medical doctor, not your damned optometrist.

HARLAN

That might do more than get me retired, honey. It could get me jailed. I signed a form agreeing to abide by the terms of the National Security Act, and--

GINA

To hell with their forms!

HARLAN

Will you *hush*? Whatever it was, it's gone! It's over! No more glow! Normal nails, normal eyes, normal *everything*! Ackerman said it would be all gone in thirty-six hours and it was gone in twenty-four.

Gina goes over to the closet to pull out a couple of coats. Harlan strolls over to the piano. There is a double cameo here--a picture on each side of what looks like a small gold book held together by gold hinges. Harlan picks it up. We can't see it very well.

Gina gets the coats and comes over to Harlan.

GINA

But he didn't tell you what it was,
did he?

HARLAN

No. I don't think he knew.

GINA

I'll tell you something, Harlan
Ethan Williams--there are times when
I could just kick your slats.

HARLAN

(grins)

Sometimes you have.

GINA

Put your coat on, you stubborn old
Man--it's cold out.

But Harlan is looking down at the gold-bound double cameo he
still holds in his hands.

HARLAN

We had these taken at Coney Island
the year before we were married. You
remember?

GINA

Of course I remember.

HARLAN

God, were we young!

On the left is Gina, looking about twenty-two. She is
sublimely beautiful, with dark eyes and fair skin and dark
hair which cascades from beneath her wide-brimmed sun-hat and
probably all the way to her waist. On the right is a Harlan of
about the same age, grinning confidently into the camera. The
straw boater he wears is cocked back, revealing his fair hair.
He was a fine-looking young blade.

HARLAN

Nineteen thirty-five, wasn't it? I was
twenty-one.

She is also looking at the double cameo, looking at the people they were, her anger at his stubbornness temporarily forgotten.

GINA

And I was eighteen. Every night my father asked me to break it off with you. But God, you were so handsome.

HARLAN

And you, dear, were the most gorgeous creature on the face of the earth.

There are tears brimming in her eyes.

GINA

You really are all right, aren't you, Harl?

He takes her in his arms.

HARLAN

Yes. And you're *still* the most gorgeous creature on the face of the earth.

The clock chimes once.

GINA

We have to go. Your appointment's at two.

She breaks out of his embrace--not without some reluctance and not without giving him a warm kiss.

GINA (CONT'D)

Come on. I'll help you get your coat on.

She does, and the camera pans away and down to the double cameo, which Harlan has replaced on the piano. The camera moves in to ECU on the faces of these young people who now live in old bodies.

FADE TO BLACK.

ACT VII

INT. THE FALCO PLAINS CONFERENCE ROOM

It's dead silent. The camera dollies slowly in on Todhunter. He takes out his handkerchief, removes his glasses, and wipes his face. He still looks like Captain Queeg rattling his ball bearings.

CREWES

Did you hear the question, Richard?

ANDREWS

He heard. Didn't you, doctor?

Now the camera has moved past all of them to CU on Todhunter. He replaces his glasses, re-pockets his hanky, then just sits looking at his hands.

He looks up suddenly, and, amazingly, he has been able to pull himself together. This guy has got more lives than Richard Nixon.

TODHUNTER

It's a hard question to answer without sounding cowardly.

One of the Shop Investigators glances at his watch in a studied "Gee! How the time flies when you're having fun!" way, then looks up again.

SHOP #6

This might be a good time to adjourn for a short while. I know I could use a nice hot cup of joe--

TODHUNTER

No. No adjournment. Nobody bails out until we get this settled.

This time Terry doesn't just roll her eyes. She claps a hand to her face and looks through her splayed fingers. Crewes elbows her sharply, and Terry behaves herself again.

TODHUNTER

The janitor's the easiest thing to explain. He didn't know I was coming and I didn't know he was there. My knocking him down was a complete accident. He had the extinguisher. I bent down to get it, and then the explosion happened. I ran for help. Why did I run for the fire extinguisher in the first place? I just don't know. I was confused, distraught, and I guess it was all I could think of. At least, Mr. Andrews, I was trying to do something.

ANDREWS

According to Mr. Williams' signed statement, you hit him with the door, knocked him over, and then just high-tailed it out of there.

TODHUNTER

Yes, I read his statement. Need I tell you, Mr. Andrews, that Mr. Williams is a seventy-year-old man, a janitor who hadn't the slightest idea of what was going on?

Todhunter pauses and looks around.

TODHUNTER (CONT'D)

If I really had something to hide, I'd have my lawyer here. I don't. I'm more than willing to put my faith in this panel's judgment. I know there's a discrepancy between my account and the janitor's. You just have to ask yourselves if you are going to accept the testimony of a fifty-year-old scientist who, flustered as he was, knew what was happening, or that of a seventy-year-old janitor who was struck in the chest by a door, hit a wall

(MORE)

TODHUNTER (CONT'D)

hard enough to sustain a concussion,
and barely escaped death as the re-
sult of an explosion.

SPANN

(low and sour)

Sucker's good when his back's to
the wall, I'll give him that.

SHOP #1

Do you have anything further to say,
Dr. Todhunter?

TODHUNTER

No, sir, except I apologize for
making a speech. I'm here to answer
your questions, that's all.

SHOP #1

Does anyone have any further ques-
tions?

No one says anything. There's a bit of stir, people sensing
that the meeting's over. Yellow pads begin to go back into
briefcases.

SPANN

(grim)

I got a question.

Shop guys look around. Andrews' face is as expressionless as
always but there's a catlike gleam of interest in his eyes.

One of Crewes' feet raps Terry's ankle. The camera booms up to
their faces. Crewes' says "Shut up and stop rocking the boat."
He means it, too, and Terry sees he does.

SHOP #1

Yes, Ms. Spann? Your question?

Terry's face, which has borne the look of some big, beautiful
cat about to leap on the haunches of a slow zebra, now breaks
into a dazzling but rather stupid smile.

SPANN

Does anybody besides me want coffee?

Andrews looks away, disinterested again, and probably convinced that Terry Spann is some daffy bureaucrat SI, trying to screw her way to the top of the heap... probably starting with Crewes.

INT. GENERAL CREWES'S OFFICE

The paneling which covers the hidden back door goes up and the door opens. Terry strides in angrily. Crewes follows her, goes to the desk, and pushes the button that closes the door. He watches Terry with some sympathy as Terry paces back and forth, doing everything but pulling her hair out in bunches. Finally Terry turns around.

SPANN

Well, that was cute, wasn't it?

Crewes takes out the bottle and the glasses. He pours.

SPANN (CONT'D)

I had McGiver in the hall, Lou. You know I did! And by the way, where in hell was Harlan Williams, Dr. Strange-love's favorite janitor?

CREWES

Had an appointment at the eye doctor's.

Terry, who hasn't really expected an answer, is stopped by this.

SPANN

Huh?

CREWES

Williams is at the office of Dr. James Eakins, the optometrist we use for Class-3 to Class-5 employees.

SPANN

Oh. Well, I'd hate like hell to interfere with the man's eye appointment, *but we are dealing with a lunatic here and we could have proved he's a lunatic!*

Silence. Terry is staring angrily at Crewes. Crewes looks back mildly and patiently.

CREWES

You done?

SPANN

No. I want to tell you one more thing, Lou. The only time in my entire life that I've felt more foolish than I did asking that bunch if they wanted coffee was when I farted the first time a boy kissed me.

They look at each other for a long moment, and then both of them start laughing. Crewes gets up, comes around the desk, and goes to Terry. They embrace, still laughing.

Crewes kisses Terry. Terry kisses him back, then pushes him away when he tries to turn it into something heavier than she wants. Crewes accepts this. He goes to the desk, picks up the two glasses of bourbon still standing there, and hands one to Terry, who is adjusting the neckline of her dress. She takes it and looks at him with the cool, amused expression of a woman who knows she's left a man with his hormones in a considerable state of disarray. But that affection is still there. Crewes' hormones may be in disarray, and there is no doubt that he'd love to get Terry in the sack, but he's bearing up quite well.

There's a small sofa in one corner of the room. Crewes leads Terry to it, and they sit down on it... close, but not quite touching.

SPANN

Let me in on the secret, Lou. What exactly are we drinking to?

CREWES

How about enough rope?

SPANN

As in?

CREWES

As in "Give a man enough rope and
he'll hang himself."

Crewes drinks. After a moment, Terry does too.

CREWES (CONT'D)

You wanted to bring in McGiver.

SPANN

You're damned tooting.

CREWES

You wanted him to give hearsay
evidence.

SPANN

Dammit, Frank, that was an informal
hearing, not a court of law!

CREWES

Not one of the other soldiers in
McGiver's party heard what Redding
said, did they? Not even one of them
could have corroborated McGiver's
story.

SPANN

But we could have rattled him, Frank!
Did you see him today? Did you *hear*
him? He was like an answering machine.
He knew what every question was going
to be and he was ready with all the
right answers.

CREWES

Terry--

SPANN

That wasn't the real Todhunter. We saw the real Todhunter in here after the explosion. He was blowing his top!

CREWES

He might have ridden out McGiver's testimony as easily as he rode out the business about the janitor. And if it comes right down to it and he says "It's my word against his," what do we do, Terry? Punt?

SPANN

What about the janitor? What were we doing with nothing but a lousy deposition?

CREWES

I kept him out of the way on purpose, Terry. Sometimes people do more harm than good.

SPANN

What do you mean?

CREWES

Williams is seeing an optometrist because he flunked the eye test part of the over-sixty-five physical he has to take every year. He requested a re-test.

Terry registers surprise, no, shock is probably a better word.

CREWES (CONT'D)

Do you get it? Your other big witness is an old guy with bad peepers. Do you want him telling those guys how Todhunter looked, or where he was going, or anything? Even a bunch of yo-yos like those Shop guys would crucify him.

SPANN

Damn. Damn! Why wasn't I told?

CREWES

You just were, sweetie. By the way,
I've arranged for Williams to pass
the eye exam this time.

SPANN

Why?

CREWES

Because I don't want his ass canned.
I want him right here where I can
watch him, control him... and use him.
If and when the time comes.

He pours fresh drinks and raises his glass. After a moment,
Terry does likewise.

CREWES (CONT'D)

So... here's to enough rope.

Terry clinks the rim of her glass against Crewes'.

SPANN

Enough rope.

They drink.

INT. A BRIGHTLY-LIT RECTANGLE IN A DARK ROOM

There are letters printed across the lighted rectangle. They
read: *The shaggy dog bounded joyfully through the green
fields.*

DR. EAKINS

(voice)

Mr. Williams?

We can barely see Harlan. His whole face is obscured by the
scope-like gadget the optometrist makes you look through while
he's testing your eyes. We can see, however, the sweat on his
forehead. He doesn't know the game is fixed, and boy is he
psyched up.

HARLAN

"The shaggy dog bounded joyfully
through the green fields." Who makes
these up, Dr. Eakins?

EAKINS makes a note on the clipboard he's holding in one hand.
To his left is a small control console.

EAKINS

Sure wasn't Tolstoy, was it? Next.

He pushes a button. The words change. The new sentence reads,
*John packed his bags and set off for the train station on
foot.* The letters are much smaller.

The wrinkles on Harlan's forehead deepen.

EAKINS (CONT'D)

(voice)

Can you read it, Mr. Williams?

HARLAN

(testy)

Now, just hold your water a second,
will you?

We've seen this from Harlan's POV before; instead of being
sharp and clear, the words drift out of focus.

Eakins looks at his watch.

EAKINS

If we're going to do a dilation,
we really have to finish this up.

Suddenly, magically, the letters swim back into focus.

HARLAN

"John packed his bags and set off
for the train station on foot."

Eakins raises his eyebrows in surprise, makes a mark on his
clipboard, and then flips a switch.

With obvious relief, Harlan slides the viewer away from his face and massages his temples.

HARLAN

That's it?

Eakins walks over, eases Harlan's head back against the headrest of the examination chair, and tilts the chair backwards so Harlan looks like the world's oldest astronaut getting ready to take off.

EAKINS

That's it.

HARLAN

(tries to be casual)

Well? How'd I do?

EAKINS

Let's just get this dilation process out of the way first, shall we, Mr. Williams?

He offers Harlan a smile which means absolutely nothing.

INT. A HALLWAY AT FALCO PLAINS

Jude Andrews comes striding up the hallway and the camera pulls steadily away from him, maintaining a constant distance. He walks like a robot. His face is expressionless. Terrilyn Spann is a government whore, but Jude Andrews is a Government killing machine. If there's an old lady in my way, that empty face says, I'll walk over her and never even hear her screams or her bones breaking.

SPANN

(voice; surprised,
horrified)

You want McGiver to tell his story to Andrews? That Shop spook?

CREWES

(voice)

That's right. He's on his way now.

INT. OFFICE OF GENERAL CREWES

The paneling which hides the bank of video screens is up.

SPANN

My God, why?

CREWES

Terry, will you try--try as hard as you possibly can--to stop reacting and start thinking? At least for a few minutes?

SPANN

Tell me what to think about, and I'll try.

CREWES

The Shop wants Todhunter cleared. We have two choices in the matter: get out of its way or get run over. I saw you getting ready to make a mess this afternoon and stopped you. God knows why. Probably because I still want to--

SPANN

(stubbornly)

That's very flattering, Louis.

CREWES

Todhunter could have gone in there wearing nothing but a Napoleon hat and a leather teddy from Frederick's of Hollywood and they still would have sent him back into that lab after a token investigation. The bottom line is dead simple: they want what he can give them.

SPANN

(very disgusted)

My God!

CREWES

Maybe we can play Cisco and Pancho
and top it from happening. Want to
try?

SPANN

How?

Crewes points at the video monitors. They show Crewes' outer
office. Darla is at her desk, filing her nails. McGiver,
looking uncomfortable and out of place, twirling his cap
between his hands, sits on the sofa.

CREWES

With him.

The door of the outer office opens. Andrews walks in. Both
Darla and McGiver look up at once. That's the sort of man
Andrews is.

CREWES (CONT'D)

(voice)

And *him*.

Spann and Crewes look at each other silently for a moment.

CREWES (CONT'D)

Could you sleep with Andrews if it
meant nailing Todhunter?

SPANN

The way I feel right now, I could
sleep with Idi Amin Dada if it meant
nailing Todhunter. But I hope it
won't come to that.

CREWES

Me too.

Crewes thumbs the intercom on his desk.

CREWES (CONT'D)

Darla? Please send in Mr. Andrews and
Lieutenant McGiver.

FADE TO BLACK.

ACT VIII

INT. AN EYEBALL - ECU

An eyedropper comes into the frame. A drop of liquid is beginning to appear at the end of it.

EAKINS

(voice)

This won't hurt. Okay?

The eye blinks, then opens again.

The drop at the end begins to swell. Now it hangs like a drop of water on the lip of a faucet.

HARLAN

(voice)

Okay.

His eye is wide open, waiting to receive the drop. The pupil is quite small.

EAKINS

(voice)

Try not to blink.

The drop falls into the eye and coats it. The pupil dilates almost at once. The iris becomes nothing but a tiny ring around a wide circle of shiny black. Harlan blinks.

HARLAN

(voice)

Sorry.

The room is dark except for a pool of light around the chair. Eakins bends over Harlan.

EAKINS

No biggie. Now the other eye...

He squeezes the bulb of the dropper. The wet pupil dilates and a moment later Harlan blinks. Eakins takes a pupillary from the breast pocket of his tunic.

EAKINS (CONT'D)

Your wife will have to drive home,
you know. Did you bring sunglasses?

HARLAN

Uh... no. Sorry.

EAKINS

'S okay. I've got a drawer full of
samples. Some of 'em are quite chic.
Now let's see...

He shines the pupillary into Harlan's right eye. For a moment
we see Eakins, dim and shadowy, and then the screen whites
out.

Harlan closes his eyes.

EAKINS (CONT'D)

You have to help me, Mr. Williams.
I can't see anything with your eyes
closed.

HARLAN

Sorry.

He opens them again, and Eakins looks through the pupillary.
The core of the light shifts about as Eakins moves the
pupillary.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

Tell me something, Dr. Eakins.

Eakins looks intently into Harlan's eye.

EAKINS

Yes?

HARLAN

You see anything green in there?

EAKINS

I beg your pardon?

Harlan smiles, but he's pretty tense. Gina's not the only one who is a little nerved up.

HARLAN

I come from over by the Vermont border, doc. That's a country way of asking if you see anything odd.

Eakins moves to Harlan's other eye and begins to examine it.

EAKINS

There's a lot less floaters. Of course I didn't dilate your eyes last time and that might make a difference, but I would say... definitely less floaters. Never seen *that* before.

HARLAN

What are floaters?

EAKINS

Specks. Little moving specks. You usually see 'em best in total dark or in a bright light. Know what I mean?

HARLAN

Oh! Those!

EAKINS

Uh-huh. Those. If you shake your head, those spots move around the way particles of dirt will move around in a bowl of water when you slosh it. Close your eyes for a minute, Mr. Williams.

HARLAN

(does)

I appreciate that.

EAKINS

People who think they're "seeing
(MORE)

EAKINS (CONT'D)

spots" are usually seeing floaters.
Some people have more than others.
Last time you were in here, you
had quite a few. You can open your
eyes now.

Harlan does. His eyes are so dilated that he looks like he's
spent the last five hours smoking opium.

The office: Harlan's POV. Everything is fuzzy.

EAKINS

The number of floaters in a person's
eyes has a tendency to increase with
age. I've never seen the number go
down.

HARLAN

Did you see anything else?

EAKINS

Just your eyes, Mr. Williams.

HARLAN

And the test. The visual acuity test.
Did I--

EAKINS

You know I'm not supposed to divulge
that information...

Deep disappointment on Harlan's face.

EAKINS

...but I'm going to, anyway. You
passed easily.

Harlan's disappointment disappears. He grins.

HARLAN

I *did*?

EAKINS

You sure did. Come into in my office
and I'll find you a pair of sunglasses.

INT. WAITING ROOM

It's drowsing away, as waiting rooms always do as the
afternoon hours drift along. Gina is looking at a magazine.

When Harlan speaks, his excited voice cuts through the drowsy
atmosphere like a knife. Gina and everyone else looks up.

HARLAN

I passed! Honey, this time I *passed!*

He's wearing cool yellow plastic shades with narrow black
lenses: the sort of shades you'd expect to see a punk group
like Devo wearing. He's got a huge grin on his face. Several
people smile, a couple of people laugh out loud. A punk-style
kid is openly giggling. Gina crosses the room and hugs Harlan.

GINA

You're *sure* you passed?

HARLAN

Yeah.

She kisses him.

GINA

Honey, I'm so glad.

As Harlan and Gina approach the coat tree in the corner, the
punker, who looks like Brett Easton Ellis' worst nightmare--
leather wristlets, Metallica tattoos, orange hair--comes over.

PUNKER

Nice shades, gramps.

HARLAN

Well, I'm rebelling against the whole
bourgeois who-is-that-behind-those-
Foster-Grants attitude.

PUNKER
 (respectfully)
 Bitchin, dude.

Gina has got his coat around his shoulders cape-style and is trying to hurry him out the door, but Harlan is cranked to the max, flipped out over the moon.

HARLAN
 What I mean, son, is that you have
 to watch out for the Nazi war-pig
 mentality everywhere and that in-
 cludes sunglasses.

The others patients look perplexed, but the Punker is in perfect sublime tune with this rap.

PUNKER
 I hear you!

Gina is laughing and pushing Harlan out the door. Harlan manages one look back over his shoulder.

HARLAN
 Led Zeppelin forever!

PUNKER
 (ecstatic)
 Yo, Grampa! Freakin' Stairway. Freakin'
 STAIRWAY!!

The Punker starts pumping his fist, rock concert style. Harlan reciprocates until Gina, now howling with laughter, manages to get him out the door. It slams shut so we can read DR. EAKINS backward on the pebbled glass. Gina's red-faced, laughing helplessly.

GINA
 Harlan, you total idiot!

HARLAN
 I want to bleach my hair. I want to
 get some leather pants. I want to be
 MTV's first seventy-year-old love-god.
 I want--

GINA

You really are okay... aren't you?

They have reached the elevators. Harlan pushes the Down button.

HARLAN

Yes. He didn't see a thing he wasn't supposed to see.

She throws her arms around him and hugs him hard. They kiss, then Gina draws back a little and looks at him, amused.

GINA

I like it when you act nuts.

HARLAN

(also amused)

Do you?

GINA

I like it when you act young.

The elevator comes. They step in. They are kissing as the doors close, cutting them off from our view.

INT. A TAPE RECORDER IN CREWES' OFFICE - ECU

It's one of the small ones with the teeny-tiny cassettes.

ANDREWS

(taped voice)

Take your time, Lieutenant McGiver.

McGIVER

(taped voice)

The sterile suits are equipped with mikes and headphones--

The camera draws away from the recorder, giving us the whole room. Spann, Crewes, and McGiver have coffee. Andrews merely sits, arms folded, looking into space. McGiver looks uncomfortable. There's brass all around him... and a Shop

investigator in front of him who looks like a human Panzer tank.

McGIVER

(taped voice)

--but the silo was full of loose electricity from the explosion. Even without my men talking, I was getting a lot of popcorn in my cans--

ANDREWS

(taped voice)

Static in your headphones, you mean.

Spann shoots McGiver a sympathetic glance. Andrews goes on looking into space.

McGIVER

(taped voice)

Yes, that's what I meant. Well, the suit mike is equipped with an on-off switch you turn with your chin. And I--

ANDREWS

(taped voice)

You shut off your mike so you could hear Technician Redding.

McGIVER

(taped voice)

Yes, that's--

Andrews leans forward and turns off the tape recorder.

ANDREWS

'Kay.

McGIVER

(to Spann)

Colonel Spann, I wonder if--

ANDREWS

Get him out of here.

SPANN

I hardly think--

ANDREWS

Get him out of here.

SPANN

Hey, man, do you know how to say thanks?

ANDREWS

No. Get him out of here.

SPANN

Listen, Popeye--

Crewes puts a hand on Spann's arm.

CREWES

Please see Lieutenant McGiver out, Terry.

(looks at McGiver)

And thank you, Lieutenant.

McGiver doesn't care whether Andrews says thanks or fuck a mudhole. He just wants out.

McGIVER

Yessir.

He salutes General Crewes smartly. Crewes returns it. Spann spares Andrews another smoking look (Andrews ignores it, of course) and walks with McGiver toward the door.

Andrews points toward the video screens.

ANDREWS

There they go.

(beat)

Good riddance. When you have a mess like this, it's best left to people who shovel crap for a living.

EXT. FALCO PLAINS HELIPAD, AS SEEN ON VIDEO SCREENS

The chopper which brought the investigators is taking off into a gray, rainy sky.

Spann returns. She's still smoking.

SPANN

I wonder if you'd mind telling me,
Mr. Andrews, why you treated him
that way.

ANDREWS

Tell me a couple of things first,
Spann. Why wasn't he at the hearing
this afternoon? And why am I here
now?

Spann looks uncertain. Crewes just remains silent.

ANDREWS (CONT'D)

Never mind. I think I know the an-
swers.

SPANN

I bet a smart guy like you knows
lots of answers, Popeye.

Andrews gives her a long look, then looks away. It's not that he's scared; he's just decided Spann isn't worth the trouble.

ANDREWS

Here's a question I can't answer: How
scared of Todhunter are you?

CREWES

I'd as soon not talk here.

ANDREWS

(faintly amused)

If you don't feel safe in your own
office, General Crewes, where will
you feel safe?

EXT. FALCO LAKE

It's a gorgeous upstate New York lake, a blue gem surrounded by blazing fall foliage. In the middle of it is a small boat. The sky is as blue as the lake; this is another day.

In the boat are Spann, Crewes, and Andrews. Crewes is in civvies. All are bundled up in fall coats. Spann looks odd in a faded fisherman's hat. Crewes wears horrid checked golfer's pants. Only Andrews, in jeans and a work-shirt, looks totally at ease--but he would look at ease in a Vietnamese village or a Viennese ballroom.

ANDREWS

Do you feel safe now, General Crewes?

CREWES

Fairly safe, yes.

Andrews looks over the side.

ANDREWS

My God, there goes a carp with a microphone in his mouth.

SPANN

You're a funny dude, Popeye.

ANDREWS

My name's not Popeye. Remember that, little lady.

CREWES

Stop it. You hear me, Terry?

SPANN

Five-by, General.

CREWES

Andrews?

ANDREWS

I hear you. Now hear me, General:
The next time your trained bitch
(MORE)

ANDREWS (CONT'D)

calls me Popeye, I'm going to give her something to call the Battered Women's Hotline about.

SPANN

(grinning)

Really? You want to go for it, Stud City?

CREWES

(really angry)

Stop it! Both of you! Now! We came out here to transact some vitally important national business! Can we please for God's sake stop the scuffling and do our jobs?

A long pause among the three of them.

ANDREWS

(mildly)

Okay. Let's pick up where we left off. How scared of him are you?

Crewes and Spann exchange a glance.

CREWES

Pretty scared.

ANDREWS

Why exactly are you so scared?

SPANN

I'm scared they're going to let him start again.

ANDREWS

Sure they are. This doctor of yours has maybe got the end of the arms race locked up inside his head. They'd let him start again if he was Norman Bates.

CREWES

He went with a red light on the board.

ANDREWS

Hearsay.

SPANN

You don't believe it?

ANDREWS

Sure I do. But what have you got?
The evidence of one man who was out
of the com-net at the crucial moment.
None of his men heard even *his* side
of the conversation.

CREWES

You are unfortunately correct.

ANDREWS

All's well for Dr. Todhunter. It's
his word against that of one old
janitor that he ran. His word against
that of the hearsay evidence of a
West Point Wonder that he went with
a red light on the board. But even
if both allegations could be proved...

SPANN

They'd wink.

Andrews smiles an ancient alligator-smile. It's answer enough.

ANDREWS

So let's go back to the other question.
Why am I here?

CREWES

The technical investigation is going
to go on for another month. Then
they're going to rebuild the turbine
that blew and, assuming Todhunter
gets the clean bill of health we all
expect, here we go again. Our buddy

(MORE)

CREWES (CONT'D)

could be ready to go again by the first of March.

SPANN

Earlier.

CREWES

Suppose I could persuade the Shop to keep you on until the next test run, Mr. Andrews?

ANDREWS

As what? Assistant librarian?

SPANN

(irritated)

As *anything*? We could tell them you're looking at the side-effects of the explosion on the janitor, for instance. Or if you don't like that--

He leans forward, suddenly bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.

ANDREWS

That wasn't in the reports! *What* side-effects?

SPANN

His fingernails glowed for a day or two. I saw something similar when I examined Redding's corpse. It gave me a hell of a jump at the time.

ANDREWS

What was it?

SPANN

Nothing. It faded in both cases-- twelve hours in Redding's, forty-eight in Williams'. Ackerman gave the janitor a physical. All systems go. But *that* doesn't matter. The important thing is, you're Shop. And if Todhunter went off the rails again--

CREWES

--you could stop him.

Andrews begins to laugh.

SPANN

You mind telling me what's so funny?

ANDREWS

Not at all. For years people have looked at me and seen a loaded gun. This is the first time someone ever saw me as a safety catch.

CREWES

Well?

ANDREWS

Suppose I stay on. Suppose Todhunter's flaky. Let's even suppose he tries going with a red board again. What am I supposed to do then?

SPANN

Kill him.

Andrews stops smiling.

ANDREWS

If you're that convinced he's dangerous, why don't you kill him yourself?

SPANN

Don't be dense, dear. If you did it--if you *had* to do it--you could justify it.

ANDREWS

You have greatly overestimated my importance, I think.

CREWES

Will you stay? Keep an eye on him?

Andrews looks out at the lake, his eyes unreadable. Then he looks back at the other two.

ANDREWS

I might be able to arrange a posting
to Falco Plains until next spring.
And it might be amusing.

CREWES

(relieved)

Good.

ANDREWS

(looking at Spann)

Just keep her out of my way. She gets
under my skin.

SPANN

I think I can manage that myself, Mr.
Andrews, because the feeling is mutual.

Crewes yanks the pull-cord on the motor and it starts.

The boat makes a long turn--the only boat on the autumn,
deserted lake--and heads for shore.

EXT. FALCO PLAINS INSTALLATION PARKING LOT

Directly in front of the camera is an empty space with
"General Crewes" stenciled on it. A dark gray sedan pulls in.
Crewes and Spann get out and start toward the building. The
camera tracks with them. They are still in their fishing
clothes.

SPANN

That man's almost as crazy as Tod-
hunter.

CREWES

You should have met his predecessor.
Big Indian named Rainbird. *That* man
was crazy.

Crewes stops. Spann stops with him.

CREWES

You didn't tell him about the scars
that disappeared from Redding's body.

SPANN

No. For the time being, at least,
that one's mine. I think I'll sleep
better knowing one thing Andrews
doesn't.

(beat)

You going in?

CREWES

Yeah. I want to get out of these
pants. Feel like a fool in 'em.

SPANN

Maybe we could both get out of our
pants.

Crewes gives her a long, thoughtful look.

CREWES

What are you saying, Terrilyn?

SPANN

I think I'm saying that the joke is
starting to get too big, Lou. It
stopped being funny a long time ago,
and now it's getting in the way.

She stands on tiptoe and kisses him lightly.

SPANN (CONT'D)

Or maybe I just want to see what you
got.

Crewes is trying not to look as if Christmas just came early.
The camera watches as they go toward the building, side by
side. Just before they go in, Crewes drops an arm around her
waist. Spann doesn't resist.

CROSS-FADE TO:

INT. ANDREWS' HOTEL ROOM

It's lit by a dim off-and-on red glow. A key rattles in a lock. The door opens, spilling light in from the hall. Andrews turns on the light, illuminating an anonymous little hotel room. He's been here for a week but there's absolutely no sign of it. We can read the number 422 on the door before he closes and locks it. Andrews crosses the room. He's still in his fishing clothes.

INT. BATHROOM

Andrews enters, turns on the fluorescent light, and approaches the toilet. He looks closely at the lid of the tank.

A thread has been taped across the dropped rim of the lid. It is intact.

He lifts the lid, reaches in, and pulls out a plastic bag. There is a round black gadget in it. Andrews puts the lid down again.

INT. BEDROOM

Andrews crosses to the bed. He's looking out the window. Across the street is a neon sign which reads BAR. It goes on and off, stuttering red light across his impassive face. There's a telephone on the nightstand. He takes the handset off the cradle and unscrews the mouthpiece. He opens the plastic bag and takes out the round black thing. It snaps neatly into place where the mouthpiece was.

He dials long distance. Waits.

ANDREWS

Six.

(beat)

Yes.

Waits.

ANDREWS (CONT'D)

This is Number Six. Is he there?

Waits.

ANDREWS (CONT'D)

This is Andrews. We have a secure line. I've decided to stay.

(listens)

Yes, of course they did.

(listens)

No, nothing new. I'm not interested in Todhunter at all. It's something Crewes' pet DSA bimbo said.

The camera begins to move in on Andrews' face. The red light washes it... fades... washes it... fades... washes it.

ANDREWS (CONT'D)

They want me to use the janitor as cover while I keep an eye on Todhunter. I want to use Todhunter as cover while I keep an eye on the janitor. Something happened to him. It happened to Redding, too, and I don't think Spann told me the whole story on that.

(listens)

Yes. But Redding's dead... the janitor's not.

Andrews listens longer. We're very close on him now.

ANDREWS (CONT'D)

No. It's just a feeling right now. Like something inside me... woke up.

(listens)

Yes.

(listens)

I will.

Andrews hangs up. He looks straight ahead. The light flashes on his face... flashes on his face... flashes on his face. And we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE WILLIAMS HOUSE, ESTABLISHING - MORNING

Birds twitter cheerily.

INT. GINA WILLIAMS, IN A BATHROOM DOORWAY

She's wearing a robe. Her arms are crossed. She's leaning casually against the jamb, looking faintly amused.

GINA

Okay, dad, fess up. How long have
you been using it?

Harlan's wearing his work-pants and a strappy t-shirt. His face is lathered, and he's shaving in with an old-fashioned straight-razor. In the mirror, over one shoulder, we can see Gina reflected.

HARLAN

Which? The heroin or the cocaine?

Gina comes into the room and stands by the basin. Harlan finishes with one cheek and rinses his blade.

GINA

The stuff that's supposed to work so
gradually your boss thinks you lost
ten pounds instead of just dying your hair.

Harlan stops shaving and looks at her.

HARLAN

What are you talking about, Gina?

Gina touches his hair just above his right ear.

GINA

Your boss might think you lost weight,
but I happen to be married to you. I
know you haven't had any black in your
hair for at least ten years.

She is still smiling, but Harlan looks startled. He peers into the mirror and brushes at his hair where Gina's fingers touched.

We see his fingers brush the hair... and yes, amid the thick white there are several strands of black. It is like a reversal of the normal event, which is a man noticing the first threads of gray at his temples while shaving.

GINA

How long have you been dying it, and
what have you been using?

HARLAN

I haven't been.

For the first time Gina's expression of amused tolerance falters.

GINA

What?

HARLAN

I haven't been dying my hair. Thought
never crossed my mind.

GINA

Don't be silly, Harlan. Once your hair
turns white, there's no going back.

HARLAN

Gina, I *haven't*.

She believes him. The two old people look at each other, a little frightened.

GINA

Then what's happening?

Harlan turns back to the mirror and peers at his hair again.

HARLAN

I don't know.

CU on Harlan's hair: black strands amid the white ones.
They're both frightened. He turns back to her.

HARLAN (CONT'D)

I don't *know* what's happening.

They look at each other and

WE FADE TO BLACK.