

The Grid

Written by

Charlie Stickney

Aaron Kogan
Aaron Kogan Management
Phone: (424) 234-3125
akogan@aaronkoganmanagement.com

THE GRID

by

Charlie Stickney

Aaron Kogan
Aaron Kogan Management
Phone: (424) 234-3125
akogan@hollywoodfc.com

EXT. LURAY, VIRGINIA - TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Sunday morning in the South. Church is in session and the streets are deserted -- save for BETH, 40, weary but determined, who stares up at the Luray Catholic Church.

BELLS TOLL. Beth heads inside as the CONGREGATION emerges.

INT. LURAY CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

Only a few STRAGGLERS remain, as the PRIESTS clear the remnants of the morning service.

Beth surveys the room, eyes locking on a six-foot-tall CRUCIFIX on the dais. An ELDERLY PRIEST approaches.

ELDERLY PRIEST
Beautiful, isn't it? It'd been in
the basement for over twenty years.
We started restoring it last
summer. And now -- just beautiful.

Suddenly, Beth CHARGES past the Priest and SLAMS herself into the crucifix. It TOPPLES to the floor -- and SHATTERS.

Silence fills the chamber. No one moves, unsure of what to do, as Beth frantically PAWS through the DEBRIS.

Recovering, several priests converge on Beth and restrain her.

ELDERLY PRIEST
Someone call the police...

The words die in his throat as he catches the slack-jawed visages of his fellow clergymen. Looking down, he sees what Beth pulled from the wreckage --

A small METALLIC ORB that PULSES with an eerie GREEN LIGHT.

Stunned, the Priests release her.

BETH
Forgive me.

With an apologetic nod, Beth hurries out of the church.

EXT. INTER-FAITH ALLIANCE (I.F.A.) TEMPLE - DAY

The I.F.A espouses the kind of new-age, spiritualistic dogma that lost souls and celebrities flock to.

A SIGN outside the front door reads:

Share the Spirt, it is the Spark of Life.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE/CORRIDOR - DAY

Beth nods a greeting to a couple of IFA CLERICS in purple robes as she navigates the long hallway.

SCREENS on the walls serenade her with welcoming propaganda.

CHRISTIAN MAN (ON SCREEN)
I am Christian.

JEWISH MAN (ON SCREEN)
I am Jewish.

MUSLIM WOMAN (ON SCREEN)
I am Muslim.

ALL THREE (ON SCREEN)
We are the IFA.

MUSLIM WOMAN (ON SCREEN)
The Interfaith Alliance enables us
to come together and worship.

JEWISH MAN (ON SCREEN)
The most important elements of my
faith are still here, but now I'm
part of something bigger.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE/MERIC'S OFFICE - DAY

MERIC, 46, handsome, with an unstable glint in his eyes,
sits at a desk, fingering an EBONY DISC with rapt attention.

Satisfied, he opens a BLACK BRIEFCASE. Inside are three
MATCHING DISCS nestled in form-fitting foam.

Meric places the remaining disc in the foam. As the disc
settles, the foam CONFORMS and SOLIDIFIES around it.

Beth THROWS the door open.

MERIC
Sister Beth?

Meric quickly shuts his briefcase.

MERIC
Share the spiri-

Beth drops a SATCHEL on the floor. It's full of GLOWING ORBS
identical to the one she found in the church.

Meric's Cheshire-cat smile vanishes.

MERIC
Where did you get these? You know
we have protocols.

BETH
Do those protocols include hiding
Conditioners in churches?

MERIC
Beth, we're just trying to help
people -- like we helped you.

His charm isn't working... this time.

BETH
Just stop, Meric. No more lies.

Beth grabs an Orb and RIPS out a CHIP. SPARKS FLY.
She tosses it aside, grabs another and repeats the process.

MERIC
You don't know what you're doing.

Suddenly, the Orbs begin to VIBRATE, emitting a low HUM.

Beth turns nervously. Whatever she expected to happen when
she removed the chips, this wasn't it.

One of the Orbs, compelled by some unseen force, ROLLS
across the floor and up the side of Meric's desk.

The Orb GLOWS BRIGHTER as it comes to a rest on top of Meric's
briefcase. The hum INTENSIFIES as the Orb begins to PULSE.

Stunned, Beth can only watch as the remaining Orbs feel the
pull, and form a PULSING MASS on top of the briefcase.

The hum grows PAINFULLY LOUD. Horrified, Meric backs away
from his desk.

MERIC
What have you done?

EXT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - CONTINUOUS

The HUM can now be heard outside the temple. The volume
soars until it peaks in a sickening crescendo.

A bright, WHITE FLASH, obliterates everything.

EXT. GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY - DAY

STUDENTS dressed for the crisp autumn air, amble across the historic campus, seemingly in no great rush to get to class.

Looming over them, a giant PHOTOBIOREACTOR SPIRE filled with ALGAE, protrudes from a hi-tech COMPLEX. A PLAQUE on the building's cornerstone reads:

Bocher Research Institute for Alternative Energy.

BEN (PRE-LAP)
What is in the beaker?

INT. BOCHER RESEARCH INSTITUTE/CLASSROOM - DAY

BEN BOCHER, 33, scholarly, but attractive, hipster GLASSES, presents a BEAKER of clear LIQUID to a lab full of FRESHMEN.

The students fidget with an eye on the clock.

BEN
It could be any of a hundred solutions. So we experiment to form a theory, weigh action vs reaction.

Ben INSERTS a metal rod into the tube. The liquid BUBBLES.

BEN
A reaction. Acid, perhaps? With one source of information, it's impossible to verify.

He quickly DRINKS THE LIQUID.

Several students GASP. They're paying attention now. Ben smiles. He's fine.

BEN
Simple H₂O. The rod was coated with Calcium powder. The Calcium reacted to the water. Now watch what happens when we add magnesium.

As Ben unwraps a MAGNESIUM STRIP from a piece of ALUMINUM FOIL, he notes the clock. Class is over.

BEN
Which we'll have to do next time. Remember, it is never enough to believe you know the truth, we must prove it. When faith replaces fact, objective perception is compromised.

As the students file out, Ben cleans up, POCKETING the strip.

RACHEL (O.C.)

"When faith replaces fact? It's
time for some new material, Ben.

Looking up, he sees RACHEL, 28, lurking in the doorway.
A wholesome beauty in a buttoned-up cardigan, Rachel could
easily achieve the "sexy librarian" look, if so inclined.

She's not.

BEN

I guess moving on is easier for
some of us than others, Rachel.

Lines are drawn. Rachel blinks first.

RACHEL

As much as I'd like to quote you
some Einstein on the necessity of
faith in science... I didn't come
to fight.

BEN

Are you sure? It sounded like you
were throwing down the gauntlet.

RACHEL

Sorry, maybe I was. Old habits.

(beat)

It's been over a year. I was hoping
we could clear the air. Ben, please.

Ben softens, closing some of the distance between them.

BEN

I just don't know where we'd start.

RACHEL

Neither do I. But I saw you as I
walked by, and I knew I had to give
it a shot.

She takes his hand. Ben lets her. Then a thought intrudes.

BEN

Wait, walked by? If you didn't come
here to see me -- why are you here?

The look on her face confirms, Ben already knows the answer.
Brushing by her, he storms down the hall.

Rachel sighs. The moment was there and she blew it.

INT. BIOLAB - DAY

Hundreds of PHOTOBIOREACTORS TUBES filled with water and algae line the walls of the chamber. The cylinders rotate silently, casting a jade luminescence over the room.

Ben BURSTS in. A man in a lab coat with salt and pepper hair, turns to greet him. This is DR. MARCUS, 48.

BEN

What's she doing out there?

Marcus pats the glowing tubes.

MARCUS

Algae. Who would have thought sea slime could be the fuel of the future?

BEN

Don't change the subject, Marcus. Let's talk about Rachel. Not my sister.

MARCUS

But her future sight enabled us to get a jump on the field. Without her, the grants, this building, none it would have existed.

BEN

Where are you going with this?

Marcus lets out a frustrated sigh.

MARCUS

We've fallen behind. Caltech and MIT are working on more efficient models. Not to mention Germany, China... India.

BEN

So you rehire Rachel? That's a stopgap. She can't do it by herself.

MARCUS

I know... Do you want back in?

BEN

Do I want? Marcus, even IF there was a way Rachel and I could work together, you and I both know the Board would never let that happen. I'm lucky they let me teach.

MARCUS

Don't be so sure. A billion dollar patent trumps a million dollar settlement any day of the week.

Ben lets that sink in.

BEN

I have been playing around with a way to maximize hydrocarbon secretions.

MARCUS

See, the juices are flowing already. With you... Rachel... who knows, maybe we could even bring the whole team back together?

Ben stiffens.

BEN

The whole team? Is that what this offer's about?

MARCUS

Don't take it that way, Ben.

BEN

How the hell else should I take it? She left, Marcus. Left all of us.

EXT. BOCHER RESEARCH INSTITUTE - DAY

Ben stares pensively at the spire extending from the building. A return would be complicated at best.

VOICE (O.C.)

Dr. Bocher?

BEN

I have office hours from...

Turning he sees AGENT TILMAN, a mountain of man in a dark suit and glasses.

BEN (cont'd)

Holy crap. you are--

AGENT TILMAN

Immense. Yes, sir. I know sir. Agent Tilman, Homeland Security.

BEN

Well, I do feel secure.

AGENT TILMAN
Thank you sir. I need you to come
with me, sir.

He gestures meaningfully to a black SUV.

BEN
What? Now?

Tilman opens the door to the vehicle. Yes, right now.

INT. SUV - DAY [TRAVELING]

Tilman wordlessly navigates the SUV across the border into Virginia. Ben hunkers down, resigned to the fact that he's not getting any answers until they reach their destination.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The SUV slows as it hits a long line of cars. Ahead, a CONSTRUCTION DETAIL diverts traffic off of the main road.

However, when the SUV reaches the construction site, the CONES are moved and they're ushered through.

As soon as they clear the site, Tilman pulls over.

INT/EXT. SUV - DAY

AGENT MATHER, 40's, a man used to being in charge, climbs in.

AGENT MATHER
Dr. Bocher, I'm Agent Mather.

Mather signals to Tilman and the SUV resumes its journey.

BEN
Where are you taking me?

AGENT MATHER
When did you last speak to your
sister, Doctor Bocher?

Ben lets out a frustrated sigh.

BEN
Of course. Of course this is about
her. It always is.
(off their expectant look)
We haven't talked in over a year. What's she into this time?

Ben trails off, as out of the corner of his eye, he catches sight of the trees outside -- they're GRAY ASH.

In fact everything is, as if someone clicked a button and drained the color from every tree, rock, blade of grass, etc.

Ben rolls down the window. Outside the scene grows grimmer. Scores of dead, gray BIRDS line the roadside.

BEN
What happened here?

They pass a colorless field filled with dead, GRAY COWS.

AGENT MATHER
We were hoping you could tell us.

INT/EXT. SUV - LURAY, VIRGINIA - DAY

The SUV slows. Main street is littered with GRAY BODIES.

Horrificed, Ben slumps back against his seat.

BEN
How many?

AGENT MATHER
Over a thousand.

The SUV somberly heads for a giant, white CONTAINMENT TENT.

INT. CONTAINMENT TENT - DAY

Agent Mather ushers Ben inside the CLEAN ZONE where AGENTS mill about tables covered with DEBRIS searching for clues.

BEN
What do you want from me? You must have military experts.

AGENT MATHER
We do. Lieutenant Fisher.

Lean and lanky, LIEUTENANT FISHER, 30's, ambles over.

LIEUTENANT FISHER
Dr. B, I saw your presentation in Geneva on bio-energy extraction from micro-algae. Impressive stuff. You were really fast-tracking until the fire. But hey, you can't bake a cake without cracking eggs, right?

Ben smiles stiffly.

BEN
How can I help?

LIEUTENANT FISHER
To start, the boys and I are taking
bets, whatdaya think terrorists, or
industrial accident?

BEN
I guess I would have to see the site.

INT. CONTAINMENT TENT - PASSAGEWAY - DAY

They head down a plastic tube rimmed with HALOGEN LAMPS.

LIEUTENANT FISHER
At first we thought the desaturation
might be chemical in nature.

BEN
An instantaneous mass-oxidation?

LIEUTENANT FISHER
Right, but as we got closer to the
epicenter --

He gestures through a clear plastic partition. The remnants
of a wall are marked with GRAY STREAKS of varying
intensities. They all point in the same direction.

BEN
The amount of energy it would take
to create a blast pattern like that.

They arrive at a door blocked by TWO SOLDIERS.

AGENT MATHER
What do you know about the IFA?

BEN
The IFA? A bit. I know that their
Revive program got my sister clean
when no one else could. And I also
know they're a cult... which has
left me wondering if it was worth
it. But why ask me that now...

Ben's stomach grows cold. Through the clear plastic window
he can make out a plaque reading: **Share the Spirt...**

BEN
Beth.

LIEUTENANT FISHER
I'm sorry, Dr Bocher. I really am.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Ben numbly follows Agent Mather and Lieutenant Fisher down the long hallway. Here the carnage is much more pronounced.

The ceiling and the walls are BENT and BUCKLED, the light fixtures fused and twisted.

INT. MERIC'S OFFICE - DAY

It's obvious this was the epicenter of the implosion. Carnage rings the room, pointing to the top of Meric's desk.

Ben barely sees any of this. His attention is drawn to a FIGURE on the floor covered by a white sheet. He kneels down and slowly pulls back the covering.

It's Beth. She stares up at him, cold and gray. Ben caresses her face, allowing himself a few, silent TEARS.

BEN

Beth... I -

He looks up angrily at Agent Mather and Lieutenant Fisher.

BEN (cont'd)

Why didn't you tell me?

AGENT MATHER

I'm sorry. We needed you to see the room. And now there's something else I need you to look at. Can you do that, Dr. Bocher? It's important.

Ben swallows the emotion, letting the scientist in him take over. He gently replaces the sheet and nods to Mather.

INT. CONTAINMENT TENT - A MAKESHIFT LAB AREA - DAY

Lt. Fisher leads Ben through a swarm of TECHNICIANS buzzing over remnants of the office, to an isolated workstation.

Meric's BLACK BRIEFCASE lies under the examination lamps.

BEN

A briefcase?

LIEUTENANT FISHER

One that somehow survived our little Armageddon unscathed. Intrigued? You should be.

Lieutenant Fisher uses a probe to flip open the briefcase. Inside rest the four EBONY DISCS.

LIEUTENANT FISHER
The lab hasn't been able to
determine the composition of the
discs or the case.

BEN
You mean the type of alloy?

LIEUTENANT FISHER
I mean, at all. They're comprised
of elements that don't pop up on
any periodic table. And speaking of
knowing jack-shit.

He gestures to another table. Under a light sit the pile of
Conditioners. They've fused together into a SOLID MASS.

LIEUTENANT FISHER (cont'd)
These were on top of the briefcase.

Ben bends over and peers through the magnifying light. After
a moment he lets out an admiring whistle.

BEN
They look like miniature SQUIDS,
but the complexity of the circuitry
is off the charts.

AGENT MATHER
Squids?

LIEUTENANT FISHER
Superconducting Quantum Interference
Devices. They detect electromagnetic
field fluctuations. Think of it like
a Geiger counter for brain.

As Ben's sleeve gets close to the Conditioners, the red in
his shirt DESATURATES.

BEN
Fascinating. Even fused, they're
absorbing the color wavelengths
reflecting off my shirt. What
potential.

AGENT MATHER
Go on.

BEN
Each of these units seem to be
designed to lock onto and absorb
energy signatures. But the way
they're fused together...

Ben traces the source of the fusion in the circuitry.

BEN (cont'd)
...there was some kind of feedback.
An overload and then--

LIEUTENANT FISHER
All this.

The men grimly survey the room. Ben breaks the silence.

BEN
I hope I've been of some help, but
if there's nothing else, I'd like
to make arrangements for my sister.

AGENT MATHER
Actually, there is one more thing.

Agent Mather nudges Lieutenant Fisher, who grabs a PACKAGE
and hands it to Ben. It's addressed to him -- from Beth.

AGENT MATHER
She never got a chance to mail it.

Ben raises an eyebrow. The package has already been opened.

At Agent Mather's urging, Ben opens box inside, revealing:

ONE HALF of a BIBLE that's been RIPPED IN TWO, and a
pristine CONDITIONER.

BEN
Wait, why would she send me...

A panic washes over Ben as he realizes how bad this looks.

AGENT MATHER
She's dead. There's no reason to
keep protecting her. Come clean now
and I'll do what I can for you.

BEN
This is why you brought me here?

AGENT MATHER
Ben, your sister killed a thousand
people. If you know anything...

BEN
No. She would never-

Agent Mather keeps peppering Ben, hoping that he'll crack.

AGENT MATHER
People change, Ben. Was Beth
working alone?

BEN
Alone? She didn't do this.

AGENT MATHER
What's next? Was this a trial for
something bigger? Washington? New
York? Los Angeles? Where?

Agent Mather's words spark something in Ben.

BEN
*Where... where. You're right. We
have to figure out where it went.*

Agent Mather looks to Lieutenant Fisher for clarification.
Fisher shrugs, he has no idea what Ben's talking about.

But someone does.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Where? Where what went?

A quiet, but intense-looking man, GRIFFEN, 43, emerges from
the back of the tent. The Agents draw their weapons, but
quickly stand down when Griffen FLASHES A BADGE.

GRIFFEN
And while he formulates an answer,
Agent Mather, perhaps you can tell
me what a civilian is doing in the
middle of a highly restricted area?

Agent Mather is clearly rattled by Griffen's badge.

AGENT MATHER
Agent Griffen. Sir. Doctor Bocher's
sister had a package and I thought-

GRIFFEN
Always best left to those with an
aptitude for it. Now, *Doctor Bocher*,
go on, what did you mean, where?

BEN
An enormous amount of energy was
sucked out of a three mile radius.
There was no heat dissipation, no
light emission, no sonic readings,
so tell me, where did it all go?

LIEUTENANT FISHER
Neither created or destroyed...

BEN
And if collecting it caused this
devastation, what's going to happen
if it's released? Someone needs to
figure out where, and fast.

GRIFFEN
Indeed, Doctor. Very insightful.
(turns)
Mather, you're relieved of duty.

Agent Mather is stunned, but Griffen's already moving on. He surveys the room, eyes landing on the Briefcase and Discs.

GRIFFEN (cont'd)
Pack up and prepare for transport.
We're moving out in fifteen and
we're leaving it clean people.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The SUV's, in convoy, wind up a dusty hillside.

INT. SUV - DAY [TRAVELING]

Ben, clutching the half-bible, rides solemnly in the last of the vehicles with Griffen, and Lt. Fisher.

BEN
What did you mean when you said,
"leave it clean?"

GRIFFEN
We've set incendiary charges in a
three mile radius around the town.

BEN
I don't understand.

GRIFFEN
An investigation will show Luray was
consumed in a fire started by an
explosion at the gas processing plant.

BEN
But all those people, their families.
They have a right to know the truth.

GRIFFEN
Why? Isn't it better to give them a
place to vent their anger?

BEN
You could investigate. Find an
answer.

GRIFFEN
I already did.

BA-CHOOM! A huge explosion flames up behind them.

LIEUTENANT FISHER
I win the bet -- industrial accident.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The Convoy crests the hill and descends into a narrow valley.
High ridges on either side cast long shadows across the road.

Ahead, an overturned FARM TRUCK blocks the road, causing the
Convoy to halt its procession.

INT. SUV - DAY

Griffen's brow furrows, something's not right.

PING! A small hole appears in the window, bullet sized.

Ben looks over -- a BLOODY BLOTCH on Lt. Fisher's shirt is
rapidly growing. Lt. Fisher GASPS, and then he's gone.

GRIFFEN
Down!

Griffen YANKS Ben to the floor.

PING! PING! PING! Bullets RIP through Ben's empty seat.

The Driver isn't as lucky. BLOOD SPLATTERS as his skull
SHATTERS.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

BA-KA-BOOM. A rocket hits the first of the SUVs, engulfing
it in a ball of FLAMES. The ambush is on.

MERCENARIES in black, emerge from the embankment flanking
the convoy and cut loose with MACHINE-GUNS.

The AGENTS are well trained and don't panic. They spill out
of their SUV's and return fire.

But the mercenaries have the higher ground, picking off the
Agents one by one. It's only a matter of time.

INT. SUV - DAY

Griffen grimly straps on a brace of GUNS and grabs several clips of AMMO.

BEN
Who's shooting at us?

GRIFFEN
(cocks gun)
Stay here.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Griffen slips out the SUV and wades into the fray.

Bullets whizz, but Griffen remains eerily calm. Time seems to stop as his eyes flit around, cataloging each threat.

In a BLUR, he drops to his left, rolls and FIRES.

On the ridge, two mercenaries fall dead.

Griffen pops up, guns blazing. He's an emotionless, killing-machine. SPINNING, DIVING and FIRING with uncanny accuracy. Every shot he takes seems to find its mark.

The mercenaries drop like flies under his onslaught. For a moment it looks like Griffen might turn the tide by himself.

But as quick as he is, Griffen can't face every direction at once. He hears something coming from behind and SPINS --

-- too late. A BLAST of GUNFIRE catches him in the chest, lifts him off the ground and DUMPS HIM in the gully below.

INT/EXT. SUV - DAY

A few bursts of gunfire are followed by an eerie SILENCE.

Ben cautiously peeks out the window. The fight's over.

Five REMAINING MERCENARIES, advance slowly toward Ben's SUV.

Heart POUNDING, Ben ducks down. THINK. His eyes LOCK on the KEYS in the ignition.

Ben WRESTLES the Driver's bloody body into the back. Then, staying low, he slithers into the front.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Ben's SUV roars to life. The Mercenaries quickly draw a bead and open fire. The SUV's windshield SHATTERS.

INT/EXT. SUV - DAY

Ben ducks, cowering from the cascade of BROKEN GLASS, then uses the SUV's back-up camera to navigate his way free.

Clearing the carnage, Ben puts the car in gear and FLOORS IT. The Mercs chase with a hail of gunfire, but it's too late.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY [TRAVELING]

Ben's barely holding it together as he speeds away.

BEN
Shit-shit-shit-shit-- OH, SHIT!!!

A FARMER stands in the road.

Ben SLAMS the BREAKS. SCREEEECH. The car SKIDS to a STOP an inch from the Farmer. Phew.

It's only when the Farmer pulls out a MACHINE-GUN, that Ben realizes, he probably shouldn't have stopped.

BEN
Wait. Don't.

Too late. The Farmer opens fire, emptying a full clip. Instinctively, Ben SHIELDS himself with the BLACK BRIEFCASE.

Astonishingly, as the bullets HIT the BRIEFCASE, they LOSE THEIR MOMENTUM and drop harmlessly to the floor of the SUV.

Equally shocked, Ben and the Farmer exchange incredulous glances. Then, given the second chance, Ben GUNS THE ENGINE.

FARMER
Wait. Don't.

The Farmer is mowed down as the SUV CRUNCHES over him.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

The surviving Mercenaries search the flaming wreckage.

MERC LEADER (ON PHONE)
They're not here, They-

Five SHOTS ring out. The five remaining mercenaries fall dead.

Griffen, battered, but alive, climbs out of the gully. He painfully peels off the remains of a HI-TECH KEVLAR VEST.

After a moment to assess the carnage, he ties a tourniquet around his bleeding leg and resolutely limps off after Ben.

INT. SUV - DAY [TRAVELING]

Ben white-knuckles the steering wheel trying to keep his composure. But as the adrenaline fades, he loses it.

Ben slams the wheel, POUNDING it until he has nothing left.

BEN

Damn it, Beth. Damn it.

Eventually the anger dissipates, leaving quiet contemplation.

Ben looks down and grabs the HALF-BIBLE from the seat. He flips it over and processes where it was split in two:

Jeremiah 31:15 -- a passage depicting Rachel's lament.

Wheels turn. The location of the rip was intentional.

It's a MESSAGE.

EXT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

Identical to the one in Luray, but ten times the size.

INT. LONG CORRIDOR - DAY

We follow Meric down the hallway. Two IFA CLERICS approach --

IFA CLERICS

Share the...

-- only to falter as they get a good look at Meric's face.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

As Meric enters, a section of the wall crackles to life. On the MONITOR sits a FIGURE who's face is obscured by shadows.

SHADOW FIGURE

Where have you been, Meric? We were getting worried.

MERIC

There was a slight complication...

It seems Meric didn't escape Luray unscathed as we see the LEFT HALF of his FACE has been COMPLETELY DRAINED OF COLOR.

MERIC (cont'd)

...but I'm dealing with it.

SHADOW MAN

Our shipment?

MERIC

Intact. But I'm going to need a little more time than we agreed on.

SHADOW MAN

Two days. After that, Klinge is in charge of collection.

The monitor goes blank. Meric shudders. *Klinge*. Shit.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ben, clutching the half-bible and black briefcase, wearily KNOCKS on the door. He's been through hell and looks it.

He knocks again. Finally, Rachel cracks the door.

RACHEL

Ben, it's late, and... whoa, what happened to you? Are you okay?

BEN

A lot. And no, I'm really not.
(beat)
Beth's dead.

Rachel's face goes white.

RACHEL

Oh, God. Was it?

BEN

No, it wasn't drugs.

INT. RACHEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ben's eyes trail along a wall of vintage concert posters -- The Clash, The Damned, etc., before landing on a PICTURE.

It's of a much younger Ben, Rachel and Beth embracing at the groundbreaking for the Bocher Research Institute.

Rachel joins him and quietly hands Ben a cup of coffee.

RACHEL

She looked good in that picture.

BEN

Beth was happy.

He points to a MAP of the world riddled with PUSH PINS.

BEN

This one's new.

RACHEL
Missionary targets. A.K.A. "How I
wasted the last eighteen months of
my life." And please, don't say
anything. Not tonight.

(Ben quietly nods)
I left the institute to help people
find God. But what "the people" were
really looking for was clean drinking
water, sustainable agriculture and a
strong wi-fi connection. They didn't
need faith, they needed a
biophysicist. So I came back to where
I could actually make a difference.

She takes a substantive swig of coffee.

RACHEL (cont'd)
What happened, Ben?

BEN
There was an accident in Luray.

RACHEL
Oh God, she was in the explosion.

Off Ben's confused expression, Rachel turns on the TV.

RACHEL
It's been on the news all day. A
gas plant blew up. Was she there?

ON SCREEN: aerial footage of the smoldering wreckage of Luray.

BEN
It wasn't a gas plant. That's what
they want you to believe.

RACHEL
What do you mean? Who wants you to
believe?

BEN
The government, I think. I'm not
sure. It doesn't matter. Did you
get a package from Beth?

RACHEL
This morning. How did you-

Ben holds up his HALF-BIBLE.

Intrigued, Rachel puts down her coffee and fishes through a
pile of papers on the table and unearths the OTHER HALF.

BEN
Are any passages highlighted?

RACHEL
Yes, but--

Excited Ben cracks his open.

BEN
I think it's a code.

RACHEL
A code? A Government cover up? Ben,
you know you sound insane, right?
(off his insistent look)
Fine, there are two. Psalm 119:20,
*My soul is consumed with longing
for your laws at all times.*

Ben writes down the quote, book and verse.

RACHEL
And Genesis, book three, verse
nineteen, *for dust thou art and
unto dust shalt thou return.*

BEN
And I have Mark, book one, verse
eight. *And I baptize you with
water, but he will baptize you with
the Holy Spirit.*

Ben scribbles the last of the numbers.

RACHEL
Fine. I'll play. Maybe it's an
anagram -- rearrange the letters.

BEN
Beth always preached focusing on the
numbers. It's gotta be about the
books and verses. Maybe an equation.

Rachel paces, her eyes falling on her MAP.

RACHEL
What about an address? Say,
Longitude and latitude?

Rachel rolls her eyes, as Ben does a quick calculation.

BEN
I doubt Beth wanted to send us to
the Sudan... Can I use your laptop?

She gestures and he sits down at her computer desk.

BEN

What if the books and verses formed
an ip address? 119.203.191.08

Rachel leans in as Ben inputs the sequence. Their shoulders touch. It's nice. Exciting even.

A page starts to load... PETITE PREGGERS, a pregnant midget, PORN SITE stares at them.

BEN

Damn it, I though I had something.

RACHEL

I'm sorry, Ben. Maybe she did
really just want to share a couple
of passages with us.

Not helping. Ben stands abruptly, and steps back.

BEN

Great. Thanks to you, my sister's
last words are idiotic nonsense.

RACHEL

And we're back to this. She came to
me, Ben. The way your parents died...
the odds were astronomical. She
needed something more than numbers.

BEN

Of course she did. She needed her
friends, her family.

RACHEL

I was her friend.

BEN

And what were we?

(beat)

You left. Left me behind.

RACHEL

Ben, there are lines. You crossed
them. If you'd listened to me, it
would have never happened.

BEN

And if you hadn't sent Beth down a
rabbit-hole of false hope, she'd
still be alive. Period.

RACHEL

Period? How dare you blame me for this? That's out of line, period.

(thinking)

Period... I'll get back to how you're a gigantic asshat in a minute, but what if Mark in the Book of Mark meant "mark," as in period?

BEN

Mark... Brilliant. That would change the address to...

He TYPES in 119.203.19.108 A page quickly LOADS.

ON SCREEN: A VIDEO PLAYS

Beth, looking much like we saw her in the opening, sits in her car at night. She glances around nervously as she talks into a WEBCAM.

BETH (ON SCREEN)

Ben. Rachel. If you're watching this, you're together -- which is good, because I need all the help I can get. Rachel, you were right, I should have never joined the IFA.

Ben PAUSES the video to compose himself. Then thinking.

BEN

Wait, I thought you'd be on board the IFA's "share the spirit" train.

RACHEL

I may have taken Beth to church. The IFA's a frigging cult.

Ben gives her a begrudging smile, then resumes the video.

BETH (ON SCREEN)

The IFA's Pyramid of Clarity.

ON SCREEN: Beth holds up a small CERAMIC PYRAMID. Green light glows through an opening in the top.

BETH (ON SCREEN) (cont'd)

Five points: Kardia Heart, Dianois: Mind, Ischus: Will, Dunamis: Might, (points to the top) and Psyche, the soul. Revive's detoxification approach centers around a process of reunifying the points. What few know is...

Beth TOUCHES two SPOTS simultaneously on the pyramid and the bottom panel flips open. A glowing conditioner falls out.

BETH (ON SCREEN)
...that at the core of Revive is
the Conditioner. It supposedly
drains toxins off the body's bio-
electric field... but it does more.
I think they're brainwashing
people. *Shit.*

Beth freezes as a set of HIGH-BEAMS washes over her. Beth
unclenches as the car continues on its way.

BETH (ON SCREEN)
I must seem paranoid, but I'm not.
I was doing outreach with one of
the parishes in our county, when a
janitor came into the office. He
had accidentally knocked a hole in
a wall in the chapel. He found this
inside.

She holds up a CONDITIONER.

Beth then pushes a button on her computer and the video cuts
away. A series of scanned WORK ORDERS flit across the screen.

BETH (V.O.)
The chapel was redone six months
ago by Renew Renovations, a company
owned by the IFA. I tracked their
last ten jobs... all churches,
temples and mosques.

ON SCREEN: the camera cuts back to her.

BETH (ON SCREEN)
I found Conditioners everywhere--
hidden in a pew, in a Torah's ark,
nestled in an Ablution fountain.

She pans the webcam down. On the seat next to her is a
satchel full of conditioners.

BETH (ON SCREEN)
Take the conditioner to Marcus.
Figure out what it does. I'm going
to Luray tomorrow. If I'm right,
there's another one there. I hope
I'm not. I love you, Ben. Rachel.

The video ends. Ben and Rachel sit in silence, processing.

RACHEL
Holy crap. This is-- I don't know
what this is. Did she send you a
conditioner?

Rachel catches sight of something OUT THE WINDOW.

RACHEL
Whoa. What's going on?

Ben joins her at the window and looks down to the street --
POLICE CARS have surrounded the block. A SWAT TEAM slowly
creeps toward the building.

BEN
Shit! They must have been watching
your place.

RACHEL
Who?

BEN
The police. The CIA. Homeland.
Maybe all of them. We've got to go.

RACHEL
What? Why?

BEN
They won't believe us. They think
Beth was involved in what happened
at Luray. And that I was too.

Ben's panicking now as he stumbles toward the door. Head
spinning. Everything seems distant. Moving in slow motion.

RACHEL
That's crazy. We can explain.

Ben's not waiting. But, as he reaches the door, it's KICKED
OPEN by a BALD, black-clad TROOPER, toting a giant BACKPACK.

Another, TATTOOED TROOPER, crashes through the window.

Rachel SCREAMS. A scream that is cut short as the Tattooed
Trooper ZAPS her with a TASER-like device.

She drops TWITCHING to the floor.

BEN
Rachel!

VICTOR, 40's, a trooper in steel-rimmed glasses with a long,
BLACK BAG, slung across his shoulder, steps into the room.

VICTOR

Dr. Bocher, come with us now before
anyone else gets hurt.

Ben knows when he's beat. The Bald Trooper roughly ushers him outside as The Tattooed Trooper scoops up Rachel.

Victor scans the room until he spots the Black Briefcase on the couch. He grabs it and follows his team out the door.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The three Troopers herd Ben quickly down the hall. Behind them, the elevator *DINGS*.

The doors open and the SWAT TEAM steps out.

For a moment, nobody moves. The SWAT team assesses the Troopers and the Troopers assess the SWAT team.

A cold sweat washes over Ben as it dawns on him that the Troopers holding him aren't with the police.

VICTOR

Toast'em.

The Bald Trooper pulls a HOSE from the BACKPACK/FLAMETHROWER and cuts loose. A stream of FIRE engulfs the hallway.

The SWAT team dives for cover. The lucky ones make it back to the safety of the elevator. The rest--

--scream in anguish as they are ROASTED ALIVE.

No matter where they run, the flame finds them. Like a smart missile, the fire BENDS and TWISTS its PATH in pursuit.

Desperate, a SWAT member risks the five-story plunge and crashes through the window.

But the flame won't be denied, ARCING THROUGH THE WINDOW after him. The fire incinerates the Swat member before he hits, leaving only a CHARRED CORPSE that shatters on the sidewalk.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Victor KICKS open the stairwell door.

VICTOR

Go! Go! Go!

Ben doesn't have time to process what just transpired. Prisoners in tow, the Troopers double time it upwards.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Victor pushes Ben out onto the roof. The Tattooed Trooper joins them, dumping Rachel to the ground.

Ben casts a glance over the edge of the building. The police have locked down the entire block. There's nowhere to go.

The Bald Trooper sets up in the doorway, firing short bursts of FLAME to keep the SWAT team pinned down in the stairwell.

BALD TROOPER

Victor, hurry. I'm almost out of fuel.

Victor takes a RIFLE with a LARGE MUZZLE out of his bag.

BLAMP! Ben flinches as an ANCHOR HOOK imbeds itself into the door frame inches above his head.

Victor pulls out a CABLE and attaches one end to the door frame. He then attaches the other end to a second hook.

Victor takes aim at a distant target. BLAMP!

EXT. SKY - NIGHT [TRAVELING]

Cable in tow, the Anchor cuts through the night -- straight toward a looming SKYSCRAPER.

But, an instant before impact, it VEERS OFF SHARPLY, contouring its path AROUND THE BUILDING.

Seemingly supported by NOTHING, the cable LOCKS INTO PLACE. The anchor continues on --

EXT. ABANDONED BUILDING - NIGHT

-- until it slams, into the base of a brick building. The cable SOLIDIFIES forming a customized, contoured ZIP LINE.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

VICTOR

Send the woman.

BEN

What? No! Stop!

Victor JABS Ben with the butt of his rifle, dropping him to his knees.

The Tattooed Trooper snaps a pair of CUFFS on Rachel and then attaches to a SMALL BOX inset with a GROOVE LINE.

He carries her to the edge of the roof and SNAPS the groove of the box onto the CABLE. Rachel jolts awake as the impact of what's about to happen hits her.

RACHEL

W-what, what are you? Nooooooooo.

Too late. Tattooed Trooper gives Rachel a little shove. Smooth as silk, she SLIDES down the cable into the night.

BEN

Rachel.

Victor attaches himself to the cable via a belt harness.

VICTOR

Send Dr. Bocher after me, then get down to the car.

Victor secures the briefcase and steps off the building.

Tattooed Trooper snaps a handcuff on Ben, but before he can attach the second, a blast of BULLETS rip through his chest.

Ben spins. The SWAT team has gained the roof and they're making up for lost time and teammates.

The Bald Trooper is practically CUT IN HALF by gunfire. The SWAT team's guns track towards Ben.

BEN

WAIT! I'm not--

The SWAT team responds with a HAIL OF BULLETS.

As the bullets eat up the ledge Ben's perched on, he quickly ascertains that there's only one place to go.

Ben SNAPS the box to the cable and JUMPS off the building.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT [TRAVELING]

ARGH! Ben grimaces as his shoulder nearly dislocates. Attached only by one arm, Ben TWISTS WILDLY.

Ben makes an attempt to grab the other cuff, but he's moving too swiftly to do anything but dangle precariously as he shoots at kamikaze speed down the line toward the skyscraper.

Ben only has a moment to marvel at the technology that's supporting him, before he CAREENS around the building.

His foot SMACKS PAINFULLY against the edge of the skyscraper slinging him wildly back and forth.

Ben frantically CONTORTS to avoid more obstacles as he plunges under a BILLBOARD, across a FREEWAY OVERPASS, etc.

Finally, the cityscape falls behind, as the zip-line begins its final descent. Ben relaxes...

...until he realizes, the end of the line that's rushing towards him, is a BRICK WALL.

BEN
Oh... SHIIIIIIIT!

An instant before he splatters, PROXIMITY SENSORS on the black box FLASH and HYDRAULIC BREAKS clamp down.

Ben JERKS to an ABRUPT STOP. Then, with a HISS, the black box releases the cuffs, dumping him roughly to the ground.

A BURLY TROOPER grabs him and tosses him into a Black Sedan.

INT. BLACK SEDAN - NIGHT

The Burly Trooper pulls a hood over Ben's head and secures him next to Rachel. He nods to Victor.

BURLY TROOPER
No one else made it down.

Victor pulls a pack of CIGARETTES and a small REMOTE from the glove compartment.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

A ruddy-faced SWAT SARGENT surveys the carnage on the roof. As he examines the corpses, a BLINKING LIGHT on a SMALL BOX nestled under the ledge, catches his eye.

INT. BLACK SEDAN - NIGHT

Victor takes a deep draw on the cigarette as he FLIPS the remote's switch.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The Sargent gasps as the blinking light turns SOLID RED.

BA-KA-CHOOM! The roof incinerates in a MASSIVE EXPLOSION.

EXT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

A loud GONG echoes, signaling the start of morning services.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE/GRAND CHAMBER - DAY

Adorned with icons from every religion, the Grand Chamber provides a place of worship welcoming for all comers. Muslim PRAYER MATS, PEWS for kneeling Christians, a TORAH ARK, etc.

As the coalition assembles in their respective sectors a MELODY PLAYS that evokes elements of Gregorian chants, Cantillation rhythms and bits of the Adhan.

Hanging from the ceiling, a large-scale version of the PYRAMID OF CLARITY looms over the chamber.

INT. MERIC'S OFFICE - DAY

Through a thick pane of ONE-WAY GLASS, Meric watches the Congregation gather below.

MERIC
*For Your sake we are killed all day
 long; We are accounted as sheep for
 the slaughter...*

Meric turns to face Ben and Rachel, BOUND to chairs. They are flanked by the Burly Trooper and Victor.

MERIC (cont'd)
 Romans, eight, thirty-six. But
 you're not a sheep, are you, Dr.
 Bocher?

Ben eyes Meric wearily, unsure of how to answer.

MERIC
 I think not. Your sister surprised
 me. Sharp eyes emerging from a haze
 of addiction. I won't underestimate
 a Bocher again.

Unnerved, Ben searches for a response that might placate his increasingly erratic captor.

BEN
 We don't know anything. You have
 the briefcase. Please, let us go.

MERIC
 The briefcase? The BRIEFCASE?

Meric grabs the briefcase from Victor and flips it open.

MERIC
 Why the fuck would I'd want an
 empty briefcase?

He's right, the case IS empty.

MERIC

Where are my *POWER CELLS*?

Meric HURDLES the empty briefcase against the wall. It impacts with NO SOUND and falls silently to the floor.

BEN

Power cells? I don't know what--

Meric pulls a gun from his robes and puts it to Rachel's temple. She starts to SHAKE, terrified beyond belief.

BEN (cont'd)

NO! Please don't. I'd tell you if I knew anything. I swear, I would.

MERIC

Disappointing. You bleat very much like a sheep, Dr. Bocher. Well, for her sake, I hope there's a little lupine lurking inside you...

RACHEL

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

Meric slowly TWISTS the MUZZLE against Rachel's skull.

BEN

Stop. I'm begging you.

MERIC

...a wolf who knows who I am and where my cells are.

RACHEL

Give us this... t-this day our daily bread.

Ben's mind races, desperately looking for an answer.

MERIC

Otherwise I will blow her FUCKING BRAINS all over the wall.

Meric cocks the gun. Ben heart stops, he's got nothing.

BEN

Rachel. I'm so sorry.

RACHEL

ohGodOhGodOHGOD!

As Meric's about to shoot he notices a FAINT LIGHT reflecting off the gun's barrel. He tracks the source-- the bottom of the briefcase has become dislodged, revealing a GLOWING DOT.

Panicking, Meric LAUNCHES himself at Ben.

MERIC
Which division sent you?

BEN
Division? I don't-

Meric shoves the Glowing Dot and his gun into Ben's face.

MERIC
This is a Company beacon. So either
you put it there and you're going
to tell me everything, about who
you work for. Or you didn't--
(cocks the trigger)
--and we have a situation.

BEN
Griffen.

Meric's taken aback. That's a name he wasn't expecting.

MERIC
Griffen? You work for...

Realizing that Ben wasn't answering him, Meric follows his eyes to the door -- where Griffen steps into the room.

Victor and the Burly Trooper attempt to draw their weapons. In a blur, a GUN appears in Griffen's hand FIRING two SHOTS.

The first HITS the Burly Trooper between the eyes.

The second is just off, as Victor TWISTS. The blast catches Victor in the shoulder, sending him writhing to the floor.

Griffen turns his attention to Meric, who recoils in horror, letting his weapon clatter to the ground.

MERIC (cont'd)
I can explain. This isn't-

Griffen SEIZES Meric by his neck, and shoves his KEITAI, a device that looks like a super-charged iphone, into his face.

LIGHT BEAMS out, SCANNING Meric's eyes.

GRIFFEN
Identity confirmed, Meric, Tinjen.
I.D. # JX2-47. Per article seven of
the Charter, *any illicit profiting
from The Company's resources shall
be deemed a treasonable offense.*

Griffen returns the Keitai to his pocket and cocks his gun.

MERIC

Wait! I can give you others. Others
at the company. I'm nobody. This
goes all the way up.

Griffen hesitates. Meric's leveling a weighty charge.

RACHEL

Behind you!

Heavily-armed REINFORCEMENTS, flank Victor in the doorway.

Griffen SHOVES Meric towards them, and DIVES behind his desk.

THUNK, THUNK, THUNK! Bullets dig deep into the oak.

Griffen TOSSES a small CYLINDER towards the Troopers.

SMOKE BILLOWS out of the cylinder, CONDENSING to form a
GASEOUS WALL between Griffen, Ben, Rachel and Meric's men.

The Gaseous Wall starts to CREEP toward Meric and his men.

MERIC

Fall back. NOW!

Meric frantically herds his men out of the room.

Griffen springs to his feet and frees Ben and Rachel.

RACHEL

What the heck is that?

GRIFFEN

Directional gas. Hurry, we've got
to get out of here.

On cue, the Gaseous Wall reaches the door and REVERSES
DIRECTION, sweeping ominously back toward them.

Griffen grabs the corner of Meric's heavy oak desk.

GRIFFEN

Help me with this.

BEN

I'm not going anywhere until...

The Gaseous Wall drifts over the Burly Trooper's corpse. His
skin SIZZLES and DISSOLVES as if consumed by acid.

BEN

We've got to get out of here.

Motivated, Ben and Rachel join Griffen at the desk. With the Gaseous Wall closing, they SHOVE the desk THROUGH the window.

INT. GRAND CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

SHATTERED GLASS and the desk explode down on the CONGREGATION. Griffen, Ben, and Rachel follow, DROPPING to the stage.

Behind them, noxious gas BILLOWS out of the window. PANDEMONIUM ERUPTS. Congregation members scream and run about.

GRIFFEN

Use the crowd. When you get outside, keep moving.

RACHEL

Thank you.

Griffen nods, then heads for the PURIFICATION ALCOVES.

Rachel starts for the exit. Ben isn't following.

RACHEL

Come on.

Ben watches Griffen duck behind the Alcoves curtain.

BEN

I can't, Rachel. I've got to know.

She's seen that look on his face before.

RACHEL

Don't Ben. Don't do this. You're going to get yourself killed.

BEN

Go. Go now.

Ben turns and sprints after Griffen. Rachel shakes her head in disbelief, to her this is madness. Which is why she can't believe it when she finds herself...

RACHEL

Darn it. Lord, help me now.

...running after Ben.

AT THE GRAND CHAMBER'S EXIT

Meric scans the fleeing crowd until he finds Rachel.

MERIC

They're in the Purification Alcoves.

INT. PURIFICATION ALCOVE - DAY

Ben steps inside and nearly gets his head blown off.

GRIFFEN

I told you to go.

Griffen re-holsters his gun and turns his attention to a small table adorned with a PYRAMID of Clarity.

BEN

Not until I get the truth. Who are you? What's really going on?

GRIFFEN

Hold this.

He TOSSES Ben the pyramid. Then, pushes the table aside and begins searching the floor.

BLOOD DRIPS from Griffen's waist, red stains marking his progress, as he scours the tile until he finds a TINY HOLE.

BEN

You've been shot.

GRUNTING acknowledgment, Griffen takes the pyramid back and thrusts its POINT into the hole.

The Pyramid slides in, CLICKING into place. A faint GLOWING CIRCLE appears on the floor around the pyramid.

Rachel DARTS through the curtains.

RACHEL

I hope there's a way out of here.
Meric's right behind me.

GRIFFEN

There is.

Griffen TURNS the pyramid and PULLS. As it RISES, a section of the floor comes with it, forming a PEDESTAL.

Suddenly, his knees BUCKLE. Griffen clutches the pedestal.

GRIFFEN

I've lost too much blood. I'll need
your help to keep it steady,
otherwise we'll go off course.

Rachel hesitantly helps Griffen up.

BEN
Off course?

Griffen grabs Ben and JAMS his hand against the pyramid.

GRIFFEN
Don't let go.

The pyramid grows brighter, its light filling the room.

BA-DA-DA-DAH! BA-DA-DA-DAH! GUNFIRE from Meric's Men SHREDS the curtains.

EXT. PURIFICATION ALCOVE - CONTINUOUS

Meric THROWS the tattered curtains aside revealing --
--an empty alcove. Griffen, Ben and Rachel are gone.

Meric slumps against the wall. He knows the consequences of letting Griffen escape. As despair sets in, Meric finds himself staring at a possible salvation --

One of the black ENERGY DISCS, spattered with Griffen's blood, is lying on the floor.

INT. THE IN-BETWEEN - TIME HAS NO MEANING

A gray swirling VOID broken by SYNAPTIC FLASHES of light.

Three figures holding a pyramid, slowly MATERIALIZE. In response, a LIGHT FLASH accelerates toward the trio.

Rachel fights a growing hysteria as she processes what's happening. Her shouts DISTORT as they ECHO into the void

RACHEL
WWWWWHAAAAAAAAT'S HAAAAAAPPENING?

GRIFFEN
Stay clam. We're almost through.

Griffen's words fall on deaf ears. As the light envelops them, Rachel panics, and LETS GO of the pyramid.

Griffen frantically grabs for her, but it's too late.

INT. TRANSFER STATION - DAY

Ben and Griffen MATERIALIZE on a metallic PLATFORM. Ben's eyes dart rapidly as he tries to gain his bearings.

The platform they're kneeling on is one of a dozen, identical structures, that sit along the side of a GLOWING RAIL.

Above, a CLEAR DOME keeps a foreboding, inky sky at bay.

Ben is seemingly oblivious to the ALIEN ENVIRONMENT, as all that's of consequence, is that Rachel is nowhere to be seen.

BEN

Rachel! Where are you? RACHEL?

GRIFFEN

I'm sorry. She spun off as we came through. There's nothing I can do.

BEN

Nothing you can do? What does--

Griffen COLLAPSES into Ben's arms. He's a bloody mess.

In the distance, the edge of the dome SHIMMERS and a TRAIN-LIKE CONVEYANCE glides along the rail through the rift.

BEN

Griffen. Where's Rachel?

The transport pulls up and a circular door IRISES OPEN.

BEN

Where is she? Where is--

A panic grips Ben as he notes the UNIFORMED FIGURES exiting the vehicle. While seemingly human, the CRIMSON HUE of their SKIN and reptilian YELLOW tint of their EYES says otherwise.

Ben turns to Griffen for answers, only to find -- Griffen's SKIN and EYE COLOR, now matches that of his compatriots.

Ben numbly takes in his surroundings, finally realizing that wherever he is, it's not Earth.

It's just too overwhelming. The world swims and Ben gladly embraces the darkness that finds him.

EXT. TOXIC ZONE - DAY

The Conveyance shoots along a glowing rail, whooshing past the charred remnants of a civilization long forgotten.

The rail is suspended ten meters above the surface, out of the reach of what prowls the shadows below.

GLITTERING EYES and SALIVATING TEETH, pierce the darkness, and HOWL in displeasure, as "Dinner" passes overhead.

As the vehicle approaches another DOME, the edifice SHIMMERS, allowing the transport access to its protective membrane.

INT. TRAIN-LIKE CAR - DAY [TRAVELING]

Ben's eyes flutter open as consciousness returns. He tries to stand, but a wave of dizziness catches him short.

GRIFFEN

Easy now. It takes a while for the body to acclimate after crossing.

Ben gingerly turns to find Griffen lying across from him. His wounds have been packed but his breathing is still labored.

Ben gives Griffen's reddish skin a hard look. In answer to Ben's unasked question, Griffen slowly twists his RING.

Griffen's skin tone and eyes shift to HUMAN COLORS.

GRIFFEN

It adjusts the Melanin levels so we can pass.

BEN

It's effective.

(beat)

Are you an Alien?

GRIFFEN

To your world, yes, we are, alien.

BEN

And Rachel?

Griffen shakes his head solemnly. Ben takes in the news. He wants to scream, but he's just... numb.

BEN

So the crossing -- some sort of Einstein-Rosen Bridge? A wormhole across the galaxy? Universe?

GRIFFEN

We call it "The In-Between." A dimensional portal that connects alternative realities.

Ben looks out at the domed city through the transport's translucent walls. At first blush, the buildings could be plucked from any modern metropolis. Closer inspection reveals subtle differences, like the lack of windows or doors.

BEN

I thought I was dead... that we'd traversed purgatory and this might be the afterlife.

Ben gives a sad smile.

BEN (cont'd)
Rachel would have loved that. Being
right. I wish she was.

Ben glances back out the window. A BILLBOARD approaches.

BEN
Sadly, I don't believe in Heaven,
just Quantum Mechan--

Ben FREEZES as he makes eye contact with the billboard. It features a stunning RED-SKINNED BEAUTY holding a BOTTLE.

INT. CANDLE LIT ROOM - NIGHT

Ben reclines in a king-sized bed. Satin sheets. Champagne on the nightstand. This is luxury living at its best.

VESPA, a naked, red-skinned beauty, with the kind of body men go to war for, plants a silky soft kiss on Ben's lips.

Two other sets of HANDS reach across the covers, sensually exploring his body. The THREE WOMEN have long been experts in knowing just how to please Ben, and today is no exception.

Vespa nibbles Ben's ear, teasing him with a throaty whisper.

VESPA
You know why we love having sex
with you, Ben?

BEN
No... tell me. Please

VESPA
It's the Rush Cologne you wear.

Suddenly each woman is holding a BOTTLE of *Rush Cologne*.

DISEMBODIED VOICE
Rush Cologne. Pat it on and feel
the *Rush*.

Vespa borrows under the covers between Ben's legs. A euphoric smile spreads across his face.

INT. TRAIN-LIKE CAR - DAY [TRAVELING]

BEN
--ics.

Thoroughly flushed, Ben tries to orient himself.

BEN
W-what just happened?

GRIFFEN
Trigger Boards. Our world is linked
by a neural network -- a mental Wi-
Fi. The minute the network sensed
you engaging, a download was sent
directly into your brain.

Ben processes, impressed and a little embarrassed.

GRIFFEN
I'm sorry about your friend. She
let go just as we came through. If
it's any consolation, her death
would have been instantaneous.

BEN
Was there any chance she survived?

GRIFFEN
Infinitesimal.
(beat)
It's good she's the one who
believed in heaven.

EXT. IN THE CLOUDS - THE MOST BEAUTIFUL DAY EVER

White, billowy clouds. Rachel floats through their wispy
tendrils. Celestial peace.

Or maybe it just seems that way. Pulling back, we realize
she's falling, more so, PLUMMETING toward the ground.

DISEMBODIED VOICE
Thanks for "dropping in." The new
Glamson 1000 has been redesigned to
provide unparalleled durability.

A BLACK BRIEFCASE, identical to the one that contained
Meric's power cells, APPEARS in the air next to Rachel.

DISEMBODIED VOICE (cont'd)
Glamson's proprietary composition
disperses over ninety-nine percent...

EXT. EMPTY FIELD - DAY

Rachel now stands on the ground. Looking up, she watches as
the Glamson Briefcase hurtles toward the ground.

There's NO SOUND as the case hits the earth. It doesn't
bounce, stir up dust, or move in any perceptible manner.

DISEMBODIED VOICE
 ...of any kinetic energy, ensuring
 the safety of its contents.

Rachel opens the case. Inside is a CHAMPAGNE GLASS and a BOTTLE of Krug, 1928, both in pristine condition.

DISEMBODIED VOICE (cont'd)
 Glamson, we worry about the
 precious things in life so you
 don't have to.

Rachel pours herself a glass and takes a sip. It's the best thing she's ever tasted.

EXT. PERIPHERY SETTLEMENTS - DAY

Rachel averts her gaze from the light of the GLAMSON TRIGGERBOARD. She's alive. At least for the moment. A thick, opaque RAIN falls, obscuring her vision.

Shivering, she shields her eyes, scanning the shantytown-like dwellings for refuge. Amidst the, dark, dilapidated buildings, a brightly lit, Gothic STRUCTURE stands apart.

Fighting the welling panic, Rachel permits herself a moment of hope. If there's a church on this alien world, she's pretty sure she just found it.

INT. TRAIN-LIKE CAR - DAY [TRAVELING]

Griffen hands Ben a small black CLOTH.

GRIFFEN
 For your glasses. It will help
 block out the Trigger Boards.

At Griffen's urging, Ben WIPES his LENSES. As he does, the cloth DISSOLVES into the GLASS. Intrigued, Ben puts them on.

BEN
 What you said to Meric, illicit
 profiteering? He's one of you, right?

Griffen nods.

BEN
 So Rachel, Beth, Luray... this is
 because of Meric?

GRIFFEN
 And what he stole from The Company.

Griffen leans in and holds up a small Conditioner.

BEN
Of course. What's it worth?

GRIFFEN
Worth? Meric didn't steal a
Conditioner, he stole the harvest.

A cold chill slowly grips Ben.

BEN
The harvest?

GRIFFEN
The body's electromagnetic field is
in a constant state of flux. We've
found these levels peak under two
conditions: when the body is under
extreme duress; and during sessions
of intense--

BEN
Prayer.

GRIFFEN
The Conditioner harvests that extra
level of energy, equilibrating the
body to a normal output level.

BEN
So you're saying that all this...
(gestures out the window)
...is powered by the energy you've
sucked out of our world.

GRIFFEN
No. Your world only provides a
fraction of our energy needs. We
have stations on many, many others.

Ben takes that in, both appalled and impressed by the
magnitude of the implication.

INT. AGHAI'S - DAY

Rachel realizes instantly she was off in her assessment of the
building. Aghai's might be a sanctuary, but it's one of drink.

She's in a bar. And a seedy one at that. Forget Mos Eisley,
Aghai's is where the scum of the universe unwind after work.

And while truly terrified, the scientist in Rachel can't help
but be fascinated by the ALIEN CLIENTELE.

SCARRED EAR (O.C.)
Despite the sickly sheen of your
skin, your orifices smell appealing.

Rachel turns. A red-hued MAN, with a nasty SCAR in place of
an ear, stands a little too close, inhaling deeply.

She forces a smile, trying to keep her panic at bay.

RACHEL
T-thank you.

SCARRED EAR
I would like to probe them. Now.

Something long and large SHIFTS under his trench coat.

Rachel blanches, but before Scarred Ear can make his move, a
turquoise TAIL, wraps around his arm. The tail is attached
to a fierce beauty, with scale-like skin. This is XAELA.

XAELA
She's drinking with me.

Scarred Ear weighs his options, before smartly backing off.

SCARRED EAR
Of course, Xaela.

She releases him, allowing Scarred Ear to shuffle away.

Xaela turns to Rachel and drops her scowl in favor of a
welcoming grin.

XAELA
I just finished a shift on TauCEtí.
Talk about a bitch of a bio-morph.
(indicating her appearance)
But you just can't beat a tail for
fending off vermin.

She gestures to the bar. Two stools immediately clear out.
Rachel cautiously follows Xaela to a seat.

XAELA
You're coming From, Earth, right?

RACHEL
You know Earth?

XAELA
I was stationed there a couple cycles
back. Haaaaaated it. Except for the
Velveeta. Loved me some Velveeta.

A ROTUND BARTENDER pours onto the bar. Before the liquid hits, it SHAPES UP, as if filling two invisible glasses.

XAELA

Friendly FYI, when you come off shift, morph back. In here, ivory derma is honey to the flies.

RACHEL

Oh. Right. Morph my skin back. I think... I think it's stuck.

XAELA

Stuck? Come on, if you're into that kinda thing, own it, girl. My man likes to ride the intergalactic safari. That's why I'm keeping the scales and tail for a couple of days.

She UNDULATES her tail lasciviously. Rachel smiles politely, then trying to be as casual as her nerves will allow--

RACHEL

No. Really, I'm stuck. I think something went wrong when we crossed over. Happened to a friend of mine too. Ben? Have you seen him? Same sickly sheen, but his orifices probably don't smell as good.

Rachel gives a small laugh, and tries not to panic as Xaela gives her a long look. Finally, she slides Rachel a drink.

XAELA

Drink up. I'll take you to a Company Outpost, see if we can find your friend, get you sorted.

EXT. DOCKING STATION - DAY

An immense octagonal structure, the DOCKING STATION is the primary hub where the eight metropolitan lines converge.

Ben's conveyance pulls into a massive SECURITY CUE.

INT. TRAIN-LIKE CAR - DAY

Ben watches as the cars in front of them are boarded by uniformed IFA CORPORATE SECURITY, and scanned for contraband.

GRIFFEN

Industrial espionage has become a problem of late. That and the Rathals, an anti-secular extremist group.

BEN

Forgive me if I'm less than sympathetic to a corporation that profits from raping our minds.

GRIFFEN

Rape? Is that how you define a practically unlimited energy source harvested with negligible impact on a self-sustaining ecosystem?

BEN

Negligible impact? Is that how you define a thousand deaths in Luray?

GRIFFEN

On the contrary, Luray was quite impactful, that's why I was sent. When an incident occurs, my job is to assess the situation and rectify any contributing factors.

BEN

Such as?

Griffen leans in to Ben, out of earshot of his compatriots.

GRIFFEN

A postmortem on the Luray station showed a point, zero-seven-eight discrepancy between its acquisition and distribution levels.

BEN

Meaning?

GRIFFEN

Someone was stealing energy.

Griffen parts his jacket. Tucked inside are two BLACK DISCS.

BEN

The power cells.

GRIFFEN

When filled, one cell could power Chicago for a month. Meric was about to make a fortune when something went very wrong.

BEN

If you knew -- that bug on the briefcase, you used me as bait.

GRIFFEN

Indeed. You led me right to Meric.

Then it hits Ben.

BEN

Rachel's death. It's your fault.

As rage fills Ben, Griffen locks a hand on his shoulder, PINNING him to his seat.

GRIFFEN

Don't do anything you'd regret, Dr.
Bocher. If you attack me, they'll
kill you in seconds.

Ben follows Griffen's eyes to the front of the cabin. Despite Griffen's friendly facade, his countrymen are on alert.

GRIFFEN (cont'd)

Besides, I never asked either of
you to come. Rachel followed you.

He's right. Ben slumps back down. Rachel's death is on him.

GRIFFEN

I'm sorry, there's no time to
wallow, I need your help. My company
appears to be dirty and I don't know
whom I can trust on my world --
aside from you. Your glasses are
doing more than blocking out Trigger
Boards -- they cut you off the Grid,
ensuring no one can access your
thoughts.

BEN

Why would I ever help you?

GRIFFEN

Because The Company knows that long-
term, sustaining the ecosystem is
more profitable.

BEN

More profitable than what?

GRIFFEN

Strip mining. Imagine what happened
in Luray, but for your entire world.

Ben's head spins, horrified at the prognostication.

BEN
I... I can't. I don't know what you
think I could do-

Griffen COUGHS. More BLOOD comes up. He pulls Ben closer and
slips him the POWER CELLS.

GRIFFEN
Keep these safe, tell no one what
we discussed. And don't take off
your glasses. Things are about to
get much more dangerous for you.

The conveyance JOLTS as a wave of light *scans the car*. The
doors open and it is boarded by a CORPORATE SECURITY TEAM.

BEN
How is that even possible?

GRIFFEN
I'm about to pass out.

Good to his word, Griffen does, leaving Ben alone to face
the steely yellow eyes of his new captors.

INT. UNDERGROUND BUNKER - DAY

Water stains and crumbling walls, intermix with hi-tech
equipment on make-shift tables.

Meric fidgets as he thrusts the power cell onto an IFA
TECHIE. The Techie rights the disc and slides it in a READER.

MERIC
Well? What are my levels?

TECHIE
This reader's like a thousand years
old. It'll take a sec to juice up.

MERIC
A "sec?" If we don't get Klinge the
seven petajoules, he'll gut us. So
forgive me if I'm terse when I
ask -- *WHAT ARE MY FUCKING LEVELS?*

Rightfully terrified, the Techie redoubles his efforts.

TECHIE
Okay, okay, here they come.

As the disc spins, a HOLOGRAPHIC LEVEL METER flickers on
above it. The readings quickly shoot past all the markers.

SPARKS fly as the reader SHATTERS into pieces.

TECHIE

Holy crap, what did you give me?

MERIC

Is it full? How close are we?

TECHIE

Full? This reader was rated to ten petajoules and it blasted by that marker. What did you do, Meric?

For the first time in a while, Meric's Cheshire-grin returns.

EXT. DOCKING STATION - DAY

The Security Team DUMPS Ben onto the platform and moves to secure the area. Barking orders in a GUTTURAL TONGUE, they swiftly REROUTE a section of the MASSIVE CUE of PEDESTRIANS.

A MEDICAL TROOPER steps into the clearing, places a pair of HANDLES on the ground and PULLS. A SECTION of the ground RISES up with the handles, forming a GURNEY.

Troopers carefully lay Griffen on the makeshift stretcher.

A THICKSET TROOPER shouts at Ben. And while Ben doesn't understand the particulars of the alien language, the tone is clear, he shuffles into position behind Griffen.

The Thickset Trooper gives Ben a hard shove to help him along, momentarily DISLODGING Ben's GLASSES.

As the glasses come askew, Ben suddenly understands everything the Troopers are saying.

THICKSET TROOPER

...in line before I crack your
fucking skull open.

Ben adjusts his glasses on his face until he finds the position where they're on enough to cut him off the Grid.

He then OFFSETS them slightly so that he's still connected to The Grid, ensuring they'll CONTINUE to TRANSLATE the troopers.

THICKSET TROOPER (cont'd)

Double-time it. The Company will
eviscerate me if we let their
Adjustor bleed out on the slab.

Suddenly, Griffen starts CONVULSING, spitting BLOOD. The Medical Trooper slaps a SCANNER on his chest.

MEDICAL TROOPER
His hearts just gave out.

While Ben digests "hearts," the Medical Trooper springs into action. Powering up the scanner, he reaches through a shimmering window INTO Griffen's CHEST.

He pulls out a SMALL HEART and tosses it aside. A moment later, an ENORMOUS HEART follows it to the ground.

The Medical Trooper replaces the damaged organs with an OSCILLATING TUBE. Sweat beads as he waits to see the effect.

Finally, Griffen's seizures slow, then cease. The Medical Trooper lets out a breath he didn't realize he was holding--
--then notices a METER FLASHING pale yellow.

MEDICAL TROOPER (cont'd)
Shit! No one charged the field
unit. We've got about ten minutes
of juice before he crashes.

THICKSET TROOPER
You heard the man -- Go! Go! Go!

The Thickset Trooper leads the charge, VIOLENTLY CLEARING a path through the CROWD.

After several tumultuous moments, they break through the assemblage, reaching the narrow TUNNEL CHECKPOINT that serves as a bottleneck to slow access to the main concourse.

INT. TUNNEL - DAY

Sirens WAIL. People FLATTEN to the sides of the narrow enclosure to make way for the Troopers' cavalcade.

The Troopers are moving now and it's all Ben can do to keep up. But the tunnel's long and Griffen's time is running out.

EXT. PERIPHERY MARKETPLACE - DAY

The rain has passed allowing VENDORS to reopen their stalls and aggressively hawk their alien wares. Think a Moroccan bazaar designed by H.R. Gieger.

Xaela leads Rachel quickly through, brandishing her tail at anyone who gets too close.

XAELA
I hate unregulated commerce, it's
so unruly.

As if to prove her point, two MISCREANTS tip over a stall.
BUBBLING WAFERS fly everywhere.

As the ANGRY VENDOR frantically tries to gather his goods,
the Miscreants pull out CANS of what appears to be SPRAY
PAINT and spray SYMBOLS that solidify and HANG in the AIR.

XAELA

Faithers.

KLAXONS BLARE.

RACHEL

What's happening?

XAELA

Come on, let's get inside before
they lock down the sector.

Xaela hurriedly leads Rachel towards the COMPANY OUTPOST --
a compact, modern building, nestled amongst the tenements.

Lurking in the shadows behind them, Scarred Ear wets his
lips, as he watches them head inside.

EXT. MAIN CONCOURSE - DAY

BRIGHT FLOODLIGHTS meet Ben as he emerges from the tunnel. He
winces as his eyes adjust to the security-level illumination.

Across the concourse, the group's destination is clear -- a
GARGANTUAN PYRAMID that's basically an IFA Pyramid of Clarity
on steroids.

The concourse is deserted save for six ROBED-FIGURES.
The Thickset Trooper shifts uneasily.

THICKSET TROOPER

No one's manning the access
terminal. Where's the Portal Watch?

In response, the Robed-figures turn, revealing wicked-
looking SCIMITARS... and the DECAPITATED HEADS of FOUR
TROOPERS, presumably the aforementioned "Portal Watch."

THICKSET TROOPER

Rathals.

The very name elicits a nervous MURMUR from his men.

Suddenly, an EAGER TROOPER draws his BLASTER and opens fire.

THICKSET TROOPER

NO!

Too late. The ENERGY BLAST from the weapon STOPS as it exits the muzzle -- it then REVERSES TRAJECTORY and returns to its source, INCINERATING the weapon and the Eager Trooper.

The Thickset Trooper indicates several FLASHING LIGHTS.

THICKSET TROOPER

The Damper's been activated. Hand
to hand protocol. Stay tight.

The Troopers draw their BLUDGEONERS and engage the hostiles.

Blades WHISPER through the air. SEVERED LIMBS drop to the ground... followed by the bodies of two dead Troopers.

The remaining Troopers regroup into a BUNCH FORMATION, standing back to back to ward off the blows.

As the Rathals circle the Troopers, scimitars probing to find an opening, a STEALTHY Anti-secular disengages...

...and turns his attention to Griffen on the stretcher.

The Medical Trooper passes Griffen's gurney to Ben and gamely draws his Bludgeoner.

MEDICAL TROOPER

Get the Adjustor inside. Don't look
back. Just Go!

And then the Stealthy Anti-secular is on them. In a vicious arc he CUTS OFF the Medical Troopers HANDS... and his head.

Ben, stares, mesmerized, watching the BLOOD SPURT. Then self-preservation kicks in.

Ben WHIPS the stretcher around and SLAMS it into the Stealthy Anti-secular, knocking him to the ground.

Ben sprints off, PUSHING Griffen toward the entrance. The Stealthy Anti-secular jumps to his feet and races after Ben.

Behind them, another Trooper goes down. The Troopers battle valiantly, but it's clear it's only a matter of time.

Desperate, the Thickset Trooper taps the side of his head.

THICKSET TROOPER

Coxsin, I.D. # VS8-65. We've engaged
hostiles and need lock-down at-

The rest of the sentence is lost on Ben as the Stealthy Anti-secular SLIDES, knocking Ben's legs out from under him.

The Stealthy Anti-secular rolls on top of Ben and raises his scimitar for a killing blow.

There's a FLASH as the quadrant is lit up with a GREEN LIGHT, IMMOBILIZING everyone in the zone like a statue...

...except for Ben, who cautiously climbs out from under the frozen blade in his would-be assassin's hands.

Ben can only surmise that his glasses, knocked back into position during the struggle, have kept him immune.

A theory that will remain untested as he notices the meter bar on Griffen's chest scanner is now FLASHING a pale red.

BEN

Shit.

Griffen starts SEIZING AGAIN. Ben grabs Griffen's gurney and renews his race to the presumed sanctuary of the pyramid.

With each step, Griffen's CONVULSIONS grow more intense. Chest heaving, Ben pushes himself faster toward the entrance.

As he closes the last few yards, Ben can make out the shimmering glow of an ENERGY BARRIER blocking his way.

He pulls up, unsure of what to do.

Griffen makes Ben's mind up for him. With an intense SHUDDER, Griffen's body goes limp as he FLAT-LINES.

Ben swallows hard and charges toward the barrier.

BEN (cont'd)

I have the Adjustor! Let me in!

Just as he is about to hit the Energy Barrier, it dissipates granting him access...

INT. IFA HOME BASE/SECURITY BAY - CONTINUOUS

...to a chamber rapidly filling with TROOPERS, weapons drawn.

Ben freezes. Then, following the GUTTURAL COMMANDS of the Troopers, slowly backs away from Griffen.

As soon as he's clear from Griffen, the Troopers mob Ben.

As the bodies pile on top of him, the last thing Ben sees is a team of MEDICAL PERSONNEL swarming Griffen.

INT. COMPANY OUTPOST - DAY

Inspirational MUSIC plays as Rachel and Xaela enter the outpost and find themselves on an exotic BEACH, populated by the REDARI, a svelte, feline-like race.

Despite whiskers and claws, the Redari are smoking hot.

PEPPY VOICE
Have you dreamed of seeing the seventy
permutations of the multi-verse?

The landscape SHIFTS, beaches giving way to a rustic MOUNTAINSIDE, painted by the light of THREE SETTING SUNS.

Hunky FUNGI-MEN offer warm moss BLANKETS to Rachel and Xaela.

PEPPY VOICE (cont'd)
Yearned to learn the vocation of
the next generation...

The mountainside MORPHS into a classroom of attentive STUDENTS being taught how to build Conditioners.

PEPPY VOICE (cont'd)
...while making relationships that
last a lifetime?

Rachel and Xaela, now in an IFA Temple, are warmly embraced by their coworkers -- laughing, good-looking IFA Clerics.

PEPPY VOICE (cont'd)
Then join The Company and start
being a part of history today.

The doors to the IFA temple open and a slew of eager HUMAN PARISHIONERS rush in for services.

Rachel's stunned to see other humans. Before she can react, the music swells as the room SHIFTS again.

A dazzling light takes over, its rays focusing on the source of the Peppy Voice -- a TV-anchor-handsome, RECRUITER.

RECRUITER
Welcome to the first day of the
rest of your lives. I'm here to-

The Recruiter's face drops as he takes in Xaela and Rachel's appearance.

He gestures angrily. The lights and music DISAPPEAR returning the room to a dingy office. Desk, chairs, etc.

RECRUITER
 How many times do I have to tell
 you people, if you work for the
 company, you use the "employee"
 entrance. Do you know how much it
 costs to run those holos?

Xaela SLAPS him.

XAELA
 Shut it. I'm from Inquiries.

The Recruiter is shaken. Shaken hard enough for Rachel to wonder who her companion really is, and what she wants.

RECRUITER
 The lawyers are lying, everyone
 crossing was fully informed that
 Ultherian genitalia are lined with
 teeth.

XAELA
 I don't give two Drekan shits about
 how shoddily you're running your
 station, I need a bio-scanner. Now.
 We have an illegal cross. Maybe two.

Xaela coldly turns to Rachel.

RACHEL
 Xaela? I don't understand.

XAELA
 If you and your friend are humans,
 whoever brought you over is mine.

Rachel turns to run. But Xaela's too quick. Her tail catches Rachel's foot and YANKS her down, pinning her to the floor.

XAELA
 Where's that scanner?

As the Recruiter fumbles in his files, Rachel closes her eyes and begins to PRAY.

RACHEL
 Listen to me, Lord, and answer me-

WHOMP. Time stops for a beat as an ENERGY WAVE bursts out from Rachel and RIPPLES into the ether.

TIME RESUMES as Xaela SLAMS Rachel against the ground.

All Hell breaks loose. KLAXONS BLARE. LIGHTS FLASH.

XAELA

You fool, you'll kill us all.

Rachel struggles, but Xaela's too strong.

SCARRED EAR

Let her go.

Scarred Ear bursts into the room. He parts his coat, revealing a SCIMITAR identical to that of the Rathals.

Xaela climbs off of Rachel and shifts into combat position.

XAELA

You're out of your depth, Rathal.
I know a hundred ways to disembowel
you with your own blade.

SCARRED EAR

Good to know. I won't use it, then.

Scarred Ear flips open the hilt of the scimitar and pours three small WHITE PEBBLES into his hand.

RECRUITER

Wait! I don't know these people.

Scarred Ear tosses the pebbles. They ENLARGE rapidly, ENVELOPING the Recruiter, Xaela and Rachel in opaque SACKS.

Trapped, Xaela glowers as Scarred Ear stands over her and INHALES deeply.

SCARRED EAR

Delicious.

Then, as the Klaxons continue to blare, Scarred Ear grabs Rachel's oval bag, and drags her off with a cheery whistle.

INT. IFA HOME BASE/HORIZONTALATOR CORRIDOR - DAY

An absurdly long alabaster passage. In the distance a tiny SPEC appears. The spec grows as it rapidly approaches, until we can discern it's a GROUP of crimson-skinned men, lead by--

--HARDIN, 60's, wispy Goatee, a head taller than the rest. He strides with purpose as the GROUND FLOWS beneath him augmenting his steps, like the moving walkways in airports.

He's flanked by squad of ELITE TROOPERS. From the attention they're paying to his safety, it's clear, Hardin's the boss.

A WIZENED CUSTODIAN navigates his SANITATION SCOOTER against the wall, giving the procession a wide birth.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

A serene oasis. From the lighting to the soothing, MUSIC-LIKE TONES, all is focused on physical and spiritual rejuvenation.

Griffen HOVERS in the center of the room, buoyed by the light of a NUTRIENT SUSPENSION that BEAMS up from the floor.

The mood is shattered as several of Hardin's Elite Troopers charge into the room, scanning it for potential threats.

VIGILANT ELITE TROOPER
We're clear. Bring him in.

Hardin ducks his head as he enters.

Griffen gestures at a WALL SENSOR, ending the treatment. He centers himself as the LIGHT FADES and LOWERS him to the ground.

Hardin cracks a broad grin as he takes in Griffen's white skin.

HARDIN
Whoeeee, boys, best avert your eyes, unless you want to be blinded by sheer whiteness. Perhaps you need to get back in that oven and cook a little longer Griff.

The Elite Troopers have to work to stifle their smiles. There's a hominess to Hardin's cadence that's infectious.

GRIFFEN
An unfortunate side-effect of the blood loss, Hardin. It'll be a day before it'll be safe to readjust my melatonin. But surely The Company has more pressing needs than my skin-tone.

HARDIN
Other business can wait, Griff. 'Sides, if I don't show you the T.L.C. there's a long list of C.E.O.'s that will. Speaking of--

He tosses Griffen a small, hermetically sealed, CASE.

HARDIN (cont'd)
Here's your spare ticker. The doctors tried to put it back in, but none of them had seen a heart augmentation like yours before.

This is a subject, Griffen would rather avoid.

GRIFFEN
Is Dr. Bocher, okay?

 HARDIN
The human? Phew, that boy's got the balls of a R'ken Millpaw. He took on a Blademan unarmed and is still standing. Without Bocher, I'd be looking for a new Adjustor.

 GRIFFEN
I should check on him.

 HARDIN
Sure, sure. But first, let's talk about Station One-Six-Nine. Dr. Bocher's earned a bit of quiet.

INT. THE WHITE ROOM - DAY

A room that's anything but quiet. A HULKING THUG, rages at Ben STRAPPED to a INTERROGATION CHAIR, berating him with incomprehensible GUTTURAL TONES.

Ben tries to focus on something other than his captor.

He takes in the room. With no doors, windows or lights, the illumination seems to emanate from the bright white walls.

Abruptly, one of those walls WARPS, allowing a willowy man, to glide through their ivory membrane. This is KLINGE.

Klinge curtly dismisses the Thug. Once the Thug departs, he address Ben in perfect MANDARIN CHINESE.

When this doesn't have the desired effect, he switches to...

 KLINGE
Hablas español?

Ben is suddenly uneasy as to where this is leading.

 KLINGE (cont'd)
Français... English?

A thin smile parts Klinge's lips.

 KLINGE
Your eyes betray you, human. When we cross the In-Between, The Grid's ability to translate is lost.

He straightens Ben's shirt, then traces the contour of the sleeve down to the cuff, where he takes Ben's hand...

KLINGE (cont'd)
 ...which is why those of us who
 need to pass, study everything
 about the worlds we inhabit, from
 the languages... to the anatomy.

...and coldly pulls back Ben's PINKY, SNAPPING the BONE.

Ben SCREAMS in anguish.

KLINGE
 Now that you know a bit about me,
 perhaps you'd be so kind as to tell
 me how you're keeping off The Grid.

Ben tries to block out the pain and compose himself.

BEN
 W-what grid? Why are you doing
 this? I saved Griffen.

KLINGE
 Please, take your time. Get out
 your lies. I'm in no rush.

SNAP! He BREAKS Ben's RING FINGER. Ben screams again.

KLINGE (cont'd)
 I have eight more to go.

INT. THE RUINS - DAY

The Sack sits alone on a DAIS encircled by ancient STONE
 PILLARS. Suddenly, it LIQUIFIES, disgorging Rachel.

She scrambles to her feet and takes in her surroundings.
 TORCHES illuminate the platform and just enough of what's
 beyond for her to make out she's in a SUBTERRANEAN CAVERN.

A faint CHANTING leads her to peer cautiously around a
 pillar. Below, on a larger dais. A CEREMONY is in progress.
 FIGURES in purple robes stand around Scarred Ear.

The chanting CRESCENDOS and then ceases. A robed GIANT steps
 forward and pulls out a DAGGER.

Terrified, Rachel scrambles back around the pillar.

RACHEL
 Crap-oh-crud-oh-God... oh God.

FEMALE VOICE
 It is a great honor, what you
 witness.

Rachel grabs a TORCH and BRANDISHES it toward the shadows.

RACHEL

Stay back. I don't know what you things are, but I know you bleed.

FEMALE VOICE (O.C.)

I have bled many times over. The ichor poured from my eyes, each drop a crimson tear howling for the heads of those who steal what no man has claim to.

A red-skinned woman, mid-fifties, steps from the shadows. She carries herself with a grace that belies her SCARRED APPEARANCE. Missing both EYES and EARS, this is THE DAME.

She's guided by a COMPANION who FINGER SIGNS into her hand, interpreting the world for The Dame through touch.

THE DAME

Welcome to the Ruins, birthplace of the Huegari. I am known as The Dame.

Horrified by the disfigured visage, Rachel lowers her torch.

RACHEL

What -- what did they do to you?

THE DAME

They? No child, it was by my own hand that I was freed from the blasphemy. Just as those below earn the right to be liberated.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

HARDIN

So one-six-nine's overseer caused its meltdown?

(sighs)

I hate it when the rot comes from inside the tree. At least you caught it before it could spread.

GRIFFEN

There's more.

Hardin's jovial air evaporates. He barks at his troopers.

HARDIN

Give us the room.

INT. WHITE ROOM - DAY

Ben SCREAMS again, as the last of the fingers on his left hand is shattered, leaving it a mangled mass of flesh.

KLINGE

Come, come, we're just getting started. Show a bit more fortitude.

He delicately unfolds a HANDKERCHIEF and uses it to DAB the SWEAT BEADING on Ben's forehead.

BEN

I... I told you. I don't-

KLINGE

Yes, yes. I'm bored. It seems your hands means nothing to you.

Panic washes over Ben as Klinge produces a long, thin, KNIFE.

KLINGE

Let try the eyes.

He rips off Ben's GLASSES and prepares to dig out his eyeball. SUDDENLY the walls flicker with IMAGES OF BEN'S LIFE.

KLINGE

Someone's online. Now how did that--

Klinge connects the dots to the glasses.

KLINGE

Interesting.

He puts the glasses back on Ben. Instantly, the walls revert to their inert, white state.

KLINGE

Now where did you get these?

Ben is truly terrified now.

BEN

F-from one of the Rathals.

The thin smile returns to Klinge's lips.

KLINGE

Tut. Tut. No need to lie, human. No need to say anything at all.

He gently removes Ben's glasses. The IMAGES of BEN'S LIFE flutter back onto the walls.

INT. THE RUINS - DAY

RACHEL

What do you want with me?

The Dame eyes her with vacant sockets.

THE DAME

It's a miracle you survived the outpost. To pray, in there? You must truly be a believer.

Rachel guardedly fingers the CROSS around her neck.

RACHEL

I don't understand. What happened?

SCARRED EAR

Feedback.

Rachel turns. Scarred Ear, now missing an eye, joins them on the dais. He presses a cloth to staunch the bleeding.

SCARRED EAR

The Company Outposts ship our people out, but are also where the harvests are stored until they can be processed.

THE DAME

You were a spark to the tinder.
Come, I will explain all.

INT. WHITE ROOM - DAY

Klinge CIRCLES Ben while IMAGES and SOUNDS from Ben's life GHOST in and out, taking over the room.

KLINGE

The Grid touches wherever your soul has gone.

A GHOST IMAGE takes center-stage -- of BEN at 28, *receiving terrible news from the POLICE. Beth collapses into his arms.*

POLICE OFFICER

...regret to inform you...

IMAGES BLUR, swirling around the room. Klinge SITS astride Ben, CARESSING his face.

KLINGE

You can only dance on the fringes for so long.

A GHOST IMAGE takes center-stage -- of BEN at 29, in a lab. He stares angrily at a **FORMULA** on a chalkboard. His frustration mounts until -- Ben **PUSHES** the board over.

The chalkboard knocks a shelf over, **EXPOSING** a **BOX** of **PAPERS**.

As Ben picks the box up, his eyes light up as he ascertains the contents-- **BETH'S RESEARCH**. Making sure no one is around, Ben surreptitiously tucks the papers into his pocket.

The **IMAGES BLUR** again.

KLINGE

Each thought is linked to a
thousand others. Ultimately, the
web spirals back. And when it does,
I'll be there.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

Hardin kicks at the ground.

HARDIN

Blast it! If this is true...

GRIFFEN

Merik was desperate, but he was
ready to name names.

INT. WHITE ROOM - DAY

IMAGES swirl faster giving only glimpses into Ben's life. Klinge whispers, his lips brushing against Ben's earlobes.

KLINGE

Show me what I want to know...

A GHOST IMAGE -- of Rachel yelling at Ben flits across the room. They stand outside. The **LAB** is **ON FIRE**. **FIREMEN** battle the blaze while a **BURN VICTIM** is loaded into an ambulance.

RACHEL

Beth knew this was too dangerous.
Why the hell did you think you
could make it work? There are lines
Ben, lines we don't cross.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

HARDIN

The timing on this is bad, Griff.
The Board is about to meet.

Hardin crosses to Griffen... perhaps a bit too close.

HARDIN
We've got to keep this locked down.
Who else knows about Meric?

There's something about the way Hardin's asking the question that makes Griffen uneasy.

INT. WHITE ROOM - DAY

The IMAGE SWIRL at a dizzying speed.

A GHOST IMAGE -- *of Ben 23 about to kiss Rachel.*

KLINGE
Show me...

GHOST IMAGE -- *of Ben pulling back the sheet from Beth's body.*

KLINGE (cont'd)
...now.

A GHOST IMAGE -- *Ben on the Conveyance taking the CLOTH from Griffen. He dissolves the cloth into his glasses.*

Klinge FREEZES the memories on the image of Griffen.

KLINGE
My, my, The Company's Adjustor. To
quote one of my favorite
expressions from your world --
Human, you just wandered into a
gale force shit storm.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

GRIFFEN
Logically, there's only-
Hardin, holds up his hand.

HARDIN
Sorry, I have to take this.

Griffen looks on as Hardin takes a call over a MIND-LINK.

KLINGE (VIA MIND-LINK)
Your Adjustor's been naughty.

HARDIN (VIA MIND-LINK)
That's unfortunate. Don't kill Bocher
yet, I want to read him myself.

As Hardin locks eyes with Griffen he realizes that somehow Griffen is hearing every word of his mental conversation.

KLINGE (VIA MIND-LINK)
Of course. That doesn't mean I--

Hardin SEVERES the connection and advances on Griffen.

HARDIN
You were listening to my mind-link.
How is that possible?

Griffen backs away, looking for any way out of the room.

GRIFFEN
Does it matter? It is obvious that
Meric was speaking about you.
Protecting that means there's no
chance I'm leaving this room alive--

Hardin's arm blurs, and his hand is around Griffen's throat.

Griffen gasps, both for air, and at the velocity at which
Hardin moved -- he's even faster than Griffen.

HARDIN
You think you're the only one who
has access to augmentation?

He lifts Griffen from the floor as if he were a doll.

HARDIN
Torture may not frighten you...

Hardin squeezes, CRUSHING Griffen's WINDPIPE.

HARDIN
... but can you say the same for
your Doctor Bocher? He's in
Klinge's hands now.

Griffen knows exactly the horror that implies. Eyes bulging,
Griffen, struggles. Then, as the room grows dark --

Griffen spies the WALL SENSOR. Frantically he waves at it...
until... it... finally... ACTIVATES.

The nutrient suspension BEAMS up, LIFTING Hardin.

Startled, Hardin loosens his grip. Griffen wriggles free.

Griffen bounces off the ground and uncorks a SPINNING KICK
that SNAPS Hardin's HEAD back, knocking him unconscious.

Griffen gathers himself, and slips outside, leaving Hardin
floating limply in the nutrient suspension behind him.

INT. THE RUINS - DAY

The Dame and Scarred Ear, lead Rachel down a once-majestic stairway, that leads deep into the bowels of the planet. ACOLYTES from the ceremony, follow at a respectful distance.

THE DAME

Everything that lives is connected. Points on a celestial grid, our energies interweave in glorious chorus to the Maker. Your people knew this once, which is why your cathedrals, temples and pyramids were constructed for one purpose.

She points upwards.

THE DAME

Antennas to focus your Pneuma and ensure when you pass, you reconnect with the Source.

RACHEL

And cutting out your eyes?

THE DAME

My people have blasphemed the holy link using the sacred life-web to push vile product and propaganda. Eyes and ears were small sacrifice to sever the tainted connection.

The Dame spits disdainfully on the ground.

THE DAME (cont'd)

But were that my people's greatest transgression. Mapping the Grid led them to the In-Between and the worlds beyond... like yours.

INT. WHITE ROOM - DAY

Ben watches as Klinge flicks through his memories, like a teenager with a TV remote.

KLINGE

What a miserably mundane existence you've had. If Hardin doesn't hurry, I may kill you out of sheer boredom.

Summoning what strength he has left, Ben snarls at Klinge.

BEN

Easy, when I'm strapped to a chair.

KLINGE
 Yes, it is. That's the point. This--
 (indicates the chair)
 --is designed to make it easy to do
 things like this.

He grabs the arm-rest that Ben's mangled hand strapped to.
 The support HINGES the opposite way of BEN'S ELBOW. Which
 means Klinge needs minimal force to--

--SNAP Ben's ELBOW like a DRY CRACKER. A JAGGED piece of
 BONE pokes through the skin of what used to be Ben's arm.

KLINGE (cont'd)
 But if you think the game would be
 different without the chair...

Klinge TURNS a HANDLE on the back of the chair, (akin to the
 one on Griffen's gurney), prompting the chair to DESTABILIZE
 and PUDDLE back into the floor from which it was pulled.

Ben lands HARD on his arm and writhes MOANING on the floor.

Klinge flicks his wrist and the long, thin, BLADE reappears.

KLINGE (cont'd)
 ...I'm always up for a dance.

INT. GRAND COURTYARD - DAY

Griffen creeps to the end of the horizontalator. Below, a
 PROMENADE rings a sparkling azure LAKE.

Robotic DRONES HOVER over the water taking READINGS while
 massive SERPENTINE TUBES slither from the walls of the
 Pyramid to plumb the lake's depths.

An ALARM BLARES. TROOPERS ready their weapons.

Griffen looks toward the top of the Pyramid where a series
 of room-sized WHITE CUBES are stationed. It's going to be
 next to impossible to make it up there undetected, unless...

His eyes travel up the NETWORK OF TUBES lining the walls.

INT. LAKE - DAY

Griffen plunges deep into the depths, bee-lining towards the
 gargantuan PUMP STATION thundering on the lake bed.

Lungs burning, Griffen struggles with an ACCESS HATCH.

Finally it comes free, and Griffen swims inside, pulling the
 hatch shut behind him.

INT. PUMP STATION - DAY

Water drips from Griffen as he runs down the steel-grated planks of the automated station.

The metallic ramp ends at the base of one of the GIANT TUBES. Griffen claws at a series of BOLTS, removing a PANEL.

Inside the tube, water SURGES, pumped up with sickening force.

Griffen takes a deep breath and then CLIMBS into the STREAM. Releasing, he SHOOTS up the tube, swallowed by darkness.

INT. WHITE ROOM - DAY

Ben jerks back as Klinge NICKS a small CUT into his FACE. Ben wipes away the blood as Klinge dances out of range.

BEN
Y-you call this a fair fight?

KLINGE
Who said anything about fair?

Klinge grins and KNIFES a shallow GASH across Ben's stomach.

INT. AQUA-TUBE - DAY

Griffen shoots up the flume, BANGING and BASHING as he contorts his body to navigate the various channels.

Glowing MAINTENANCE MARKERS line the inside of the tube, providing enough illumination for Griffen to pilot his way.

Suddenly, the duct takes a SHARP RIGHT. Griffen is SLAMMED against the tube, and PINNED to the wall.

Precious seconds pass. Finally, his fingers GRASP the corner. With a superhuman LURCH, he thrusts himself into the current.

INT. WHITE ROOM - DAY

Eye closed and bleeding from a dozen cuts, Ben's face is a mess. Klinge gestures to the blood cascading down his chin.

KLINGE
An improvement, Human. Your race
has such a pasty, unpleasant, skin-
tone. You should thank me.

Klinge nicks Ben's good arm inducing a trickle of blood.

KLINGE
I said, THANK ME.

Klinge flicks his blade again. But this time Ben is ready.

Ben GRABS the BLADE with his good hand, letting it BITE deep into his flesh, and YANKS Klinge toward him.

Klinge stumbles, falling on Ben. Before he can recover, Ben JAMS the splintered BONE of his ARM deep into Klinge's NECK.

Klinge's eyes shiver, as the life slips from them.

BEN

Thank you.

Ben pushes Klinge's body off of him and struggles to his feet. The room SPINS. Blood loss is making Ben WOOZY.

The wall in front of him WARPS. Ben picks up Klinge's blade, ready for one last stand. Thankfully the WATERLOGGED figure entering the room is...

GRIFFEN

Dr. Bocher.

BEN

Oh. Hi.

And then Ben COLLAPSES.

Griffen rushes over to him. After confirming Ben still has the CELLS, Griffen, SCOOPS him up and carries him outside.

INT. HORIZONTALATOR CORRIDORE - DAY

As Ben drifts in and out of consciousness, he's vaguely aware of Griffen:

- 1) Racing down the hall with Ben in his arms.
- 2) The situation getting dire as a CADRE of Troopers show up.
- 3) A Sanitation sweeper RAMMING a Trooper just as he's about to shoot Griffen.
- 4) Griffen and the Wizened Custodian helping him into a hidden compartment in the undercarriage of the SWEEPER.

INT. HIDDEN COMPARTMENT - DAY

Griffen joins Ben inside and closes the hatch behind him.

GRIFFEN

Just hold on.

Ben tries, but sweet oblivion beckons. He closes his eyes.

INT. THE RUINS - DAY

The procession approaches a dilapidated, stone archway.

DAME

When the mining began, our priests,
railed against the process.

The Dame gestures to Rachel's torch. IMAGES flicker in the flames ILLUSTRATING the story of her peoples past.

DAME

A battle ensued between people of
faith and the men of commerce. And
commerce won. For over a thousand
cycles, Religion has been outlawed on
our world. Those who believe do so in
secret or pay a terrible price.

The flames flicker, shifting to modern times. We see:
TEMPLES RAIDED. ALTERS BURNED. TROOPERS bursting in on a
PRAYING COUPLE and DRAGGING them away.

Rachel's eyes water with tears... and anger.

RACHEL

How dare they?

Reaching the archway, The Dame PULLS at a stone outcropping.
GEARS TURN as the Archway begins to ROTATE.

THE DAME

Fear not child, down here, there is
hope for both our people.

Rachel finds that rather than looking back on the way she'd
come, the VIEW through the arch is of a SET OF SLABS
descending into the depths.

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

Ben's eyes flutter open. The first thing he notices is that
he's free of pain; second, there's something dark PLASTERED
to his FACE; thirdly, as he tries to ascertain what, that
HE'S IMMOBILIZED, strapped to an UPRIGHT GURNEY.

Looking around, he finds himself in a darkly-lit lab, crammed
with ALIEN DEVICES of indeterminate hi-tech function.

Hearing approaching VOICES, Ben feigns sleep.

The Custodian, A.K.A., TOLBROOK, storms in. Tolbrook's
beyond ancient. Even his wrinkles have wrinkles.

Griffen, the object of his ire, trails sheepishly behind.

TOLBROOK

You let them take it out? *This* is
how you treat my gifts?!?

He angrily waves the SEALED CASE containing Griffen's heart.

GRIFFEN

Tolbrook... I-I was unconscious-

TOLBROOK

Bah. *Un*-grateful is more like it.
(disgusted sigh)
Well, come on.

Tolbrook leads Griffen to a small PEDESTAL, then grabs a pair of BRACELETS and a NECK-CUFF from one of his tables. He blows off a CLOUD OF DUST, and snaps them on Griffen.

Tolbrook yanks a LEVER sending a surge of POWER up from the platform, rendering Griffen's body NEAR-TRANSLUCENT.

Tolbrook cracks the case containing Griffen's heart. Using an ENERGY BLADE, he makes several adjustments to the organ.

Satisfied, he PUSHES the heart THROUGH Griffen's chest cavity and jostles it into place.

TOLBROOK

Try not to screw this one up.

Griffen grimaces as Tolbrook roughly withdraws his arm.

Tolbrook then turns to Ben and POKES his forehead.

TOLBROOK

Open your eyes. Your neural
monitors have been spiking for
several minutes.

Tolbrook jerks the DARK OBJECT off Ben's face. It SQUIRMS in his hands. All EYES and TENTACLES, the object is alive.

Ben's stomach churns as Tolbrook drops it into a bucket.

TOLBROOK

Don't mind the stench, Oegopsida
excretions have remarkable healing
properties.

He's right, Ben's face looks like it was never cut.

TOLBROOK
Griffy brings me the best tidbits.

He gestures to an eccentric assortment of alien curios strewn along the table... including a HUMAN ARM.

BEN
And the arm?

TOLBROOK
Don't worry, I'll put it back.

Back? Ben steels himself, and takes a quick look down --
Empty shirt sleeve. ALIEN TECH holding his shoulder in STASIS. Yep, that's his arm on the table.

BEN
P-please do.

EXT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - ODESSA, FL - DAY

A small building, similar in scope to the temple in Luray. Two VANS roll up. Doors open, deploying teams of TROOPERS.

Meric and Victor lead one team inside, while the remaining Troopers use CHAINS to SECURE the doors to the temple.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - GRAND CHAMBER - DAY

Thirty or so PARISHIONERS are assembled. Suddenly --
The chamber doors BURST open. Meric and his men surge inside.

MERIC
Everyone stay calm. Today is a day
for rejoicing -- for today, you
shall be reunited with the source.

Neither Meric's tone, or the armed men inspire much tranquility. One CONGREGANT makes a break for the door.

Meric nods and a Trooper GUNS HIM DOWN.

MERIC (cont'd)
Some of you quicker than others.
Now SIT DOWN.

Terrified, they all do.

MERIC (cont'd)
Good. Now the rejoicing may begin.

Meric opens a SATCHEL. It's full of POWER CELLS.

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

Ben looks around nervously as Tolbrook reattaches his arm.

TOLBROOK
Keep twitching or the nerves'll die
before I can get the blood flowing.

Ben does his best to stabilize his shoulder.

TOLBROOK
You're safe here. I've annexed a
piece of The In-Between creating
what you'd call a pocket universe.
(finishes)
There, how's that?

Ben FLEXES his arm and wiggles his fingers.

BEN
That's... amazing.

TOLBROOK
I made a few adjustments.

Before Tolbrook can elaborate, Griffen comes back into the room carrying a POWER CELL READER.

GRIFFEN
Thirty-one Petajoules on the two
cells. Is that possible?

TOLBROOK
Hypothetically one could super-
saturate the absorption matrix, but
the amount of energy needed to-

GRIFFEN
Station one-six-nine.

Griffen sets his KEITAI (the super-charged iphone) on the ground. A HOLOGRAPHIC OVERLAY beams out, transforming the room so that it appears they're standing on Main Street in Luray.

Griffen FLICKS IT aside, bringing up OTHER IMAGES from Luray, showing Tolbrook the full extent of the devastation.

TOLBROOK
My, my, a Faradaiun Event. Your
world was very lucky.

BEN
Lucky? Over a thousand people died.

TOLBROOK
 A thousand? You saw the wasteland
 outside the dome on your way in?
 (Ben did)
 Millions lived there. And here...

Tolbrook gestures. The Luray holographic overlay disappears
 and is replaced with overlays of several, drained, WORLDS.

TOLBROOK (cont'd)
 Eridani, Gliese, Arae C -- tens of
 billions dead.

They grimly process the images of planetary genocide.

TOLBROOK
 It took a lot of trial and error
 before we stabilized the process.
 Even now, if the frequencies aren't
 aligned precisely --

GRIFFEN
 C.P.D. Comprehensive Planetary
Depreciation.

TOLBROOK
 So yes, I think you were lucky it
 wasn't worse. Much, much worse.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - GRAND CHAMBER

A PILE of Power Cells sits in the middle of the Parishioners.
 Troopers holding SMALL CHESTS, ring the congregation.

Meric strolls through the terrified collective, lending
 false comfort: caressing a cheek, patting a head, etc.

MERIC
*Fear not, though I walk through the
 valley of the shadow of death...*

Meric signals. The troopers flip open their chests. Each
 contains a GLOWING CONDITIONER.

MERIC (cont'd)
...I will fear no evil...

One by one, the conditioners hop from the chests and roll
 across the room -- forming a glowing, pulsing, humming MASS.

MERIC (cont'd)
...for thou art with me.

From the number of Conditioners, this appears to have the potential to be a disaster even larger than Luray. A fact that seems to bring Meric great pleasure.

MERIC (cont'd)
Thy rod and thy staff comfort me.

Meric and Victor step into a purification Alcove --

MERIC (cont'd)
 Amen.

-- and close the door behind them.

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

BEN
 So what caused this... event?

TOLBROOK
 A Faradaiun event is a feedback loop. If Conditioners get too close to each other, or a power source-

BEN
 Like the cells.

TOLBROOK
 --their limiters can overload. At that point, the solenoid engorges on power, supercharging its energy acquisition capabilities. The more energy it absorbs the more--

BEN
 --power it has to acquire energy.

TOLBROOK
 Precisely.

Tolbrook pulls up an areal map of Luray.

TOLBROOK
 Station one-six-nine's event center was too far from a population mass. It simply ran out of gas. Burned itself out. Otherwise...

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - GRAND CHAMBER

Meric and Victor emerge from the Purification Alcove and step around the DEAD, colorless BODIES that fill the room.

However, unlike the rampant destruction in Luray, the grayed out zone here, barely reaches the edge of the chamber.

This is lost on Meric as his attention is fixated on the Power Cells. Rather than brimming with energy as he'd hoped, the Cells are a FUSED, SPARKING, mess. Totally unsalvageable.

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

BEN

Why isn't this your standard operating procedure? It seems a much more efficient way to harvest.

Even Griffen takes pause at what Ben's suggesting.

TOLBROOK

Harvest, yes. But storing the yield proves problematic. The energy disperses too quickly overloading and destroying the power cells.

Tolbrook picks up the super-charged power cells.

TOLBROOK (cont'd)

Which is why your particular event is fascinating. Something must have modulated the Prime Frequency.

BEN

Prime Frequency?

TOLBROOK

All atoms in the universe have vibrational motion -- a frequency.

Griffen retreats to a computer terminal.

TOLBROOK

We discovered, if one were to tabulate those frequencies for every atom in your body and find their mean, it would be the same.

BEN

The same? The same as what?

TOLBROOK

The same as all the others.

Tolbrook gestures and the Holographic overlay becomes a animated PANORAMA OF LIFE FORMS from across the universe.

TOLBROOK
Every sentient life form that we've
cataloged, shares this Frequency.

The PANORAMA shifts. We see: DNA STRANDS, a SNAIL SHELL,
SUNFLOWER, ALIEN PLANTS, and finally the SWIRL of a GALAXY.

All of these images share the same GEOMETRIC SPIRAL shape.

TOLBROOK
Even the basest life forms show
evidence that this Prime Frequency
is hard-wired into them -- that if
and when they evolve, they'll
maintain that universal constant
and join the unified field that
connects us all -- The Grid.

Ben processes. As the full extent of what that implies flits
through Ben's mind, his eyes land on a GLAMSON BRIEFCASE on
Tolbrook's table. *Hmmm.*

BEN
I think I know how the frequencies
were modulated.

INT. LEMURIAN CAVERN - DAY

A sparkling AZURE LAKE casts dancing patterns of light on
the Cavern's walls. Minus the Drones and Tubes, the lake is
a doppelganger of the one inside IFA Headquarters.

The Dame leads Rachel along a VIADUCT bridging the water.

THE DAME
The Lemuria. It's all that's left of
the waters my people first crawled
from. Like all that we held holy,
it's been turned into a commodity.

RACHEL
That's truly horrible.
(thinking)
I have friends... friends who could
help. If you can help me find them.

THE DAME
Excellent. Our army grows strong.
For the defilers there will be no
refuge -- no place to hide, no room
too secure. With the Lemuria we
have ways to get to them.

A fire smolders in The Dames' eyes.

THE DAME

And we will get each and every one
of them.

Rachel recoils. The Dame's blood lust is truly terrifying.
And then it's gone. She reaches out a kind hand to Rachel.

THE DAME

Come my child, we must prepare.

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

Tolbrook gently grabs Ben's arm.

TOLBROOK

Are you sure about this, human?
Some genie's can't be put back in
the bottle. Trust me, I know.

Ben considers... but just has to know. He picks up the
Glamson briefcase and puts a power cell inside.

BEN

The discs were inside a case like
this... a case that affects kinetic
energy. Now you tell me, is this
how the frequencies were modulated?

Tolbrook reluctantly runs a SENSOR over the case.

TOLBROOK

Congratulations. You may have just
figured out how to make genocide
cost-effective.

Ben's morbidly proud of his discovery.

GRIFFEN

But why would Hardin do it?
Whatever he might make from
skimming is nothing to the money he
makes as CEO. Why jeopardize that?

Before anyone can answer, warning lights start FLASHING.

TOLBROOK

This can't be. Without a navigator
beacon, there's no way to find this
place -- No way.

Tolbrook frantically checks a monitor. Something's
approaching their location... and fast.

TOLBROOK
Unless they somehow smuggled one
inside -- your heart.

Tolbrook grabs a SCANNER and slaps it against Griffen--
--revealing a PULSING OBJECT in the center of his heart.

INT. THE IN-BETWEEN - TIME HAS NO MEANING

An apartment-sized BLACK CUBE floats through the gray void.

A PINPOINT of LIGHT zooms towards it, increasing in size as
it approaches. Coming into focus, we see the light is a WARP
TUBE whose far end seemingly extends off into infinity.

The Warp Tube DOCKS with the CUBE.

INT. WARP TUBE - CONTINUOUS

COMPANY TROOPERS, four abreast and three squadrons deep, grip
BLASTERS and adjust SHOCK ARMOR as they prepare to breach.

VIGILANT TROOPER
We are at a go, Sir.

INT. IFA TACTICAL COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Hardin sits at a BANK OF HOLOGRAPHS with feeds ranging from
Trooper HELMET CAMS to cameras stationed inside the Tube.

In the Hanger below him, two more SQUADRONS of TROOPERS are
positioned at the Warp Tube's ACCESS PORTAL for deployment.

HARDIN
Don't make it too messy.

INT. LABORATORY - DAY

A section of the wall BLASTS OPEN. The force of the
concussion knocks Ben, Griffen and Tolbrook to the ground.

Before they can react, the front line of Troopers in the tube
UNLOADS with their blasters. BURSTS sear into the threesome.

SMOKE from the discharge fills the room. When it dissipates
it reveals three CHARRED BODIES.

A CURIOUS TROOPER cautiously flips what's left of Griffen's
body over. A mangled arm clutches SOMETHING.

INT. IFA TACTICAL COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

IN THE HOLOGRAPH, Hardin can see the object Griffen's holding
-- it's the HERMETICALLY SEALED CASE his heart was in.

The Curious Trooper reaches to open it.

HARDIN

Wait.

INT. LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS

Too late. Inside the case is the pulsing NAVIGATOR BEACON. And the act of exposing has -- TRIGGERED a REACTION.

The presumed BODIES of Griffen, Ben and Tolbrook LIQUEFY -- leaving behind three INCENDIARY DEVICES. WHOOORRR-WHOOOOOM!

FLAME ERUPTS, instantly consuming everything in the room. It EXPLODES through the BREACH POINT and into the Warp Tunnel.

INT. WARP TUBE - CONTINUOUS

Flame INCINERATES the hapless Troopers, picking up speed and intensity as it SURGES down the tube.

INT. IFA TACTICAL COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Hardin watches THE HOLOGRAPHS as the fire ROARS toward them.

HARDIN

(quietly)

Shut the portal.

No one moves. His Troopers stand mesmerized by the sight of the APOCALYPTIC FLAME approaching on the monitor.

HARDIN

SHUT THE PORTAL!

Not able to wait any longer, Hardin LEAPS down to the hanger, THROWS two Troopers aside and SLAMS the KILL SWITCH.

The portal to the warp tube SHUTS, dooming those still inside, but saving the men in the hanger.

HARDIN

Lift every rock, knock down every door. It's time to fire up the trackers, we're going hunting.

INT. MAINTENANCE HANGER - DAY

The bay of SANITATION SWEEPERS is empty of staff save for a few STRAGGLERS preparing to go home post custodial shift.

None of whom notice the WARP TUBE open and dump Tolbrook, Griffen and Ben into the back of the bay.

INT. SWEEPER (HIDDEN COMPARTMENT) - DAY

Ben and Griffen slide into the compartment. The quarters are cramped, but there's just enough room for them to stand.

INT. MAINTENANCE HANGER - DAY

Tolbrook climbs into the sweeper's cockpit and fires up the engine. The machine rumbles along the enormous hanger until it positions itself over the EXIT CHUTE.

EXT. DOMED CITY OF RAL-TOR - SKY - DAY

The Sweeper PLUNGES from what we now see is a SUSPENDED HANGER, one of several we can see HOVERING OVER THE CITY --

As the Sweeper approaches the street a series of ENERGY FIELDS SLOW its descent. It touches down with a slight jolt.

Tolbrook shifts into gear and merges with the traffic, an assortment of WINDOWLESS VEHICLES, clogging the street.

INT. HIDDEN COMPARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Griffen MORPHS OPEN a PANEL so he can talk to Tolbrook.

 GRIFFEN

We need a way off-world, they'll
have locked down all the Transfer
Stations by now.

 TOLBROOK

We can use the Techno-Lemuria to
make the jump. There are three
dimension hoppers in the bulkhead.

Griffen pulls out three BELTS with HI-TECH buckles.

 BEN

Techno-Lemuria?

 TOLBROOK

An artificial lake that's the key to
accessing The In-Between. Its waters
are saturated with molecules that
vibrate at the prime frequency.

 BEN

You mean the lake inside--

 GRIFFEN

Indeed.

The sweeper turns and heads back towards IFA Headquarters.

INT. LEMURIAN CAVERN - SACRED OASIS - DAY

Rachel follows The Dame into a grotto, where the Lemuria BUBBLES UP forming five, tear-shaped, steaming, POOLS.

THE DAME

(re: the five pools)

Kardia, Dianoa, Ischus, Dunamis and
Psyche. The Rite of Water will give
you strength for what's to come.

The Dame CLAPS. Two BLIND FEMALE ACOLYTES shuffle over to Rachel and start undressing her.

RACHEL

Whoa. Hold on. What's to come, is
me finding my friends. And for that
I'd prefer to keep my clothes on.

THE DAME

We'll find your friends, in time.
But first, let us give back for all
we have taken. Relax, my child.

Relax? As impossible as that seems, there's something
soothing in the STEAM. Something that puts Rachel in a state
where she's okay with the removal of her clothes.

RACHEL

Okay... that could be... *nice*.

The Acolytes help Rachel into the first pool.

THE DAME

Let the waters cleanse you...

Between the intoxicating steam, the hands caressing her, and
the bubbling, warm water, Rachel falls into a DEEP TRANCE.

THE DAME (cont'd)

...until every inch of your body is
given over to the Lemuria.

The Dame pulls out a small BOX. Inside, an EYE with four
legs, spiders up her arm and nests in her empty EYE-SOCKET.
The orb ROTATES, lingering over the curves of Rachel's flesh.

THE DAME

When you wake, my child, it is you
who will be the cleansing fire,
burning away the taint of The
Company, the stain of their
betrayal. It is you who will be the
vessel of my vengeance.

INT. HARDIN'S CONTROL CENTER - DAY

Hardin studies the holographs as they flash through sectors of the city -- in particular the sweepers.

HARDIN
How many sweepers do we have
running right now?

A HOLOGRAPH JOCKEY, flits through several databases.

HOLOGRAPH JOCKEY
Eight-twenty-three in the city,
another one-fifty in Lower Ral-Tor.

HARDIN
Run a lock-down on every sector
where a sweeper is crawling.

HOLOGRAPH JOCKEY
Sir, the suspects have demonstrated
the ability to negate the neural net.

HARDIN
And when you find something moving
where it shouldn't, blast it to hell.

EXT. STREETS OF RAL-TOR - DAY

A GREEN LIGHT washes the street, FREEZING everything it hits.

Noting this, Tolbrook SLAMS the BREAKS and kills the engine.
The Sweeper JOLTS to a stop.

TOLBROOK
They're doing a sector sweep.

Griffen clamps his hand over Ben's mouth.

GRIFFEN
Quiet. Don't move, or we're dead.

As the light envelops them, Griffen, Tolbrook and Ben freeze.

INT. HARDIN'S CONTROL CENTER - DAY

The Holograph Jockey flits from sector, to sector. Watching.
Listening.

HARDIN
Anything?

The Holograph Jockey adjusts his headphones as he DIALS
Tolbrook's sweeper up...

INT. HIDDEN COMPARTMENT - DAY

Still like statues, they wait. And wait. A single DROP of SWEAT runs down Ben's nose and HITS the floor.

Plop.

INT. HARDIN'S CONTROL CENTER - DAY

The Holographic jockey leans in. There's no way he could have heard that, right?

INT. HIDDEN COMPARTMENT - DAY

Finally, after what seems like an eternity, the LIGHT FADES. Life outside the sweeper starts back up. Ben lets out a sigh of relief. It's over.

Or is it? Griffen looks up sharply as he detects a faint BUZZING SOUND.

GRIFFEN
Trackers. Blast it. Tolbrook, get
down here. NOW!

EXT. STREETS OF RAL-TOR - DAY

Tolbrook looks up -- a GRAY CLOUD is rapidly approaching. PEDESTRIANS in the streets PANIC and dart for cover.

Tolbrook FUMBLES frantically with the control panel. The Sweeper GROANS as it starts to STRETCH horizontally, widening to accommodate a new configuration.

Tolbrook's cockpit begins slowly DESCENDING, merging with the compartment Ben and Griffen are stationed in.

GRIFFEN
Hurry.

TOLBROOK
This is as fast as it'll reform.

As the cloud nears, Ben can finally make out the TRACKERS, a swarm of malicious-looking, metallic, bug-like devices.

INT. SWEEPER - DAY

The cockpit LOCKS into place next to Ben and Griffen. Tolbrook, moving with a speed only pure terror can muster, LURCHES across his console and ACTIVATES a panel.

With the SWARM inches from impact, the ceiling MORPHS SHUT enclosing them in a TANK-LIKE COCOON.

EXT. STREETS OF RAL-TOR - DAY

Denied their prey, the Trackers BUZZ angrily as they blanket the Sweeper.

INT. SWEEPER - CONTINUOUS

The BUZZING is deafening inside the cramped confines. The men cover their ears trying to block out the sound.

EXT. SWEEPER - CONTINUOUS

The Trackers micro-mechanical MOUTHS OPEN and INJECT anchor TENDRILS into the Sweeper's plating. Firmly anchored, the buzzing sound slowly dies out, as the Trackers shift to their dormant, HOMING PULSE state.

INT. SWEEPER - CONTINUOUS

As the cacophony of buzzing outside fades, it's only then that the men orient on a low buzzing INSIDE THE COMPARTMENT.

TWO TRACKERS got in. They HOVER in the back of the chamber.

For an instant, no one moves. The Trackers and the men size each other up like fighters in a ring.

Griffen breaks the stalemate, LUNGING at the Trackers. The Trackers DART BY his outstretched hands, and LATCH ONTO --

-- Tolbrook's back. Anchor tendrils EMBED deep into his flesh. Tolbrook SCREAMS and COLLAPSES in pain.

 GRIFFEN

Tolbrook!

Griffen SNAPS the Trackers' heads off, but the damage is already done. BLOOD STAINS Tolbrook's tunic and there's a green tinge to the plasma.

 GRIFFEN

Poison. Bocher, grab an anesthesior.

Ben follows Griffen's gesticulations, and hands him a long, OPAQUE TUBE. The tube SNAKES around Tolbrook.

The effect is instantaneous. Tolbrook relaxes.

 GRIFFEN

Stay with us. I have a stash of anti-toxins on--

A BLAST ROCKS the Sweeper, SLAMMING them against the wall.

EXT. STREETS OF RAL-TOR - CONTINUOUS

A SQUADRON of thirty TROOPERS on motorcycle-like CRUISERS, debark from a Transport Platform.

ANNIHILATORS blazing, the Squadron advances on the Sweeper.

INT. SWEEPER - CONTINUOUS

Griffen clambers into the cockpit.

 GRIFFEN

Under a minute response time. The
Company's getting too efficient.

 BEN

Who's fault is that?

EXT. STREETS OF RAL-TOR - CONTINUOUS

The outer shell Sweeper's Cocoon BLASTS OFF, SHEDDING the trackers and creating an opening so Griffen can navigate.

 GRIFFEN

Try and hold Tolbrook steady.

A TURBINE emerges from the rear of the Sweeper. FLAMES blast out, INCINERATING the lead CRUISER TROOPER.

The Sweeper LURCHES FORWARD and accelerates down the street.

Cars frantically PULL OVER as the Tank-like Sweeper races up behind them. Those that don't, SMASH off the front.

Another BLAST HITS the Sweeper. Griffen fights for control as the Sweeper FISHTAILS, SIDESWIPING several PARKED CARS --

--causing one to FLIP UP, CRUSHING two Cruisers behind them.

 GRIFFEN

How thick is our plating?

 TOLBROOK

A decimeter. It won't hold off the
Annihilator blasts much longer.

A Cruiser pulls up. Its DRIVER levels a BLASTER at Griffen.

 GRIFFEN

I was more worried about teeth.

Griffen SLAMS into the Cruiser, SPINNING it into a building.

TOLBROOK
Are you insane? It's mating season.

Griffen's jaw hardens as he veers off the street and across a clearing toward the EDGE OF THE DOME.

EXT. TOXIC ZONE - DAY

A PRIDE of MILPAWS picks at the REMAINS of last night's kill.

Measuring an imposing nine-feet of MUSCLES, HORNS, TEETH and CLAWS, the Milpaw might be best described as the foul-tempered, offspring of a Rhino and a Lion.

Suddenly, the Sweeper SMASHES through the pride, SCATTERING the beasts, and continues on across the rocky plateau.

The Milpaws quickly recover. Letting out a defiant ROAR, they spring into attack position, just as --

-- the unfortunate Cruiser Troopers round the embankment. PAWS BLUR, as the Milpaws vent their rage, SWATting Troopers from their vehicles.

SCREAMS are cut short by a BUZZ-SAW of teeth that chews up the hapless Troopers. When the RED MIST clears, only five remain.

EXT. ROCKY PLATEAU - DAY

Griffen navigates the Sweeper toward the IFA Pyramid.

Proximity sensors FLASH, IMAGING the Cruisers rapidly approaching.

GRIFFEN
Damn, they survived the Milpaws.
Hardin will know we're coming.

BEN
Is there another way to access the
Inbetween?

Griffen glances at Tolbrook, he's deathly pale.

GRIFFEN
No time. Without an anti-toxin
he'll will be dead within the hour.

Ben slides behind the wheel.

GRIFFEN
Head for where the base of the
pyramid and the dome meet.

Griffen climbs from the open cockpit, out onto the roof.

BEN
Where are you going?

GRIFFEN
To even the odds.

Griffen, timing the blasts, nimbly runs the length of the roof, and then, LAUNCHES himself--

--into a trailing Trooper, KNOCKING him free of his Cruiser. They land HARD. The Trooper takes the brunt of the impact.

Griffen pops up, ready to do battle, but the landing has already done the job. The Trooper's SKULL has SPLIT OPEN.

ON THE CRUISERS

The Squadron Leader sends two Troopers after Griffen. Then he and the remaining Trooper continue after the sweeper.

INT. LEMURIAN CAVERN - DAY

The Dame leads a procession over the viaduct. As they reach the center, she raises an arm halting the march.

THE DAME
Bring her.

Four MUSCULAR ACOLYTES, set a small LITTER down. Rachel, sits in an open chair. Eyes glazed, she's oblivious to everything.

The Dame holds a small COMPASS-LIKE DEVICE. The device's needle JUMPS in time with the CURRENT of the Lemuria.

THE DAME
Prepare the oblation.

EXT. ROCKY PLATEAU - DAY

A Blast HITS the SWEEPER, knocking it in the AIR. It lands with a CRUNCH. Ben fights to regain control.

BEN
We're not going to make it.

Tolbrook DRAGS himself up to Ben and shakily flips a switch. With a hum, a protective DAMPER FIELD envelops the machine.

TOLBROOK
That should buy us some time.

Two BLASTS from the Cruisers, hit the DAMPER FIELD, are absorbed, and then BOUNCED BACK -- narrowly missing the Cruisers.

BEN

Why the hell didn't you turn that
on before?

TOLBROOK

It uses too much juice. We can only
maintain it for a few minutes.
Hopefully we'll make the dome
before we run out of charge.

ON THE CRUISERS

Noticing the damper field, the Troopers accelerate and pull
alongside the Sweeper. There, the Cruisers' wheels EXPAND,
raising the Cruisers up, parallel to the Sweeper's roof.

The two Troopers climb aboard and make their way toward Ben.

EXT. JAGGED STEPPES - DAY

Griffen's Cruiser races along, eating up the craggy tundra.
Two BLASTS gouge CRATERS in the ground bracketing him.

Griffen squeezes his FRONT BREAKS. The Cruiser pops a
REVERSE WHEELIE, pivoting AROUND to face its pursuers.

Griffen FIRES TWICE. Two riderless Cruisers, spin off
harmlessly into the dirt.

Griffen disembarks and creeps over to the edge of a BLUFF.
Below, an OASIS provides water to several score of milpaw.

Griffen cups his hands to his faces and lets loose with a CRY
that sounds like a STUTTERING OBOE.

INT. SWEEPER COCKPIT - DAY

TOLBROOK

Behind you!

Ben narrowly EVADES a Bludgeoner targeting his head. The
Squadron Leader GRABS Ben and HAULS him up onto the roof.

Ben struggles, but the Squadron Leader holds him tight,
positioning him for the Trooper's Bludgeoner.

WHUMP! The Bludgeoner SMACKS into Ben's STOMACH.

The Trooper gleefully rears back to deliver a killing blow.

In that moment, something in Ben CHANGES. His ARM, the one
Tolbrook repaired, LASHES OUT, moving at SUPERHUMAN SPEED.

A hard ELBOW, BREAKS two of the Squadron Leader's RIBS.

Then, whipping his arm forward, Ben catches the Trooper by his wrist, and SNAPS it.

The Bludgeoner falls from the Trooper's limp hand and is SNATCHED from the air by Ben.

In a vicious arc, Ben SWINGS the Bludgeoner SMASHING the Troopers Jaw, and the Squadron Leader's KNEECAP.

Shocked, the Troopers FALL from the roof, crippled before they even knew what was happening.

Ben, breathing heavy, stares in horrified wonder at his arm.

TOLBROOK

I told you I made a few
adjustments.

Ben processes. But before he can absorb what Tolbrook's implying, he sees something that takes precedence.

Ahead, beyond the dome's barrier, a BATTALION of TWO HUNDRED TROOPERS readies weapons in preparation for their arrival.

BEN

Can you make a few more?

A light FLASHES. Tolbrook turn off the Damper in response.

TOLBROOK

We're almost out of power.

Griffen comes zooming up behind them. He VAULTS from the Cruiser into the cockpit and brusquely assumes the helm.

BEN

We've got a problem up ahead.

Griffen routes the last of the power to the turbine.

GRIFFEN

Right now I'm more concerned with
what's behind us.

Ben looks back. There's a huge DUST CLOUD about fifty meters behind them -- a Dust cloud that's rapidly gaining on them.

Griffen cranks a knob that sends a signal, OPENING a LARGE HOLE in the Dome.

GRIFFEN

Hold on.

EXT. IFA HOME BASE - DAY

On the BATTALION COMMANDER'S mark, the Troopers OPEN FIRE. A BURST from an ION CANON --

--BLOWS the WHEEL CARRIAGE off of the Sweeper.

The Sweeper LANDS HARD on its side. SPARKS FLY, as it SKIDS rapidly across the ground, toward the dome.

The CANON OPERATOR tracks his SITES with the Sweeper.

As his fingers close on the trigger, the Dust Cloud enters his VIEWER. The cloud... and more importantly, its source.

CANNON OPERATOR
MILPAWS!!!

Dozens of snarling Milpaws STAMPEDE after the Sweeper. The Battalion Commander quickly regroups.

BATTALION COMMANDER
Coordinate all fire on the Milpaws.
Target the joints. Short bursts.

The Battalion UNLOADS on the charging beasts. Some of the shots find their mark, piercing the joints of the Milpaws' ARMOR-LIKE hide, SEVERING legs and paws.

But most just glance off the plating, leaving nothing more than a SCORCH MARK... and even further enraged beasts.

The Milpaws shift to an even higher gear, sprinting across the remaining ground and LEAP into battle with the Troopers.

Its a bloodbath. The Troopers vastly outnumber the Milpaws, but the Milpaws even the odds -- Quickly.

BASE OF THE PYRAMID

The Sweeper slows to a stop.

Griffen's eyes flit around tracking threats as he and Ben assist Tolbrook out of the Sweeper and across the courtyard.

GRIFFEN
Hurry.

A ROAR provides just enough warning.

Griffen spins and fires a perfect shot through the neck, SEVERING the head of a Milpaw that ventured too close.

Reaching the Pyramid, Tolbrook pries open a HATCH and fiddles with the wires inside.

A portal MORPHS OPEN, permitting access to a NARROW HALLWAY. The threesome slips inside and shuts the portal behind them.

INT. LEMURIAN CAVERN - DAY

The Acolytes lower Rachel, wrapped in CHAINS, into the water.

THE DAME

Let the child of your blood be the
bringer of blood. Let the child of
your soul be the devourer of souls.

Rachel disappears completely into the shimmering liquid.

THE DAME

Let the scales be balanced once
more.

The Acolytes pull the chains back up. THEY'RE EMPTY.

INT. GRAND COURTYARD - DAY

Two Troopers, left behind to guard the Lemuria, patrol the concourse. ROARS, SCREAMS and SHOTS echo in the distance.

The Troopers exchange nervous glances about what might be coming -- never seeing what actually does.

Griffen SLAMS the Troopers' heads together. The Troopers FALL unconscious to the ground.

Ben helps Tolbrook over to the edge of the Lemuria.

Griffen fishes in a bag and pulls out the hopper belts. He kneels down to help Tolbrook strap one on.

Tolbrook SWATS his hand away.

TOLBROOK

I'm not dead yet, I can put on my
own damn belt. Help the human.

Griffen turns -- Ben's completely at a loss. Griffen stands and helps Ben size and attach the belt.

TOLBROOK (O.C.)

The day I can't strap on a hopper
is the day I should be put-

There's a loud CRUNCH and a small WHIMPER.

Ben and Griffen look back to see: Tolbrook, arm-deep in the JAWS of a Milpaw.

Griffen FIRES three shots, one through each of the Milpaw's eyes. The beast collapses, dragging Tolbrook to the ground.

Ben and Griffen attempt to part the Milpaw's massive jaws.

TOLBROOK

Stop. The arm's gone. If you open the mouth, I'll bleed out.

Griffen's face whitens in a rare display of emotion.

TOLBROOK

It's okay, there's no pain.

Tolbrook pats the anesthesior.

GRIFFEN

Tolbrook... I-

HARDIN

You'd think a Milpaw would have better sense than to chew on such a grisled old piece of meat.

Griffen and Ben turn. Hardin and his Troopers are filling the area between them and the Lemuria.

HARDIN

Put them down. Now.

The Troopers power up their weapons, WHEN --

A VOICE BOOMS OUT.

THE DAME (O.C.)

Too long have you taken freely of that which no man was to possess.

Everyone looks up. TOWERING above the lake is a gigantic HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE of The Dame's Head.

THE DAME

For your arrogance, for your perversions, for your betrayal, The Maker has found you lacking. As it was written in the Grand Tome: *The waters beneath their feet turned to flame...*

The WATERS of the Lemuria start to FROTH, birthing a FIGURE who RISES slowly from the foam. As the figure nears we see--

--it's Rachel. She's still in a trance and naked, save for five DETONATORS strapped strategically across her body.

BEN	THE DAME
Rachel!	<i>...consuming all transgressors.</i>

As the Dame FADES AWAY, Rachel steps toward the shore.

RACHEL
Judgment is upon you. Burn.

Rachel GESTURES. A jet of water SPURTS from the lake. As it arcs through the air, the water TRANSMUTES into FLAME.

The flame ROASTS two Troopers. Rachel gestures again, sending out multiple-jets.

CHAOS breaks out as the Troopers duck for cover. Griffen pulls Ben down, using the Millpaw's corpse as cover.

BEN
You said there was no chance Rachel survived.

GRIFFEN
No, I said there was an infinitesimal chance she survived.

HARDIN
Semantics, boys. Let me clear this up for you.

Hardin levels his weapon at Rachel.

GRIFFEN
Stop! The detonators are bio-locked. If you shoot her, they'll explode.

HARDIN
I'll take my chances. She's going to blow any minute now, regardless.

He's right, around the detonators, a series of LIGHTS FLASH in a diminishing pattern -- a TIMER rapidly counting down.

FIVE BARS of LIGHT left...

BEN
Wait. She'll listen to me.

HARDIN
What did I tell you, balls of R'ken Millpaw. Go on, get yourself killed.

Ben stands up.

BEN

Rachel. It's me, Ben.

Rachel POINTS. a jet of flame nearly incinerates him. Undeterred, Ben cautiously approaches her.

BEN

I thought I'd lost you. I should have known. I should have come after you. I'm sorry. Sorry for everything. You were right, I need you, Rachel. You hear me? I need you.

Rachel hesitates as Ben's voice cuts through the haze.

RACHEL

B-Ben?

BEN

Yeah, that's right. It's just you and me, Rachel. I'm here. Listen to my voice. And please, don't kill me.

Ben creeps towards her as the TIMER continues to count down.

FOUR BARS of LIGHT left...

Tolbrook pulls Griffen close.

TOLBROOK

Take her into the In-between. There's a chance you could diffuse it there, and escape.

GRIFFEN

If I leave, they'll kill you.

TOLBROOK

I'm already dead, Griffen. My body just don't know it yet.

Tolbrook's right. With a heavy heart, Griffen picks up the hopper and sprints after Ben.

HARDIN

Stop him.

Griffen is too fast. He quickly joins Ben at the shoreline and CINCHES a Hopper around Rachel.

GRIFFEN

This time, don't let go.

He ENERGIZES the Hopper. Light CRACKLES across the Lemuria.

THREE BARS of LIGHT left...

HARDIN

Griffen.

Hardin smirks as puts a blaster to Tolbrook's head.

GRIFFEN

NO!

As the crackling ENERGY FLASH envelopes Griffen and Company, the last thing they see is Hardin PULLING the TRIGGER.

INT. THE IN-BETWEEN - TIME HAS NO MEANING

The threesome spins through the void. Griffen doesn't have time to mourn as the timer continues its countdown.

TWO BARS of LIGHT left...

He furiously navigates the sea of WIRES encircling Rachel.

GRIFFEN

We'll have to time the removal with
the reentry.

Rachel looks around groggily.

RACHEL

Where are we?

BEN

Just hold still.

Griffen and Ben grip the charges.

ONE BAR of LIGHT left...

A synaptic transition FLASH zooms toward them.

GRIFFEN

Now.

As the light envelops them, Griffen and Ben RIP the charges from Rachel's body and toss them into the gray nothingness.

The charges EXPLODE! SHOCK-WAVES ripple through the void.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE (BASEMENT) - DAY

A Temple storage area. Hidden amidst boxes of candles, outdated robes and incense is a TRANSPORTATION PLATFORM.

LIGHTNING CRACKLES as Ben, Rachel and Griffen MATERIALIZE.

Residual energy from the explosion throws them off the platform and ACROSS THE ROOM where --

-- they SLAM into a WALL and fall dazed to the ground.

TIME PASSES. Maybe seconds. Maybe hours. Hard to tell.

Then: more LIGHTNING CRACKLES on the platform.

Though BLURRED VISION, Ben sees BOOTS filing into the room. Groggily he looks up: Meric and his men loom over them.

MERIC

Ask and it shall be given you;
seek, and ye shall find.

Meric gives Rachel's body a salacious once over.

GRIFFEN

Leave them, they are nothing.

MERIC

What an interesting choice of words.

Meric traipses over to Griffen.

MERIC (cont'd)

For nothing is how you treated me
at the company, nothing is what's
left of your career, and in your
condition, *nothing* is what you can
do to stop Victor from a bit of
pruning.

Meric nods to Victor who unsheathes a set of PRUNING SHEARS.

GRIFFEN

The company has jump-sites at over
two-hundred worlds. Why would I jump
us here, Meric? Why would I jump
where I could be surrounded by this?

Meric's intrigued. He stays Victor for the moment.

GRIFFEN

I came to Earth for you, Meric. I
came to offer you a proposition.

Ben slowly sits up. What's Griffen doing?

MERIC

You're in no position to bargain.

GRIFFEN
My position is either we discuss how
you deserve more than the scraps
Hardin throws you, or...

Griffen springs to his feet, DISARMS a Trooper that had
ventured too close, and points the weapon at Meric's head.

 GRIFFEN (cont'd)
I kill you and all your men.

Seems Griffen is less injured than Meric assumed. As such--

 MERIC
Go on. I'm listening.

 GRIFFEN
A Faradaian Event, like Luray, but
on a global scale.

 MERIC
Luray was a fluke. Impossible to
replicate. Trust me, I've tried.

 GRIFFEN
Not if you know how to modulate the
frequencies.

 MERIC
And you do?

 GRIFFEN
I do. Thanks to Dr. Bocher. You'll
need these to prime the reaction.

He hands Meric the remaining two POWER CELLS from Luray.

 RACHEL
Ben, what did you do?

Troopers restrain Ben as he rages at Griffen.

 BEN
How could you? You'll kill everyone.

 GRIFFEN
Perhaps you should have thought that
through before showing us how to do it.

INT. UNDERGROUND BUNKER/COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Captives, Ben and Rachel (now dressed), look on as the
Techie manipulates a HOLOGRAPHIC SIMULATION for Meric.
Griffen sits next to him providing pointers.

The Holograph shows FIFTY BRIEFCASES lying on a floor.

TECHIE

Voilà.

The simulation widens, showing a series of CONDITIONERS in concentric rings radiating out from the briefcases.

TECHIE

The briefcases should temper the initial reaction.

A single conditioner DROPS on top of the briefcases and begins to PULSE. As the feedback loop intensifies, the innermost ring of conditioners starts to roll to the cases.

TECHIE

Exponential spacing between the rings provides a proper interval.

The pulsing intensifies as the second ring is sucked in. But the distance to the third keeps the reaction under control.

TECHIE

You'll have just under five minutes until it hits the tenth ring.

MERIC

And after the tenth ring?

TECHIE

Boom.

As the reaction hits the tenth ring, it shoots into overdrive. In seconds it ripples out through the city, the state, and country until it CONSUMES THE PLANET.

Rachel looks away, trying to choke down the panic and nausea.

BEN

Please don't. Please don't do this.

MERIC

It'll be over in an instant, no pain. Probably. It could also be excruciating, what do I know?

GRIFFEN

This much power hits the market there will be questions. We'll need to find a buyer.

MERIC

I have a buyer. Hardin.

GRIFFEN

Hardin? Don't be naive Meric, the board's review begins tonight. He won't get within a parsec of you.

MERIC

I'm naive? You. Know. Nothing. Hardin needs this for the board. If anything he'll be even more desperate to pay.

GRIFFEN

Desperate? He built The Company.

MERIC

You think The Company's an empire. Hardin's a fraud. He's been siphoning power for years -- augmenting the yield of newly discovered worlds to boost projected revenue streams.

BEN

Inflating the value of the company, and his status as CEO.

MERIC

Bravo. You are a smart one, aren't you?

GRIFFEN

But if the board looks closely enough at the books...

MERIC

He'll be screwed. Which is why he's desperate for a supply of energy large enough to bail himself out.

Meric smiles his Cheshire cat smile. Griffen senses something -- too late. Victor hits him with a TASER.

Griffen falls twitching to the floor.

MERIC (cont'd)

See. Hardin needs me. Unlike the lack of use I now have for you.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Troopers escort Griffen, Ben, and Rachel. The bulk of their vigilance is devoted to monitoring Griffen's manacled steps.

Bringing up the rear, Rachel stares sadly at Ben.

RACHEL
What happened, Ben? Why would-

BRUTISH TROOPER
Quiet.

BEN
Does it really matter?

RACHEL
I guess, not.
(beat)
Let's just hope you aren't as smart
as you think you are.

BEN
You'd like that. Sorry to
disappoint, Rachel. Again. For
once, I didn't need Beth... or you.
I figured it out all by myself. And
now we're all Fuc-

A BRUTISH TROOPER CLUBS Ben, dropping him to his knees.

BRUTISH TROOPER
I said, Quiet.

As Ben GASPS, trying to catch his breath, he notes the
separation between them and the other troopers. This is his
chance.

Ben PUNCHES with his augmented arm, CRUSHING the Brutish
Trooper's chest. He then grabs him and throws him into the
pack escorting Griffen.

Troopers TUMBLE, giving Griffen the small window he needs.

Griffen JUMPS and LOOPS his leg-chains and handcuffs around
the NECKS of two Troopers. With a sharp TWIST, he SNAPS both.
Griffen guides their fall into the remaining troopers.

They collapse into a heap. A scrum for survival ensues.
Head-butts SHATTER noses. Limbs BREAK. Ribs CRACK.

A Trooper lines Ben up in his sites. As he pulls the trigger,
Rachel BODY-SLAMs him. The shot just misses.

Ben turns and IMPALES the trooper with his own gun. Ben looks
around, ready to go. No one else is standing.

Rachel stares horrified at Ben.

RACHEL
How?

Ben wipes the gore off his arm.

BEN

Science.

There's a MOAN from the pile of troopers on the floor. Ben throws aside a body. Griffen, stares wearily up at him and gestures with his handcuffs.

GRIFFEN

Find the key, I think it's--

Ben's hands close around Griffen's throat.

RACHEL

Ben. Stop. This isn't you.

She PULLS Ben off, trying to calm him. But he's wild.

RACHEL (cont'd)

This *isn't* you.

Ben has so much rage... but Rachel's right. He takes a breath.

GRIFFEN

I have a fail safe -- a shutdown code for the conditioners.

BEN

Shut them down then.

GRIFFEN

I need my Keitai.

Ben fishes in Griffen's pockets, and finds the device. Griffen smugly enters a series of characters.

GRIFFEN

Your world was never in danger. I just needed to find out what Meric knew about Hardin's operation.

A RESPONSE appears on the screen. Griffen's brow furrows.

GRIFFEN

It seems Hardin is more efficient than I gave him credit for. He's changed the codes. Unfortunate.

Rachel tosses Griffen the key to his hand cuffs.

RACHEL

Then we better move quickly.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Toting weapons taken from fallen troopers, Griffen leads the charge back into Meric's command center.

They're too late. The room is deserted. Ben puts his hand on the transport platform.

BEN

It's still warm. Can we track them?

Griffen examines a CONSOLE. It's a mass of BLACKENED WIRES.

GRIFFEN

No. Meric fried the Navigation log.
He could be anywhere.

Anywhere. The word hits Ben hard. He slumps against the wall.

BEN

It's all over. And it's my fault.

RACHEL

Yes, Ben, you screwed up.

BEN

Unfortunately, this time, there
will be no place left for you to
run away to.

GRIFFEN

Actually, there are multiple worlds
we can jump to avoid the event.

Griffen, receiving two withering stares, retreats to readying the transportation platform.

RACHEL

Beth was gone, things were tough,
and I left. Left you in a way, you'd
never leave me. Ben, you just risked
incineration to save me.

Ben gives a small smile.

BEN

To be fair, you were naked and on
fire. Hard for a guy to resist.

RACHEL

Ben, we're scientists. Figuring
things out is what we do.

(MORE)

RACHEL (cont'd)
We don't stop till we get an answer,
weighing action vs reaction. And at
times we go too far. That's why we
have the atomic bomb. But it's also
why we have penicillin.

Ben lets the words sink in.

RACHEL (cont'd)
Ben, have faith, we're going to
figure this out too.

Ben lets the words sink in.

GRIFFEN
The only thing you should have
faith in, is that you'll die, along
with everyone else, unless you jump
out of here, with me. Now.

Ben stands with a new confidence.

BEN
No, Rachel's right. We just need the
new codes. How can we get to Hardin?

GRIFFEN
It's impossible. He'll be with the
Board all night. The room's too
secure, even I can't gain access.

RACHEL
(thinking)
Could you get us to the ruins?

GRIFFEN
Probably. The transports that far
out won't be so heavily guarded.

RACHEL
Then I know who can get you in.

The conviction in her tone even has Griffen impressed. Still,
there's a question of logistics. Griffen turns to Ben.

GRIFFEN
If we do this, Ben, you'll need to
stay here to relay the codes. If I
don't get them to you in time...

BEN
Then you better move quickly.

Griffen hands Ben his Keitai.

GRIFFEN
This light will turn green when I
transmit them. Hit this button and
everything should shut down.

 RACHEL
We'll stop this, Ben. Here, for luck.

She takes off her cross and offers it to him. Ben hesitates.

 RACHEL
It can't hurt.

The woman has a point. Ben accepts it with a small nod.

 BEN
Come back to me. I can't. I lo-

She quiets him with a KISS. A desperate, passionate, this is
the last time they'll ever do this, kiss.

 RACHEL
I know.

Rachel joins Griffen on the transportation platform.
Light CRACKLES and envelops them. And they're gone.

INT. HORIZONTALATOR/IFA TEMPLE ON EARTH - NIGHT

SPACE WARPS, so we can see both halves of the conversation
shared in the mind-link.

Hardin, flanked by his guards, MIND LINKS with Meric standing
at the center of an IFA temple overseeing the placement of
briefcases and power cells.

 MERIC (VIA MIND-LINK)
The discs should be ready for
extraction before the board
adjourns tonight.

 HARDIN (VIA MIND-LINK)
See that they are.

Hardin severs the Mink-Link.

As Meric fades away, Hardin turns to an ASSISTANT.

 HARDIN
Add one item to tonight's docket,
it appears we're going to have to
write off Station One-Six-Nine.

The Horizontalator terminates at a DONUT-SHAPED PLATFORM suspended over a shaft plunging into the planet's depths.

Hardin nods to one of the heavily-armed KEEPERS OF THE CORE.

HARDIN

Tell The Board I'm ready.

A column of ENERGY shoots up the shaft and through the platform. Stealing himself, Hardin steps into the energy.

With a flash, the energy, and all traces of Hardin, are gone.

INT. THE BOARDROOM - NIGHT

Less of a room and more of an indoor botanical garden. The Boardroom's walls are covered with alien foliage and greenery -- greenery that continues to slowly grow.

Exotic lily pads dot a SMALL POOL in the center of the room.

The energy column FLASHES into the midst of the verdure, REASSEMBLING Hardin.

Hardin composes himself and then crosses the mossy stone slabs to a GNARLED TREE, under whose branches sit a collection of HOODED HUEGARI.

They are THE NINE, and they are The Board

INT. THE RUINS - NIGHT

Griffen scans for threats as Rachel braces herself against one of the stone pillars and tries not to vomit.

GRIFFEN

Sorry for all the jumps. Had to be sure our entry wasn't monitored. The wooziness should pass.

Griffen puts his RING on Rachel, reddening her skin.

GRIFFEN

In case something happens to me, you'll be able to blend in, make a life here.

RACHEL

Where were you twelve hours ago?

GRIFFEN

On the concourse. It's a bit hazy as I lost consciousness. Twice.

Rachel swallows a grin as she leads Griffen down the steps.

RACHEL

Why help us? The Company seems like it's everything to you.

GRIFFEN

That's precisely why. Long term growth outweighs short term gains. We'll easily eclipse Meric's yield in four-hundred years.

RACHEL

You want to drain us for another four hundred years?

GRIFFEN

Four hundred? No. We'll need at least seven to get a proper return on our investment.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAY

Ben stares at Griffen's Keitai.

It's still red. And Ben's getting antsy.

Out of the corner of his eye, Ben notes some papers on the desk FLUTTERING slightly -- there's a DRAFT.

Intrigued, Ben traces its origin to a large FILING CABINET. Ben barely jostles the cabinet and it slides aside.

Behind it, an OPENING IN THE WALL leads to a LADDER going UP.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

A MANHOLE LID slides aside and Ben emerges into a narrow alley behind a restaurant. He quickly notes two things:

The EMPIRE STATE BUILDING piercing the skyline, placing him in New York City, and more importantly --

The large IFA temple across the street. Interesting, perhaps Meric didn't "Jump" anywhere after all.

INT. THE RUINS/STONE ARCHWAY - NIGHT

Griffen admires the Archway's construction.

GRIFFEN

An orientation portal. Clever.

Griffen fiddles with the base.

RACHEL
Why does Hardin answer to a board?
Isn't it his company?

GRIFFEN
They're not the board of the
company, they're The Board of
Huegari Six, our planet. At their
word empires fall.

Griffen's fiddling is successful. There's a CLICK and the Arch starts rotating.

GRIFFEN (cont'd)
Hopefully they find Hardin wanting.

As the Arch completes its circuit, a cadre of blade-wielding RATHALS is revealed on the other side.

GRIFFEN
Behind me.

Griffen takes out the first wave with his BLASTER.

As the weapon runs out of charge, he snatches a fallen blade and wades into the fray.

Griffen mixes brute force with ballet-like moves -- Blocking. Disarming. Decapitating. Dismembering.

This is how you really use a sword. In a second, it's over.

The Dame steps through the Arch.

THE DAME
Impressive performance. But you
shouldn't have come here, Griffen.
You'll tire long before I run out
of bodies to throw at you.

She CLAPS. ACOLYTES step aside, revealing Scarred Ear.

Scarred Ear SALUTES Griffen with his scimitar.

And then they engage. SPARKS FLY as the blades collide again and again, metallic blurs whirling in the air.

The two combatants are truly putting on a show, a display so enthralling, that the Dame's guard doesn't see Rachel until she's two feet away, with a blaster aimed at the Dame's head.

RACHEL
Stand them down. Do it now.

Everyone pauses, unsure exactly what the next move is.

 GRIFFEN
Hardin's meeting the board.

If the Dame had eyes, they'd be lighting up.

 THE DAME
When?

 GRIFFEN
Now. Can you get us in?

 THE DAME
Do you know exactly where the
meeting is taking place?

 GRIFFEN
I do.

 THE DAME
Then it is possible. But I will not.

 GRIFFEN
Hardin is no longer fit to lead.

 THE DAME
And how does this concern me?

 GRIFFEN
Because I know who you are and how
the company wronged you, *Cybele*.

The Dame locks an eye-less gaze with Griffen. Evaluating.

EXT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - DAY

As Ben cautiously approaches the building he notes that a cleric at the door is turning away PARISHIONERS. HMMMMM.

INT. THE BOARDROOM - NIGHT

The Nine sit silently, locked in discussion via Mindlink, leaving Hardin to anxiously wait their judgment.

Finally, the diminutive SPEAKER OF THE NINE opens his eyes.

 SPEAKER OF THE NINE
The projections for next term are
quite encouraging.

Hardin cracks his homey smile.

HARDIN
Paint me pleased as pie. The
Company lives to serve.

SPEAKER OF THE NINE
Let us speak to your renewal.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - LONG CORRIDOR - DAY

Ben furtively approaches the Grand Chamber. Stationed outside the doors are two troopers. This is definitely the place.

INT. RUINS - NIGHT

Rachel watches intently as Griffen and The Dame finish up a private conversation.

The Dame gives Rachel a coy smile as she returns.

THE DAME
Strange the allies we make.

RACHEL
Stranger the enemies.

The Dame nods respectfully then returns to her Acolytes. Griffen joins Rachel.

RACHEL
Don't trust her.

GRIFFEN
I don't trust anyone.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - GRAND CHAMBER

Meric and his men have brought the simulation to life. Briefcases ringed by Conditioners cover the floor, etc.

TECHIE
That's the last of the conditioners.

Meric admires the set up. Then, gestures to his Troopers.

MERIC
Initiate a full evac. Get to the
bunker, and start the countdown.

The Troopers quickly pack up and file out of the room -- all except for ONE who LINGERS behind.

The Lingering Trooper accidentally kicks aside a Conditioner.

TECHIE
Careful. Proper alignment is-

The Lingering Trooper, who we now see is BEN IN A UNIFORM,
grabs the Techie and throws him across the room.

Meric fumbles for a weapon. Too late. Ben is on him.

BEN
Shut this down.

MERIC
Of course. I'll shut it all down.
(beat)
But maybe we could make a deal.

Ben tightens his grasp as Meric slips into spin mode.

MERIC
Just let me have the discs from
Luray, and I'll give you the tech
from the conditioners. Think how
much energy you could get from
algae, or really anything.

BEN
Just stop.

MERIC
Living in Beth's shadow must have
been difficult. So unfair. Take the
tech. Think of all you could learn
by taking it apart. You'll be the
most famous scientist on the planet.

Meric's pulling all the right strings. Ben's tempted...

BEN
No... I...

MERIC
Why. Who does it hurt now? Think of
all the good you could do. Beth
would have wanted this for you.

...but not at that price. Ben slams Meric against a wall.

BEN
No. No she wouldn't. Shut it down.

Victor SLUGS Ben, KNOCKING him, dazed to the ground.

MERIC
Should have taken the deal.

INT. LEMURIAN CAVERN - DAY

The Acolytes lower a ROPE LADDER over the viaduct. Griffen swings a leg over and finds the rung.

The Dame studies the NAVIGATOR, her compass-like device.

THE DAME

They've constricted the access point.

She hands Griffen her Navigator.

THE DAME

Plant the Navigator when you cross
otherwise we can't follow.

GRIFFEN

Just get me there.

With a nod to Rachel, Griffen heads down into the Lemuria.
The Dame and her Acolytes begin to CHANT.

INT. UNDER THE LEMURIA - DAY

The waters circle over Griffen, enveloping him like
embryonic fluid. Energy CRACKLES through the liquid. And
he's gone.

INT. THE BOARDROOM - DAY

SPEAKER OF THE NINE

Hardin Janis, I.D. # 7309-R2 you
have been evaluated and we find in
favor of renewal. Is there anything
you wish noted before we mark the
record?

HARDIN

Only that I'm honored and touched.

Behind Hardin, the waters of the pond begin to FROTH.
Griffen clambers out of the pond and steps ashore.

SPEAKER OF THE NINE

Intriguing.

The Speaker gestures and a SECURITY FORCE appears.

A man on a mission, Griffen wades through them as if they're
not there, gently disarming, and humanely dispatching,
laying their bodies to the ground.

Finally, he kneels before The Nine.

GRIFFEN
I seek an audience to be read.

 HARDIN
Don't listen to him, he's here to
kill me and you.

The Nine seem genuinely amused by the prospect of danger.

 SPEAKER OF THE NINE
Kill us? Tut, tut. Let us see what
this "killer" has to say.

The Speaker GESTURES. A TENDRIL from the pond, SLITHERS OUT and coils up around Griffen. Then with a gentle probe, IMBEDS ITSELF in his forehead.

The pond FLICKERS. IMAGES from Griffen's life flit across its surface.

Some images we recognize, others are moments of childhood, adolescence and Griffen's early years at the company.

The Nine take it all in. The blur FREEZES on an image of Meric from the moment he was dishing on Hardin.

The Nine look up in unison and give Hardin a stare. Hardin blanches. They know.

 HARDIN
Whatever you've seen -- they're
lies. Griffen has ways of effecting
the Grid.

The Speaker POINTS. Two Tendrils shoot up SECURING Hardin.

 HARDIN
No. I can explain.

 SPEAKER OF THE NINE
Hardin Janis, I.D. # 7309-R2
you have been evaluated as
per the tenants of the...

Hardin struggles against the vines.

 HARDIN
It was for the good of the
company. It was all for the
good.

 SPEAKER OF THE NINE
...Charter and have been
found wanting. You are
hereby decommissioned.
Effective immediately.

The Nine rise and turn their backs on Hardin.

 SPEAKER OF THE NINE
I would leave now, Griffen Lantore,
The Khlûl has been summoned.

Hardin pales.

HARDIN

Please. Banish me. Sentence me to a
penal colony. Just don't do this.

The Nine slowly file out, vanishing into the foliage.
Leaving Griffen and Hardin alone.

GRIFFEN

You haven't much time, Hardin. Give
me the shutdown codes for one-six-
nine and I'll speak on your behalf.

Behind them, the pond begins to froth once more.

HARDIN

The codes? Get me out of here alive
and I'll give you any damn thing
you want.

The waters BULGE. Whatever's emerging is big. Really big.

GRIFFEN

I have your word?

The ground shakes as The KHLÛL stomps ashore. A horrifying
ten-foot mix of humanoid and octopus, the Khlûl's TENTACLES
UNDULATE widely as it lets loose a primal scream.

HARDIN

You have it.

Griffen SEVERs the vine, freeing Hardin.

GRIFFEN

Run!

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - GRAND CHAMBER

As Ben shakes the cobwebs free, he realizes he's handcuffed
around a RUSTY metal PILLAR in the middle of the pile of
briefcases.

Meric READIES a charged conditioner. It's time.

Ben searches desperately for a way out -- eyes landing on:

Victor taking a smug draw from a CIGARETTE.

The embers "spark" an idea. Ben starts RUBBING his CUFFS
against the pole, scraping off a fine powder of RUST.

Ben inhales in the direction of the cigarette smoke.

BEN

Ahhh, Formaldehyde, Benzene and Polonium 210, how I've missed you. Haven't smoked since college. That's the problem with a PhD in biochemistry, sometime you know too much about how things work.

VICTOR

And look where all that schooling's gotten you.

BEN

At times it comes in handy, though. Do you get when you mix iron oxide, aluminum powder, and magnesium?

VICTOR

What?

BEN

I'll tell you if I can finish that cigarette. Come on, last request?

Victor glances over to Meric dropping the Conditioner initiating the Faradaian Event. Can't hurt. Victor LICKS the cigarette, and inserts it into Ben's mouth.

Meric turns, sensing somethings up --

MERIC

No! Don't.

-- and he's right.

Behind the post, we can see that Ben's wrapped a small pile of the rust powder (iron oxide) with Aluminum foil around the the handcuffs. The magnesium strip, (that Ben pocketed, along with the foil while doing his classroom experiment) protrudes like a wick.

Ben turns and lets the cigarette FALL from his open mouth.

BEN

Thermite.

The cigarette IGNITES the magnesium, which REACTS with the Aluminum and Iron Oxide flaring into a FIRE that burns through the handcuffs, like a blowtorch through butter.

Ben jumps free, shaking the burning metal off his wrists.

Victor tries to pull his gun, but Ben is quicker, his augmented arm knocking it across the room.

INT. THE BOARDROOM - DAY

Hardin and Griffen CRASH through the foliage using the terrain in a desperate attempt to keep the Khlûl at bay.

Undeterred, the Khlûl closes, SMASHING through any obstacles. Saliva glistens on its beak-like jaws. The end of the hunt approaches and soon it will feed.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - GRAND CHAMBER

Victor shakes the pain from his hand and advances on Ben.

Ben's arm LASHES OUT -- and MISSES Victor by an inch. Victor uses Ben's momentum to SMACK him into the pillar.

VICTOR
It's called striking distance, Dr.
Bocher. A trained fighter knows how
to size an opponent's range...

Ben staggers up and unleashes another augmented PUNCH.

It again falls just short, leaving Ben off-balance enough for Victor to drop down and deliver a BONE-CRUNCHING STRIKE.

VICTOR (cont'd)
...and counter it.

Ben falls to the floor, grabbing his leg in agony.

INT. THE BOARDROOM - DAY

GRIFFEN
Hold.

Griffen stops their dash. The Khlûl's no longer behind them.

Hardin and Griffen stand back to back, eyes and ears straining, scanning the now eerily quiet wood.

At the last second, Griffen senses something -- from above.

GRIFFEN
Move!

He shoves Hardin aside as The Khlûl drops between them.

The dance of death begins. Griffen and Hardin use every ounce of skill and augmentation -- blocking blows with SMALL LOGS, PARKOURING up embankments to evade whip-like tentacles and retuning fire with an assortment of kicks and punches.

All of which have little to no effect on The Khlûl.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - GRAND CHAMBER

Ben pulls himself up on his good leg. He can't put any real weight on the other. The ankle is probably broken.

Victor circles around him, dancing just out of range of Ben's arm, landing RIB-SPLINTERING kicks.

VICTOR

Augmentation. For someone, like Griffen, who was trained, augmentation makes him even more dangerous. For you, it's like giving a child a Steinway -- and just letting him bang on the keys.

Ben coughs out blood.

Behind him, the REACTION slowly grows, hitting the second ring of conditioners.

INT. THE BOARDROOM - DAY

The Khlûl's blows close in as Griffen and Hardin grow tired.

GRIFFEN

Aim for the eyes.

Griffen HURLS a small rock at the Khlûl's ridged-orbs.

The Khlûl's blocks it with a hiss and WHIPS all four tentacles in return.

Griffen contorts, diving out the way. But as he gains his feet, Hardin BUMPS him back into danger.

Twisting. Leaping. Flipping. Griffen dances to evade the earthshaking blows.

Hardin uses the distraction to try and make his escape. He sprints over to a small clearing and activates a panel.

A DONUT-SHAPED PLATFORM rises from the ground.

The Khlûl, sensing his prey escaping, disengages from Griffen and charges after Hardin.

As the Khlûl closes, Hardin slams the panel again and again.

HARDIN

Come on. Come on. Come on.

Finally, a column of ENERGY shoots down to the platform.

But it's too late. As Hardin steps toward the light, a tentacle WRAPS around his arm, pulling him back.

HARDIN

No!

Three more tentacles WRAP around his arms and legs, lifting him from the ground.

Hardin strains in agony as the Khlûl slowly pulls -- foreplay before dismemberment.

HARDIN

G-Griffen, help me.

Griffen casts a look over at the energy column platform. It would be so easy, so logical, for him to forget about Ben, forget about the Earth, and just leave.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - GRAND CHAMBER

Ben's head SNAPS BACK, his glasses SHATTERING as Victor boot finds his face again.

The THIRD LINE OF CONDITIONERS begin ROLLING toward the briefcases, sending Meric edging toward the exit.

MERIC

Kill him already, would you? We've got to get out of here -- now.

INT. THE BOARDROOM - DAY

Hardin SCREAMS in agony as tendons tear and Bones SNAP. Griffen weighs his choice, it's seemingly suicide to stay.

But surprisingly, he finds he can't leave.

Griffen drifts behind the column of energy and finds a BRANCH which he HURLS like a spear into the Khlûl's eye.

Recoiling in pain, the Khlûl FLINGS Hardin into an embankment, SMASHING him against the rocky walls.

Tentacles whip out, ZIPPING through the energy column, wrapping around Griffen on the other side.

As the tentacles pull Griffen back towards the Khlûl's beak-like jaws, he passes the activation panel.

Griffen has one chance -- and he makes it count. Griffen HITS the panel, ACTIVATING the energy transport.

Which in turn, effective severs the middle-portion of the Khlûl's tentacles, as they are TELEPORTED AWAY.

The Khlûl collapses, ichor gushing from his stumps. Its body convulses in a death rattle -- then it is still.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - GRAND CHAMBER

As Victor prepares to deliver a killing blow, Ben attempts one final punch.

Victor smugly evades it. However, this time however, he feels a SHARP PAIN in his abdomen.

Looking down, he sees a black object protruding from his stomach. It's the TEMPLE from Ben's graphite glasses frame.

BEN

I extended my range.

Ben PUSHES it DEEP into Victor's stomach. The pain distracts Victor enough to get Ben in range to SNAP Victor's neck.

Meric gasps in horror. Ben THROWS Victor BODY into him, knocking Meric to the ground.

INT. THE BOARDROOM - DAY

Griffen staggers over to Hardin. Bleeding, bones protruding, he's a mess of pulpy flesh.

GRIFFEN

The codes.

The pond FROTHS. Rachel, The Dame, and Acolytes emerge.

Hardin knows it's over. He casts a desperate look around -- eyes landing on a medium-sized ROCK.

Hardin wheezes a laugh as his fingers creep toward the stone.

HARDIN

Aw, Griff, I can't believe you
actually thought I'd give you them.

Hardin's hand close on the rock and STRIKES.

Griffen DUCKS instinctively, but he was never the target. The rock SMASHES into Hardin's face. It's a killing blow. Hardin slips limply to the ground.

RACHEL

No!

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - GRAND CHAMBER

Meric struggles frantically to free himself from Victor's body as Ben determinedly limps over to him.

BEN
Shut it down.

MERIC
I can't. It's too late.

He's right. The reaction is moving quickly now. The line of COLOR-DRAIN is rapidly approaching.

Ben pulls out the Keitai. Still Red. Meric KICKS Ben's ankle.
Ben BUCKLES in pain, letting Meric dance away.

INT. THE BOARDROOM - DAY

A mocking grin is plastered across Hardin's rigor-mortifying face -- a final affront as the light fades from his eyes.

Griffen won't let it end like this. He yanks the TENDRIL the Nine used on him out of the pool and jams one end into Hardin's head. Then JAMS the other into his own.

Griffen's eyes roll back into his head. Convulsing as he patches directly into Hardin.

INT. SYNAPTIC PATH

Cold and cloudy. Griffen finds himself floating through a rapidly dimming corridor surrounded by SYNAPTIC FLASHES containing the FADING MEMORIES of Hardin's life.

Griffen twists about, desperately searching for the code.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - GRAND CHAMBER

The SEVENTH RING flies toward the briefcases. Ben limps after Meric, but he's not catching him.

Meric pauses at the Chamber's door to deliver a parting shot.

MERIC
Tell your sister I say hello.

BEN
Tell her yourself.

Meric, turns -- TOO LATE as Conditioners flying in from the EIGHTH RING hit him in the chest and CARRY HIM screaming back into the COLOR-DRAIN ZONE.

As he crosses the Color-Drain line, his screams stop.

Ben doesn't have time to savor Meric's demise, as he frantically limps away from the approaching Color-Drain line.

The Keitai is still red.

BEN
Come on Griffen.

INT. SYNAPTIC PATH

It's GETTING DARK.

Griffen frantically searches the memories. Some INFORMATIONAL, some SEXUAL, some RANDOM MOMENTS, pieces that Hardin's mind had buried deep.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - GRAND CHAMBER

Ben DUCKS as the NINTH RING shoots by him. His ankle buckles and he falls to the ground. He's not going to make it.

INT. SYNAPTIC PATH

Only the faintest glimmer of light is left. Griffen can barely make out what's left of Hardin's mind. He's too late.

Then, one last SYNAPTIC BURST pulses by. It's THE CODE.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - GRAND CHAMBER

Ben's out of time. The Color-Drain line will be on him in seconds. The TENTH RING flies over his head.

INT. THE BOARDROOM - DAY

Griffen's eyes snap open. He JERKS the Tendril free.

Griffen quickly searches Hardin's body for Hardin's Keitai. He inputs the code and hits SEND.

INT. I.F.A. TEMPLE - GRAND CHAMBER

As the Tenth RING hits the briefcases, the Keitai TURNS GREEN.

Ben hits the SHUTDOWN KEY and prays it's not too late.

But it probably is.

A bright, WHITE FLASH, obliterates everything.

INT. TRANSFER STATION - DAY

A FIGURE in a hi-tech-looking hazmat suit MATERIALIZES on the platform.

The figure removes his helmet. It's Griffen.

Rachel stands with an assortment of IFA Corporate OFFICERS awaiting his report. Griffen steps down and solemnly address the assemblage.

GRIFFEN

Total C.P.D. There's nothing left
alive. Write it off.

Rachel crumbles -- her faith shattered.

The Dame, sporting MECHANICAL EYES and dressed in a POWER SUIT identical to the one Hardin wore, steps forward.

THE DAME

Seal it up. Send out an alert
beacon. Station one-six-nine is
quarantined for a hundred cycles.

IFA officers scurry about to put the order into place.
The Dame crosses to Griffen.

THE DAME

A pity. I hope you have no regrets
about holding up your end of the
bargain. I wouldn't want our
working relationship tainted.

GRIFFEN

The Company is in good hands. As I
told The Board, what better
replacement for Hardin, than a woman
with her own source of Lemuria.

THE DAME

Indeed.

Griffen leaves her with a nod and heads over to Rachel. He helps her to her feet, CUPPING something into her hands.

GRIFFEN

Don't lose your faith now.

Rachel looks down. In her hands is the CROSS she gave to Ben. Catching the sparkle in Griffen's eyes, Rachel knows that this could only mean one thing.

Griffen lied.

GRIFFEN
 You can never go back or they'll
 know your world is safe to mine.

 RACHEL
 But Ben, my fam-

 GRIFFEN
 Never go back.

He's right. As Rachel tries to wrap her head around what that implies, she catches sight of a TEEN PROTESTOR spray-painting a religious protest symbols in the air.

IFA Troopers quickly swoop in and cart him away.

Rachel fingers her cross contemplatively.

 RACHEL
 Thank you. I understand. There's
 work for me to do here. Someone has
 to keep the faith.

MONTAGE - I.F.A. TEMPLES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE.

 NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
 To date, still no groups have
 claimed responsibility for what
 investigators are calling a global
 terrorist attack on the I.F.A.

A) EXT. I.F.A. TEMPLES IN LOS ANGELES, NASHVILLE, PARIS, ATHENS - smoke billows from the charred buildings.

B) INT. VARIOUS I.F.A. Temples - we see the source of the fires -- PYRAMIDS OF CLARITY, PURIFICATION ALCOVES and TRANSPORTATION PLATFORMS that have self-incinerated as a result of Griffen's shut down code.

 NEWSCASTER (V.O.) (cont'd)
 Despite the widespread destruction
 of property the only casualties
 reported to date are still at the
 temple in NYC.

C) EXT. I.F.A. TEMPLE IN NEW YORK - we see archival footage of paramedics removing Meric and Victor's bodies from the temple.

EXT. BOCHER RESEARCH INSTITUTE - DAY

TWENTY-SOMETHINGS mill about rushing to classes. For the students, life goes on unaffected.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

An eager student, EMILE, chases down a LIMPING FIGURE.

EMILE
Dr. Bocher.

Ben turns.

BEN
Yes? Emile, right?

EMILE
I just wanted to tell you how glad
we are that you're back.

Ben smiles.

INT. BIO-LAB - DAY

Ben stares up at the PHOTOBIOREACTORS TUBES, dedicating
himself to a new mission.

BEN
I'm coming for you, Rachel. I don't
know how yet, but I'm going to
figure it out -- because that's
what we do.

Ben pulls something from his pocket and tosses it in the
air. The green-light glints off its metallic surface.

Ben catches the pristine CONDITIONER.

BEN
And I'm going to bring you home.

A bright, FLASH to WHITE obliterates everything.

FADE OUT: