

The Mark

Written
by
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FADE IN:

We SEE a collection of drab apartment buildings. The setting is KRAKOW, POLAND.

SUPERIMPOSE TITLE: LIQUIDATION OF THE GHETTO. March 13, 1943.

EXT. GHETTO - DAY

A convoy of NAZI military trucks come to an abrupt stop just short of the apartment buildings.

A youthful NAZI OFFICER emerges from the lead truck and takes a quick look at the ghetto. He yells an order in German and dozens of NAZI TROOPERS disembark from the rear of their trucks.

Within seconds, hundreds of them have poured out, weapons in hand, and are running furiously toward the apartment buildings, screaming as they go.

They quickly storm the first building.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT WINDOW - DAY

JOSEPH GOLDSTEIN, an elderly man, peers out the window, looking at the approaching Nazi troopers. He quickly leaves the window.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Inside, we SEE the GOLDSTEIN family: Joseph's son JACOB, who is in his fifties, Jacob's wife REBEKA, and their daughter MILA. Next to them is an elderly RABBI. He is flanked by TWO MEN, who are "Disciples of the MARK." The older of the two men is MALACHI. He holds a long wooden staff, bearing a carved inscription of the MARK.

JOSEPH

There is no time -- we must complete the transfer.

The Rabbi quickly unrolls the scrolls of the TORAH. Jacob begins reading from its pages. His father nervously looks down at the palm of his hand. Imprinted on his palm is an ornate symbol. It is the MARK.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Nazi troopers force a Jewish family from their apartment at gunpoint. The frightened children cry as their belongings are knocked out of their hands by the ruthless soldiers.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT - DAY

Nazi troopers dump suitcases and other possessions of the Jewish family from the apartment windows onto the streets.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Two NAZI COMMANDERS watch with satisfaction while all around them, the inhabitants of the ghetto are being rounded up like cattle.

The two commanders stand at attention as a third Nazi officer, COMMANDANT GATES, approaches. He is in his mid fifties, very distinguished looking, handsome and broad, but there is a definite evil lurking below his piercing eyes.

GATES

(German with subtitles)

Have you located the mark?

COMMANDER #1

(German with subtitles)

No, commandant.

GATES

(German with subtitles)

Keep searching. The Fuhrer will have the mark this day even if we have to burn this ghetto to the ground!

Commander #2 notices something off camera.

COMMANDER #2

(German with subtitles)

Up there!

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT WINDOW - DAY

A strange radiant light can be seen coming from inside the Goldstein's apartment.

EXT. STREET - DAY

GATES

(German with subtitles)

Send your men up there at once!

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The Rabbi continues to preside over the sacred ceremony as he is bathed in the same radiant light coming from something just off camera. Mrs. Goldstein and her daughter stare toward the light in stunned silence.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - DAY

The Nazi troopers rush into the Goldstein's building and race upstairs.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

The light has now vanished. The Rabbi pats Joseph on the shoulder and gives him a reassuring look. Jacob is staring at his hand, looking somewhat disheveled.

RABBI

(to the Disciples)

Go now -- quickly.

Jacob steps forward.

JACOB

No, I want to stay with the family and fight.

JOSEPH

No, my son -- it's too dangerous. We cannot put you or the mark at risk. It must not fall into the hands of the Nazis.

MALACHI

Come now, Jacob.

INT. APARTMENT HALL - DAY

The Nazi soldiers arrive on the Goldstein's floor and race down the hall.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Jacob hugs his mother, father, and sister while Malachi and the Rabbi look on.

INT. APARTMENT HALL - DAY

The Nazi soldiers arrive at the door and break it down.

Inside, we see the Goldstein family kneeling beside the Rabbi, but Malachi, the Disciple, and Jacob are gone.

EXT. APARTMENT ROOF - DAY

Malachi, the Disciple, and Jacob burst onto the rooftop and race toward the ledge.

Suddenly, we HEAR an explosion of bullets followed by the screams of Jacob's family members. Jacob turns to go back, but Malachi grabs him.

MALACHI

It's too late, Jacob -- they are gone.
We must get you to safety. Can you run?

Jacob, fighting back the tears, simply nods "yes".

Malachi, the Disciple, and Jacob run toward the edge of the rooftop as fast as they can. When they reach the edge, they all jump simultaneously.

Jacob sails through the air in a superhuman fashion and easily lands on the adjacent rooftop. Malachi and the other Disciple barely grab hold of the edge of the rooftop.

Below on the street, several Nazi troopers run in the alley just underneath Malachi and the Disciple, who dangle precariously from the edge.

Jacob runs up to them and offers each of them a hand. With incredible strength, he lifts them both up to the safety of the rooftop. Malachi and the Disciple look at Jacob with a newfound respect. All three of them run toward the building's fire escape.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Malachi, the Disciple, and Jacob descend the last few steps of the fire escape and jump to the street.

The Disciple moves to a man hole cover in the street and pries it open. A plume of steam rises as he lifts the cover off.

INT. SEWER - DAY

All three of them fall five feet from the surface and land in the sewer water, creating a thunderous splash.

INT. SEWER CORRIDOR - DAY

Suddenly several flash light beams hit them in the face. Several Nazi guards stand before them with their guns at the ready.

SOLDIER

Don't move!

Jacob, Malachi, and the Disciple slowly raise their hands.

A Nazi soldier directs two of his men to approach them. One walks toward Jacob. Jacob raises his hand defiantly, we see the MARK as it pulsates with light. Startled, the soldier FIRES. The Disciple jumps in front of Jacob, absorbing most of the blast, but several rounds spray past, striking Jacob. He and the Disciple fall hard into the water.

The Nazi soldier walks forward leans down to examine Jacob as the other soldier guards a disbelieving Malachi.

JACOB

No!

Jacob flails his hand at the Nazi, and the soldier is flung across the sewer crashing against the wall with incredible force. Malachi strikes the other soldier with his staff.

The other guards OPEN FIRE.

Malachi unleashes a flurry of savage blows with his staff which sends the remaining soldiers flying to the ground.

Malachi examines Jacob's wounds. Much to his surprise, Jacob is unharmed. Jacob runs to the Disciple and turns him over. Malachi rushes to his side.

MALACHI

It's too late -- he sacrificed his life
for the mark. We must go!

Jacob reluctantly lets go of the Disciple and follows Malachi down the sewer.

CUT TO:

INT. GOLDSTEIN APARTMENT - DAY

Gates ENTERS the Goldstein's apartment. Commander #1 rushes to greet him.

CONTINUED:

COMMANDER #1

I'm sorry, sir -- there is no sign of the mark.

GATES

They have transferred it to someone else. Search every man, woman, and child -- unless you want to spend the remainder of the war on the eastern front!

COMMANDER #1

Yes, sir!

Gates is furious. He stands amid the bodies of the Goldstein family uncertain of what to do. Slowly, we FOCUS on his armband -- and the Nazi swastika he wears over his uniform.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DAY

A CLOSE-UP on the MARK on the palm of Jacob's hand. It bears a striking resemblance to the swastika. The MARK pulsates with radiant energy as Jacob examines it.

Malachi approaches Jacob and pats him on the shoulder. Jacob turns and we SEE that they are now about a mile away from the ghetto. Malachi has two horses and hands Jacob the reins for one. Without saying a word, Jacob mounts his horse, as does Malachi.

Malachi rides off toward the forest. Jacob takes a final look back toward the ghetto. His expression reveals his anger and bitter hatred for the Nazis.

He turns and gallops toward Malachi and the safety of the woods.

DISSOLVE TO:

DAWN.

It is early morning in NEW YORK CITY.

SUPERIMPOSE: NEW YORK. MAY 1, 2000.

Garbage men load heaps of trash into their trucks, workers dump steaming vats of water in front of their theatres to cleanse the sidewalks of Broadway, and commuters throughout the city endure the slow trek to work.

A typical morning in Manhattan. Until...

CONTINUED:

RUMBLE!

A moderate sized EARTHQUAKE jolts the city. Buildings begin to sway wildly as the citizens of New York run for cover. The garbage men drop their bags, the theatre workers dive for cover, the commuters abandon their cars and flee in terror.

After a few horrifying seconds, the trembling subsides. The earth begins to settle.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

We move to a modest apartment building in downtown.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Inside we see an ELEVATOR - its caged doorway suggests the age of the building. The elevator car sways slightly, making an unsettling CREAKING sound.

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

We move inside. A light fixture hanging from the ceiling sways back and forth. The scarcely furnished apartment is a mess, but not as a result of the earthquake -- this mess was caused by the apartment's occupant. Half empty soda cans, pizza boxes, and clothes are strewn about the floor as are several dozen Lotto Tickets, all of them scratched off -- not a winner among them.

Focusing on the coffee table, we see several race track forms, newspapers, and a pile of magazines -- most prominent are Newsweek, Time, U.S. World Report. On the cover of every magazine is a distinguished, middle-aged man, named JONATHAN GATES.

THE CLOCK RADIO

blares with loud MUSIC.

MIKE COLLINS

rolls over and fumbles with the clock. He tries repeatedly to hit the snooze button, but can't find it. In frustration, he hurls the clock and rolls over. We still HEAR the music in the background.

Outside, garbage men load their truck. The combination of noises is deafening. Reluctantly, Mike gets up and moves toward his bathroom. The music from the clock radio stops and an annoying DJ comes on the air.

CONTINUED:

DJ

(filtered)

Wwhaaat's shaking, New York?! Well, that was a doozy and you can expect more of the same as we head towards May 5, the day astrologers are calling, "The New Age of Aquarius."

INT. MIKE'S BATHROOM - DAY

Mike stares at his reflection in the mirror, half asleep. He grabs a T-shirt and smells it. Determining that it's "clean" enough to wear, he puts it on.

DJ

(filtered)

Scientists are warning that as a result of the upcoming planetary alignment we should prepare ourselves for all sorts of wacky acts of nature...

Several soda cans line the counter top near the sink. Mike feels each can until he finds one with liquid. He takes a drink, gargles, then spits the soda into the sink.

INT. MIKE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

DJ

(filtered)

In related news, Mayor Wilson is looking to shake things up himself with Tuesday's presidential primaries...

Mike picks up the clock off the ground and turns down the volume. He quickly loads files and other work materials into his BRIEF CASE. He is running late for work.

BAM!

There is a thundering knock on the door. Mike looks up in horror. He knows who it is.

MIKE

Damn.

INT. HALLWAY

The building superintendent, a rotund middle-aged Latin woman with a thick accent, MRS. GARCIA, pounds furiously on the door.

CONTINUED:

MRS. GARCIA

Mr. Collins. Mr. Collins, I know you're
in there. Open the door!

She pounds on the door some more.

MRS. GARCIA

Mr. Collins!

MIKE

scrambles for the door. As he weaves through the debris on
the floor, he trips over the edge of his coffee table,
landing chest first into last night's left over pizza. He
rises, his T-shirt now smeared with toppings and pizza oil.

BAM!

Mrs. Garcia pounds on the door again. Mike sighs and moves
to open it.

Mike opens the door, his face wincing as he prepares for the
latest onslaught in a series of all too frequent encounters
with Mrs. Garcia.

MRS. GARCIA

Mr. Collins, you said you pay rent by
last night! This is the third time
you've lied to me --

MIKE

Mrs. Garcia --

Mrs. Garcia looks past Mike into the apartment.

MRS. GARCIA

Look at the way you keep this place --
food everywhere, I should throw you out
right now.

MIKE

This mess?! Nah, this wasn't me -- this
happened during the earthquake, Mrs.
Garcia.

The phone RINGS. Mike hurriedly picks it up.

MIKE

Hello?

EDDIE

(filtered)

It's me.

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Can't talk now, Eddie.

(beat)

Mrs. Garcia, I can explain.

MRS. GARCIA

You always explain. I don't want you to explain, I want my money.

EDDIE

(filtered)

You're going to want in on this -- Avenue Shopper in the seventh race, it's a sure thing -- I'll put you down for a couple hundred.

Mike turns away from Mrs. Garcia.

MIKE

I don't have a couple hundred -- I'm having trouble paying my rent thanks to Lucky Louie -- remember him? He was supposed to be a sure thing too.

MIKE

(to Mrs. Garcia)

Look, I'm on my way to work right now, I'll have your money this afternoon -- I promise. I just need to get things straightened out.

(beat)

Please, Mrs. Garcia.

She eyes him sternly. A mild AFTERSHOCK suddenly rocks the building. Both Mrs. Garcia and Mike are jostled.

EDDIE

(filtered)

So you in or what?! I'm just trying to help a guy out, that's all.

MRS. GARCIA

All right, but this is it. If you don't pay me this time, you're out. I call the cops and put a lock on your door.

(beat)

Then all this junk is mine.

MIKE

Look, Eddie, I'm late -- I'll call you when I get to the office.

Mike hangs up.

CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE

(to Mrs. Garcia)

It won't come to that, you have my word.

(beat)

Thanks, Mrs. Garcia. You're a
sweetheart. I'll catch you later.

Mike slowly closes the door. Mrs. Garcia eyes him menacingly
as he does so.

He breathes a sigh of relief and quickly finishes packing his
brief case.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Mike EXITS his apartment and slams the door shut and prepares
to lock the dead bolt.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Mike races out of his apartment and runs down the street as
fast as he can. Moving swiftly, he races between two parked
cars without looking.

CRASH!

He COLLIDES with a BIKE MESSENGER; both of them fall hard to
the ground.

The Messenger gets up first and examines his bike.

MESSENGER

Asshole -- why don't you watch where
you're going. Look at my bike!

The front wheel of the TEN SPEED is clearly bent.

Mike, wincing in pain, slowly gets up and pulls out a
business card from his wallet.

MIKE

Call me, I'll take care of it.

Limping badly, he hobbles off as quickly as he can.

MESSENGER

Hey, wait a second!

EXT. SUBWAY STAIRWELL - DAY

Favoring his hurt leg, he races past several people down the
stairs into the subway station.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

He weaves around several people and sees the subway train; it's about to leave.

Grimacing from the pain, he manages to jump over the subway turnstile.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

From inside the car, Mike's best friend, JOE, sees him and moves toward the glass. He smiles -- this isn't the first time this has happened.

JOE

Mike, get the lead out!

EXT. SUBWAY

Mike is clutching his hurt leg, wincing in pain with every step, racing to reach the doors before they close.

He is only a few inches from the threshold of the door. He smiles with relief. He's made it.

Suddenly, Mike is pulled down from behind by two SECURITY GUARDS. The subway doors close and the train begins to leave. From the ground Mike looks up to see Joe through the window. His friend is shaking his head in amusement, pointing at his watch reminding Mike of the time. He waves and mouths the words: "See you later."

The guards drag Mike to his feet.

MIKE

All right, just chill out. I was just trying to catch the train!

GUARD

It's customary to pay first.

(beat)

Now pay up.

MIKE

But I missed the train!

Annoyed, Mike pulls out some money from his pocket while the guards snicker and people stare.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD - DAY

Still limping, Mike runs down a side street past a school play ground. Several kids are outside playing jump rope near the fence.

KID #1

Hey guys, here he comes again, just like yesterday.

KID #2

Hi, Mike!

Mike races by the kids and waves.

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

Mike slows his pace and hobbles up to a news stand near his office building. Most prominent among the magazines is the NEW YORK DAILY NEWS. The headline reads: "GATES COMES TO NEW YORK."

The owner turns and smiles at Mike as he limps forward. It is JACOB. Despite the passage of time, he looks as if he has aged only ten years since we last saw him.

JACOB

(referring to his limp)

Good day, Michael, what's with the limp?

MIKE

Well, Jacob, let me put it this way -- I think I got a skid mark on my leg.

Jacob shakes his head as Mike reaches for some gum and looks over the newspaper.

JACOB

You're gonna get killed running around the city the way you do. How many times have I told you -- you need to learn to pace yourself.

MIKE

I know, I know. Hey, let me have five Lotto tickets.

Reluctantly, Jacob pulls out five tickets and hands them to Mike, who gives him the money.

JACOB

Michael, why do you waste your money on these things?

CONTINUED:

MIKE

What can I say, Jacob, my man, lady luck is calling me.

Using a coin, Mike furiously scratches the tickets.

JACOB

Then maybe you should stop taking her calls -- a young man like you should consider making investments with a better return.

A MAN walks up and takes a copy of the NEW YORK TIMES. He hands some change to Jacob to pay for it.

MIKE

Yeah, what do you suggest?

JACOB

Bet on yourself for a change. You're a bright boy with a bright future ahead of you.

MIKE

What future?! Haven't you heard -- the end of the world is coming.

JACOB

For some perhaps. For others, there will be hope.

MIKE

Yeah, I guess.

(beat)

So how my Knicks gonna do tonight against Chicago?

Jacob smiles, carefully pondering the answer.

JACOB

Let me see...92 to 88.

MIKE

And the Rangers?

JACOB

5 to 1 - and look for a fight in the third period.

Mike laughs.

CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE

All right. You've been right about the last three games -- we'll see if you can keep your winning streak alive.

(beat)

Later, Jacob.

Mike leaves. Jacob shakes his head as he watches him go.

EXT. CAMPAIGN OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Mike arrives at his work place and races inside the building, sweaty and disheveled.

INT. CAMPAIGN OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Inside, Mike hurries toward the elevator and narrowly slides through the doors as they close.

INT. TENTH FLOOR - DAY

Mike EXITS and jogs to a doorway. On the door a sign reads: "CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS, WILSON FOR PRESIDENT." Several banners read: "A NEW LEADER FOR A NEW MILLENNIUM." Mike pauses at the door, takes a deep breath, and gathers his thoughts before he goes in.

INT. CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Trying not to look tired and exasperated, Mike ENTERS the office with a big smile on his face. He says "Hi" to several people as he walks by. He passes near Joe's desk.

JOE

(sarcastically)

Nice moves this morning at the subway.

MIKE

(clenching his fist)

If I wasn't already late, I'd show you some nice moves.

INT. CUBICLES

He arrives at his cubicle, newspaper clippings of Jonathan Gates decorate his wall. He unloads his stuff, nervously looking around for the campaign manager. From the cubicle directly in front of his, JULIE, the beautiful campaign financial officer, peeks out and shoots him a bemused look.

JULIE

Late again. Anderson'll have your ass in a sling.

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Not if he didn't see me.

(beat)

Hey, you feel that quake this morning?

ANDERSON

(off camera)

Why, Mr. Collins.

MIKE

Good morning, Mr. Anderson.

ANDERSON arrives at the cubicle. He is in his mid-thirties, and has a thick southern accent. He is charge of the "Wilson for President" campaign.

MIKE

Mr. Anderson, I can explain --

Anderson raises his hand in a condescending manner, cutting him off.

ANDERSON

What I'm looking for here is a little punctuality.

MIKE

I know, sir.

(beat)

I'm sorry. It's just with the earthquake and all --

ANDERSON

I've got a very special assignment for you this morning.

(beat)

Bulk mail.

MIKE

(exasperated)

Bulk mail.

ANDERSON

Three thousand pieces, and they all need to be sorted by zip code before we can send 'em out.

(beat)

Better get cracking.

MIKE

Right away, sir.

CONTINUED: (2)

Anderson gives him a reassuring pat on the back as he starts to leave.

ANDERSON

Julie make sure you see me before you go to the bank today.

Anderson leaves.

CUT TO:

LATER AT THE OFFICE

Mike is on the phone.

MIKE

Eddie, it's Mike.

EDDIE

(filtered)

I knew you'd come around. How much do you want me to put down?

MIKE

Nothing. I want to bet on tonight's Knicks game.

EDDIE

(filtered)

What?! You never bet on sports.

MIKE

Now I do. I've got the inside track. The Knicks 92, the Bulls 88.

EDDIE

(filtered)

Do you know the odds of --

MIKE

Just make the bet.

EDDIE

(filtered)

How much?

Mike pauses and looks Julie's direction.

MIKE

(loudly)

Yes, Mrs. Garcia, I have the money.

CONTINUED: (3)

EDDIE
(filtered)
Mrs. Garcia?

Mike covers the phone.

MIKE
Julie, can you cover me, I need two
hundred bucks. Just until payday.

JULIE
Why do I know I'm going to regret this?
(beat)
All right, but if I hear that you've gone
out and bought a hundred lotto tickets --

MIKE
You won't, I swear.

EDDIE
(filtered)
You in or what?

MIKE
Yes, Mrs. Garcia, I'll have the money to
you this afternoon.

EDDIE
(filtered)
You got it.

Mike hangs up and takes a deep breath, he knows he's had it
if he loses this one. Suddenly, Mike turns his attention to
the television.

MIKE
(to Julie)
Check it out, the mayor's about to be
interviewed.

On the television, we SEE MAYOR BILL WILSON. He is in his
mid-forties, self assured and confident. He is standing on
the steps of city hall surrounded by REPORTERS.

REPORTER #1
(filtered)
It's been rumored for weeks that you will
be meeting with billionaire recluse
Jonathan Gates during his trip to the
city -- can you confirm that?

CONTINUED: (4)

WILSON

Well, Mary, as you know, Jonathan Gates is a very private man -- and he's asked me to keep the details of our meeting confidential.

REPORTER #2

Can you comment on the rumor that he'll be publicly endorsing your campaign before Tuesday's primary election?

WILSON

Your guess is as good as mine, Ted. Jonathan is an old friend and he's been very supportive of my campaign in a number of ways. It would be a pleasure to have him join us on our journey towards the new millennium.

Julie walks to Mike's desk and hands him a check.

MIKE

Thanks, Julie.

(beat)

I'll pay you back before you know it.

JULIE

We'll see.

REPORTER #1

Spoken like a true politician -- thank you, Mayor Wilson. Well, there you have it, the mystery of Jonathan Gates continues. Now back to the newsroom with more on the strange weather we're experiencing...

MIKE

So what's the deal with Wilson and Gates -- do you think he'll come here?

JULIE

Not a chance -- Gates hasn't even been photographed in six or seven years.

MIKE

Too bad. I really respect everything he's accomplished. Money. Power. The man's got it all.

CONTINUED: (5)

JULIE

Yeah, I'm not sure you'd want one of the most influential men in the world seeing you like this. No offense.

MIKE

None taken. You know, I've come up with a bunch of campaign ideas that will definitely put Wilson over the top.

JULIE

As of Tuesday's primary, this race is over. His lead in the polls is staggering.

MIKE

But I'm telling you these are great ideas, I know Wilson would love them.

JULIE

Anderson's already gunning for you -- do yourself a favor and stay out of his line of fire. Just stick to what you're good at.

Mike tries to hide his disappointment.

MIKE

Yeah, I guess you're right. I can't afford to lose another job.

(beat)

I'll just...keep sorting mail and giving away bumper stickers...the stuff I'm good at.

ANDERSON

(OC)

And don't forget posters.

Anderson ENTERS frame with a stack of medium sized posters.

ANDERSON

Hang these up in all of the mid-town subway stations before you come in tomorrow.

MIKE

All the stations?

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

A GUARD sits in the ticket booth listening to the RADIO as Mike tapes the last of the posters to the wall. Despite his instructions, he has put up ALL of the posters at this one station.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

(filtered)

-- and here are tonight's Basketball scores...

Mike's turns his attention to the radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

...the Bulls 88, the Knicks 92.

Mike starts to yell in victory, and jumps up and down in celebration. The guard looks at him, annoyed.

MIKE

Jacob, my man, this could be the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Mike runs up to Jacob's newsstand, eager to share the news about the game. Much to his surprise, the newsstand has been completely DESTROYED.

From a nearby alley, he notices the intermittent PULSATING of a WHITE LIGHT.

He nervously moves toward it.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Mike turns the corner. His eyes go wide with total disbelief.

Further down the alley, we SEE MAN #1 and MAN #2. Hanging around each of their necks are AMULETS -- very ornate in design. They are glowing as if embodied with some mystical power. The men are HOVERING about a foot above the ground, FIRING white bursts of ENERGY from their hands toward Jacob, who is several feet in front of them and is also HOVERING above the ground, deflecting their assault.

MIKE

(disbelief)

Jacob?!

CONTINUED:

Mesmerized, Mike inches deeper into the alley, utterly amazed by this spectacle.

Man #1 FIRES a burst of energy from his hands toward Jacob, but he dodges it at the last second.

Jacob turns and is startled to see Mike standing behind him.

Momentarily distracted, Jacob barely DEFLECTS another blast -- it lands close to Mike. Fearing for Mike's life, Jacob rushes to his side.

JACOB

(breathing hard)

Mike, You shouldn't be here.

MIKE

"Shouldn't be here?"

(beat)

Jacob, what the hell is this?

Man #1 FIRES a burst of energy at them; Mike jumps behind a large dumpster, cowering for cover. As he lands, his brief case springs open and the "Wilson for President" posters scatter.

Jacob moves the opposite direction and returns FIRE from his hand, and we SEE the MARK, still imprinted on his palm.

Reacting to the energy bursts, Mike covers his head with his hands, utterly terrified by what is going on around him.

MIKE

Shit! Shit!

The men easily evade Jacob's BLAST; his powers are growing weaker.

Man #1 gestures for the other to move toward Jacob.

Man #2 carefully moves down the alley, using dumpsters and garbage cans for cover. Jacob sees him coming and takes a deep breathe as he prepares to challenge the attacker.

Man #2 makes a sudden move into the open; Jacob spins around from behind his trash can and FIRES. At the same moment, Man #1 emerges from his position further down the alley and FIRES a concentrated burst of energy.

Jacob uses his power to place a protective screen around himself which absorbs Man #1's blast.

CONTINUED: (2)

From behind the dumpster, Mike eyes his briefcase. He suddenly leaps out to grab it.

Jacob looks over at Mike just as he moves. Noticing that he is distracted, Man #2 instantly fires a blast which IMPACTS Jacob on the chest.

Jacob is thrown into Mike, both fall behind the dumpster.

With Jacob's chest still smoldering from the blast, Mike leans close to his friend to offer assistance, but Jacob waves him off.

JACOB
(barely able to speak)
I-It's too late for me, son.

MIKE
(losing it)
Jacob, who the hell are these guys --
what the hell's going on?!

Slowly, Jacob reaches out with his marked hand and takes hold of Mike's.

Mike looks down at Jacob sympathetically.

MIKE
Jacob, we've got to get you to a hospital.

JACOB
(barely able to speak)
No...no time.
(beat)
Fate has chosen you, Michael...you are the one.

Suddenly, Jacob's hand begins to PULSATE with a radiant light. Mike struggles to free his own hand from Jacob's grasp, but can't.

MIKE
Let go, Jacob, let go of me!

The light intensifies and Mike unleashes a blood curdling SCREAM.

Man #1 and #2 look at each other quizzically and then FIRE bursts of energy from their hands. The blasts are deflected by a barrier of energy that has completely encased Jacob and Mike.

CONTINUED: (3)

The light reaches a blinding intensity; we SEE Mike screaming in terror, but all sounds have been nullified except for the CRACKLING of energy emitting from the Jacob's hand.

The light unleashes a final radiant burst which sends Man #1 and #2 flying backward into the alley. Then, as suddenly as it appeared, the light is gone.

Mike slowly opens his eyes in a state of disorientation. He raises his hand, examining it. Imprinted on his hand is the MARK -- Jacob has somehow transferred it to him.

Mike rubs the MARK with his fingers, but it won't come off.

Next to him, Jacob moans -- he's near death.

JACOB
(whispering)
Listen...to...me...

Mike leans down close Jacob's face.

MIKE
What's up with this?! What's goin' on here?

JACOB
You are...the one...

MIKE
You keep saying that, but I don't understand -- the one what?!

JACOB
In time...you will understand. But now...you must run.
(beat)
Run!

With that, Jacob turns his head away and breathes his final breath.

MIKE
(to Jacob)
Hey! Hey!

Mike can't believe it -- he shakes his friend.

MIKE
(to Jacob)
I can't run, I've got to get you some help, I --

CONTINUED: (4)

Mike looks down astonished as he watches the body of Jacob slowly DISAPPEAR, leaving only his clothes behind.

Man #1 and #2, still dazed from the energy surge, slowly begin to stir.

Stunned and scared, Mike races out of the alley and runs into the street.

The Men drag themselves up and walk over to where Jacob's body fell and see the empty pile of clothes.

MAN #2
What about the mark?

MAN #1
He must have given it to the kid.

Man #1 looks over to where Mike was hiding and see the posters that fell out of his brief case. He walks over and unrolls one. Both the henchmen eye the poster with satisfaction.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Mike is running as fast as he can through the side streets of Manhattan.

As we SEE Mike running, he begins to accelerate to a super human rate of speed. Within seconds, he is a blur. He knocks over several garbage cans and displaces papers and other debris as he streaks by.

EXT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mike comes to a stop in front of his place. He isn't even breathing heavy.

MIKE
(astonished)
How did I get here so fast?

He doesn't wait to figure it out, he quickly runs up the stairs and ENTERS his building.

INT. APARTMENT HALL - NIGHT

He arrives at his door and pulls out his keys. It's dark in the hall, he doesn't notice the PADLOCK and BRACKET which have been attached to his door.

He turns his lock, but the door won't open all the way.

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Damn!

Mike nervously looks over his shoulder to see if anyone is following him -- he's desperate to get inside.

MIKE

C'mon, Damn it!

Mike slams his fist on the door and rattles it. Much to his surprise, the padlock and bracket tear right out of the wall.

He ENTERS his apartment.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Mike closes the door and locks the dead bolt. He turns on the light and then quickly jumps back and turns it off again.

He nervously rushes to his window and looks outside for any sign of the men from the alley. He sees nothing and moves to another window; no sign of any trouble.

He moves into his bedroom and jumps, grabbing a BASEBALL BAT from the closet.

He gets into bed with the bat and pulls the covers up around him. He fearfully watches his front door as he lays silently in the dark.

CUT TO:

EXT. GATES BUILDING - NIGHT

The immense building in the heart of Manhattan towers over the adjacent structures. It is the headquarters of billionaire Jonathan Gates.

INT. GATES PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

We see JONATHAN GATES; despite the passage of time since World War II, he still appears to be in his mid-fifties.

The two men from the alley enter the room. They remove the Amulets and place them on Gates' desk.

GATES

Have you brought my prize?

The men are hesitant; they're visibly frightened of him.

CONTINUED:

MAN #2

Sir, we had the old man cornered,
but...he was able to transfer the mark to
some kid before he died.

Gates stands up and glares at the man. He slowly walks over to Man #2. In a great feat of strength, he picks up Man #2 by the collar. As he stares at the man, Gates' eyes GLOW with demonic fury.

With a wave of his hand he suddenly creates an ENERGY PORTAL in the middle of the office. It is a swirling conduit of green and blue light which CRACKLES with electric discharges.

GATES

You know better than to fail me.

With unbelievable strength, Gates hurls Man #2 into the portal, who screams in terror. Then, with a flash, the portal, and the man, disappear without a trace.

Gates takes a deep breath and continues.

GATES

Jacob knew that in his weakened state my Amulets would be more than enough to best him. He had to transfer the mark.

(beat)

Our time is growing short -- the new age is nearly upon us.

(beat)

Fail me again at your own peril.

MAN #1

S-sir, we found something in the alley that might lead us to him.

The man shows Gates the posters. He looks at them and smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The sun has risen bringing with it a new day in Manhattan.

Mike rolls over, hugging his baseball bat as if it were a person. He looks at his hand and notices the MARK. His eyes open wide as he recalls the events from the night before.

MIKE

(half asleep)

It wasn't a dream.

CONTINUED:

He jumps out of bed and runs toward the bathroom.

INT. MIKE'S BATHROOM - DAY

Mike is scrubbing the MARK furiously with soap and water, but it won't come off.

KNOCK! KNOCK! We HEAR a thunderous pounding on the door.

MRS. GARCIA

(OC)

Mr. Collins! Mr. Collins, I know you're in there! Mr. Collins open the door or I call the police!

Mike rolls his eyes in exasperation and runs for the door.

He opens the door, revealing Mrs. Garcia standing in her bathrobe with large hair curlers in her hair.

MRS. GARCIA

Get out -- get out, right now!

MIKE

Mrs. Garcia --

MRS. GARCIA

You were supposed to pay last night -- but you never showed up. Now, you're out! I call the cops on you!

MIKE

Mrs. Garcia, I can explain --

MRS. GARCIA

I gonna have you arrested for breaking this lock! This is going to come out of your deposit!

The phone RINGS. Mike picks it up.

MIKE

Hello?

EDDIE

(filtered)

Is that all you've got to say?

MIKE

Hang on, Eddie.

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Now, Mrs. Garcia, I've got the money, okay, I just ran into some trouble on the way home. Give me a minute, I'll go to my bank, deposit my friend's check, and you'll get your money -- okay?

EDDIE

(filtered)

I got your money, buddy, you hit the jackpot last night.

MIKE

Mrs. Garcia?

Mrs. Garcia's face has calmed down, the frown has been replaced by a gentle smile.

EDDIE

(filtered)

So you comin' over to collect or what?

MRS. GARCIA

That's okay, dear, take your time.

(beat)

You pay me later.

MIKE

Uh, yeah, I'll be by later, Eddie, thanks.

Mike hangs up.

MIKE

Yeah, sure, great. Thanks, Mrs. Garcia.

MRS. GARCIA

Call me Maria, okay?

MIKE

Sure, Maria. I'll see you later.

Mrs. Garcia smiles at him as he closes the door.

Confused, Mike sits and nervously stares at the MARK. Slowly, he begins massaging his aching temples.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Hours Later.

CONTINUED:

Mike is at work, organizing "Wilson for President" fliers by zip code for another bulk mailing. He reaches into a pile and picks up a candy bar. A half dozen crumpled candy bar wrappers and a near empty donut box sit on the table next to him.

Just then, Joe walks up and notices the MARK on his palm.

JOE

Hey, you been clubbin' around town without me?

(indicating the MARK)

Where's that stamp from?

MIKE

Stamp? Huh?

(beat)

Oh, this. Well, it's not exactly a stamp.

JOE

Don't tell me you went and got a tattoo?

Before Mike can respond, Anderson and Julie walk up.

ANDERSON

Don't disturb him, Joe, he has a lot of work today.

JOE

Right, boss.

(beat)

I'll catch you later, Mike.

Joe leaves. Mike takes another bite of his candy bar as he returns to work. Anderson picks up one of the empty wrappers.

ANDERSON

I see you're enjoying quite a nutritious breakfast here, Mr. Collins. Do you always eat this way?

MIKE

Not exactly, Mr. Anderson --

WILSON

(OC)

Bob.

Wilson walks over to them. Mike drops the candy bar and suddenly tries to look very busy.

CONTINUED: (2)

WILSON

Bob, I need to talk to you about a few things before my lunch meeting this afternoon.

ANDERSON

Sure thing, Bill.

They start to leave.

MIKE

Uh, Mayor Wilson.

Wilson and Anderson stop and turn to Mike.

MIKE

We've only spoken a few times before, sir, but I just wanted to say, I've really enjoyed working for your campaign. You're going to make an outstanding president, sir.

Mike holds out his hand -- the MARK apparent on his palm. Wilson shakes it.

As he does so, he smiles at Mike.

WILSON

What did you say your name was?

MIKE

Mike, sir, Mike Collins.

WILSON

Well, keep up the good work, Mike. It's a pleasure to have you on board.

(beat)

And call me Bill.

(beat)

Let's go, Bob.

Wilson walks off. Anderson shoots Mike a bemused look, then follows him.

MIKE

That was unbelievable.

(to Julie)

Don't you think so?

JULIE

I don't know, you've been busting your ass around here for the last couple of

(MORE)

CONTINUED: (3)

JULIE (cont'd)
weeks, it's about time someone took
notice.

MIKE

I have?

(bewildered)

You really think so?

(beat)

Hey, Julie -- how 'bout dinner tonight --
my treat.

Julie smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. AL'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

From a nearby rooftop, a SHADOWY FIGURE watches as Mike and Julie enter the all-you-can-eat restaurant in mid-town Manhattan.

INT. AL'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Mike is barely managing two plates that he has piled with enough food to feed TEN PEOPLE. Amused, Julie watches him as she prepares a modest dinner salad on her plate. As they walk to a table Mike grabs a donut from the dessert cart and sticks it in his mouth. Julie shakes her head at him but he merely smiles and shrugs.

CUT TO:

EXT. GATES PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

An elevator door opens and Wilson ENTERS Gates' luxurious penthouse. He is led by one of Gates' SERVANTS into a dimly lit room, with harsh shadows and dark colors. Wilson nervously approaches a pool which sits in the center of the room. The gelatinous liquid within emits a sickly green aura.

GATES

(OC)

Congratulations, you've moved ahead
another three points in the polls.

WILSON

That's what CNN and USA Today reported
this morning.

(beat)

I owe it all to you, sir.

We SEE Gates. He is sitting in the center of the pool,
flanked on both sides by robed SERVANTS who stand along the

CONTINUED:

pool's edge. The pool itself bubbles and emits tiny plumes of steam. The bath is a concoction of mystical ointments mixed with blood and other arcane fluids. The sight is revolting to Wilson, who tries to conceal his disgust.

Gates rises out of the bath and we SEE his torso. It is tattooed with several marks and symbols from throughout history. The Egyptian Ankh. The Pentagram. The Swastika. Witches Casting Circles. Symbols of all shapes and sizes are evident on his chest and back. The servants help him put on his robe and Gates moves to a nearby sofa. As he passes in front of large MIRROR, we SEE Gates true appearance in the reflection. He is frail and decayed, with pasty white skin and thin white hair. He appears to be hundreds of years old.

Gates walks over to a large dais. He is joined by Wilson. Gates picks up a remote control and presses a button on it. Instantly, a HOLOGRAM depicting the NINE PLANETS of our SOLAR SYSTEM appears. The planets are moving toward a planetary alignment.

GATES

The time is soon upon us -- the planets will converge in a matter of days.

WILSON

Are you close to obtaining the mark?

GATES

I have never been so close. Soon, I will achieve what none before me have been able to accomplish. Not Hitler. Not Caesar. None of them.

(beat)

In a few short weeks, you will have won the presidency, I will have won the mark, and together we will usher in a new age of power and influence.

WILSON

That will be a great day.

GATES

Indeed. There is, however, another matter.

(beat)

Someone from your campaign has become involved in one of my other business dealings.

(beat)

This could be a problem.

WILSON

I see. What would you like me to do?

CONTINUED: (2)

GATES

Nothing. It's best we leave you out of this for now.

WILSON

Why?

GATES

It's too dangerous. This individual will have to be...severed from your organization.

WILSON

I am but your humble servant, my lord. Do whatever you feel is necessary.

Gates smiles menacingly.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - NIGHT

Mike and Julie walk toward the subway station. Their easy going office chatter has been replaced by an uncomfortable silence. As he walks, Mike is popping dozens of AFTER DINNER MINTS into his mouth.

JULIE

You mind if I ask you a personal question?

MIKE

Uh, oh -- here we go. Ask away.

JULIE

Why do you gamble so much?

MIKE

You think I gamble too much?

JULIE

According to Joe, you gamble all the time.

MIKE

Oh, yeah? Remind me to kill Joe tomorrow.

JULIE

Seriously, why do you do it?

CONTINUED:

MIKE

I don't know, probably the same reason everyone else does. Just looking for a short cut on the road to the good life.

JULIE

Come on, I know you've got more ambition than that, or you wouldn't be working for Wilson.

MIKE

No, not me. I didn't get involved in this whole thing to further my political career.

(beat)

No offense.

JULIE

None taken.

(beat)

So then why did you join up -- you just love hanging up posters?

MIKE

Exactly, and handing out buttons -- that's a life long dream come true for me.

She laughs. They do not notice Gates' men behind them, discretely following their movements.

JULIE

Really, why do you stick around? Anderson dumps on you every day.

(beat)

What keeps you motivated?

MIKE

I don't know.

(beat)

Hope, I guess.

JULIE

Hope?

MIKE

Yeah, for a better future. The future that Wilson talks about in his campaign speeches. The ability to shape and influence the future is an awesome opportunity and one I'm not about to pass up.

(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE (cont'd)

(beat)

Even if it's from the mail room.

Julie shakes her head and gives him an incredulous look.

MIKE

What?

She laughs.

MIKE

(laughing)

What?!

JULIE

I just can't believe it.

(beat)

Underneath that compulsive gambler
exterior beats the heart of a true
idealist.

MIKE

(embarrassed)

Well, I don't know about all that.

Julie shoots him an intense look.

JULIE

I do.

Mike looks back and smiles, popping a mint into his mouth.

MIKE

Dinner mint?

EXT. SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

Mike and Julie arrive at the station.

ROOF TOP POV

Gates' men follow Mike and Julie down into the subway.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The shadowy figure scampers quickly across the rooftop and
jumps over the edge toward the street.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - NIGHT

Julie and Mike go through the turnstile.

CONTINUED:

JULIE

Thank you for walking me to the station,
maybe tomorrow we can --

Just then Julie abruptly stops as her eyes fixate on
something OFF CAMERA just behind Mike.

Mike turns to look.

Man #1 and Man #2 are standing just inside the turnstile.

Mike recognizes Man #1 as the one who attacked Jacob.

MIKE

Uh, oh.

(beat)

Julie, go to the pay phone -- call 911.

She rushes off.

MIKE

I don't know what your problem is,
fellas, but I think it's only fair to
warn you, so far, today's been my lucky
day.

Without saying a word, Man #1 and #2 move toward him.

Instinctively, Mike backs away, frightened.

MIKE

Now, guys, there's no need to get crazy
here.

Julie arrives at the pay phones, picks up the receiver, and
dials 911.

The men surround Mike.

MAN #1

You know why we're here. Let's make this
easy on everybody.

MIKE

All I know is -- you were involved in
that light show with Jacob.

MAN #2

The old man gave you something -- we want
it.

CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE

He didn't give me anything -- I don't
know what you're talking about!

(scared)

Julie!

JULIE

(to 911)

Send someone now!

Man #1 points toward Julie, Man #2 nods.

Suddenly, Man #2 grabs Julie and hangs up the phone. She
SCREAMS.

Mike turns to help, but Man #1 rushes forward and grabs him
by the arm.

He struggles to get free.

MIKE

Get away from me!

He flails his arm and HURLS the man across the station. He
IMPACTS the wall with a huge CRASH.

Mike looks at his hand, disbelievingly.

Man #2 reacts with surprise and loosens his grip on Julie.
She breaks free and runs to Mike.

JULIE

Let's get out of here!

He is still shocked by his sudden burst of strength.

JULIE

Mike!

Man #1, dazed, lays unconscious on the floor.

JULIE

Mike!

Mike snaps out of it.

MIKE

Yeah, let's go.

He and Julie run toward the exit.

CONTINUED: (3)

Man #2 starts after them, but he suddenly stops, his eyes widening with surprise. Without making a sound, he falls to the ground.

A beautiful woman emerges out of the shadows behind him, she is the person who has been spying on all of them from the rooftops. Her name is FALKON.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Mike holds out his hand and flags a TAXI. It pulls over next to them. He opens the door and puts Julie inside.

MIKE

Go home, lock the doors -- I'll call you later.

JULIE

You're not coming?

MIKE

No, it's me they're after -- just go -- it'll be all right.

(to the cab driver)

Go!

The cab takes off and Mike, looking around nervously, runs off down the street.

INT. TATTOO PARLOR - NIGHT

We SEE Mike, hand outstretched, in the middle of a mid-town tattoo parlor. A big, burly TATTOO ARTIST is making preparations to go to work on Mike.

TATTOO GUY

You're sure about this?

MIKE

Just get it off me.

The artist leans toward Mike's outstretched hand with the BUZZING needle and aims it at the MARK. He touches it, and the needle goes flying out of his hand and impacts the wall.

The artist and Mike look the direction the needle went, with stunned expressions on their faces.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S SHOWER - NIGHT

Mike is in his shower, furiously scrubbing the MARK with a wash cloth. A can of AJAX CLEANSER sits on the shower ledge.

He stops and looks at his hand, it's raw from the scrubbing, but the MARK is still there.

Dejected, Mike turns off the shower and EXITS.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We SEE Mike sprawled out on his bed, asleep.

CLOSE UP: on Mike's face as he sleeps.

The CAMERA moves to a HIGH ANGLE, we now see another figure crouched on the edge of Mike's bed. It is Falcon.

Falcon watches Mike contemptuously as he sleeps. She sits cross-legged holding a WOODEN STAFF in her lap. The carved inscription reveals that it is the same staff used by Malachi in the opening scene.

Mike, now dreaming, begins to thrash about in his bed.

MIKE

(mumbling)

Honey, you know I love you --

Falcon can't stand it anymore. She takes her staff and pokes Mike in the chest. Mike fidgets and GIGGLES. Falcon pokes him again, this time harder.

Mike turns and slowly opens his eyes. He looks directly at Falcon. Half asleep, Mike doesn't react. Suddenly, his eyes widen and he springs up; he grabs his baseball bat from the edge of his bed and brandishes it at Falcon.

MIKE

If I'm not dreaming, it's your ass.

Falcon snickers.

FALCON

Shut up.

MIKE

Excuse me?

CONTINUED:

FALKON

I said shut up.

Mike can't believe Falcon's audacity and swings his bat straight at her. With a minimum of effort, she hooks the bat with her staff and sends it flying across the room.

Mike springs toward her, but Falcon strikes him with the bottom end of the staff directly in his stomach. Mike slumps back in bed, the wind knocked out of him.

FALKON

You finished?

MIKE

(gasping for air)

Yeah.

(beat)

Look, lady, I've got no money --

FALKON

(raising her finger to her mouth)

Shh.

MIKE

What do you want?

FALKON

I can't believe it. I can't believe you're the one.

MIKE

The one?

Falkon looks around the room observing the dirty laundry and spoiled food. She sighs in disgust.

FALKON

I spend half my life training, studying, preparing...and a punk like you comes along and takes it all away.

MIKE

Get the hell out of here before I call --

Falkon points the staff at Mike in a threatening manner.

FALKON

You're pushing me, pal. Don't push me. Just listen.

CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE

(wincing in pain)

Look, I don't know what you're talking about. I don't even know you!

Falkon suddenly hooks Mike's hand with the end of her staff, twisting it around so the MARK is showing.

FALKON

(disgusted)

This is what I'm talking about -- the mark.

Mike pulls his hand away, and shoots Falkon a surprised look.

MIKE

You know about this?

Falkon snickers.

FALKON

Yeah, I know about it. Jacob was supposed to give it to me.

MIKE

Listen, lady -- you've got my attention, all right -- I'm all ears.

(beat)

Please, if you know what this thing is, fill me in.

FALKON

(angrily)

That "thing" is the mark of ages. It is the power of life and death, it's the balance between darkness and light.

MIKE

I don't get it?

Falkon takes a deep breath to calm herself.

FALKON

Excalibur. The Ark of the Covenant. The Holy Grail. None are as important as the mark.

(beat)

It has existed since the beginning of recorded time -- and it has passed countless hands -- you're not the first to possess it and you won't be the last.

CONTINUED: (3)

MIKE

I don't want to be the first or the last
-- look, this was supposed to be yours,
right?

FALKON

Correct.

Mike grabs her hand.

MIKE

(boisterous)

Here, take it. You're the one! You are
the one!

Mike let's go.

MIKE

Now run!

(beat)

Go on -- right out that door.

Falkon stands up, annoyed.

FALKON

Look at your hand.

Mike hesitantly looks at his hand. The MARK is still there.

FALKON

You don't control the mark yet. Right
now, the only way you can transfer it is
at the moment of death.

(beat)

Which can be arranged.

Mike eyes her with a new seriousness.

MIKE

Who are you?

FALKON

I'm the person who saved your butt
tonight.

MIKE

"Saved my butt?" What're you talking
about?

FALKON

After you tossed the guy tonight at the
subway and ran -- I made sure the other
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (4)

FALKON (cont'd)
one didn't come after you.

Mike shakes his head in disbelief.

MIKE

Wow.

(beat)

What's your name?

Falkon doesn't respond.

MIKE

You do have a name, don't you?

FALKON

Falkon.

MIKE

Okay. Thanks for the help tonight,
Falkon.

(beat)

I'm Mike, or did you know that already?

Falkon walks over to the mantle and picks up a picture of
Mike and his MOTHER. She glances at it and puts it down.

FALKON

No, I didn't. It's not important.

(beat)

What is important is teaching you what
you'll need to know in order to survive
with the mark.

(beat)

We'll begin tomorrow.

MIKE

What?

FALKON

Your life is in great danger. You are
now part of something much bigger than
you could possibly imagine. Your only
hope of survival is to cooperate with me.

(beat)

Take the first ferry to Liberty Island
tomorrow morning. I'll meet you there.

Falkon walks toward Mike's window.

MIKE

Wait a second -- you haven't told me
anything.

CONTINUED: (5)

FALKON

Don't worry about those men. We shouldn't have any more guests until morning, and by then you'll be gone.

(beat)

But I'll be close by -- just in case.

MIKE

You're going to watch my apartment?

FALKON

Yes.

MIKE

Then why not...stay here.

Falkon EXITS through the open window.

Mike stares at the MARK, shaking his head in disbelief.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND FERRY - DAY

The next day.

Holding several donuts, Mike is standing near the bow of a ferry. He takes several bites from his donut and gazes at the immense STATUE OF LIBERTY in the distance.

Suddenly, Mike is startled by a VISION of the Statue and the island collapsed in SMOLDERING RUINS.

MIKE

Whoa!

The vision vanishes as quickly as it appeared. Mike shakes his head, recovering from the unexpected sensation. He looks curiously at the donut and puts it back. He quickly begins to eat another one, all the while looking around for any sign of Falkon.

FALKON

(OC)

Sleep well?

Startled, Mike looks to his left to see Falkon standing along side of him.

MIKE

(with food in his mouth)

No.

CONTINUED:

FALKON

That's too bad -- you need all the sleep you can get. The mark exerts a great physical toll on the bearer.

(beat)

That's why you've been eating so much for the past two days.

Mike stops chewing his donut.

MIKE

Really?

(beat)

I knew that.

FALKON

(irritated)

Come on. We've got work to do.

Falkon walks forward. Mike takes a bite of his donut and follows her.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBWAY - MORNING

The police have surrounded the subway that Mike and Man #1 and Man #2 had their fight in last night. A new henchmen, ABRAMS, is observing the scene. Like the men who battled Jacob, he wears an AMULET around his neck, but he is more intimidating looking than the previous henchmen, with stern features, and a long scar down his cheek. He is talking on a cellular phone.

ABRAMS

I've finally found them.

(beat)

They're both dead. The kid must have awakened the power of the mark.

GATES

(filtered)

Those fools. I never should have trusted them with this. Where did you find them?

ABRAMS

A subway near Wilson's office.

GATES

(filtered)

He won't go back to the office.

(beat)

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

GATES (cont'd)

Go to his apartment -- see if you can pick up his trail there.

ABRAMS

Yes, sir.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - DAY

Falkon and Mike are standing at the base of Lady Liberty. Biting into his final donut, Mike watches Falkon as she nears the wall.

MIKE

The only thing I can figure is you're going to make me do something unbelievably dangerous as part of my training -- like climbing the Statue of Liberty without a rope.

Ignoring him, Falkon looks around to make sure that nobody is watching, then touches the wall as if feeling for something.

MIKE

Well, I hate to tell you this -- I've got this thing about heights and --

Suddenly, Falkon triggers a control and a slab in the wall slides away revealing a passage.

Surprised, Mike walks over and looks into the darkened corridor. He shoots Falkon a bemused look.

MIKE

Your place?

Falkon makes no effort to conceal her irritation.

FALKON

Follow me.

Falkon and Mike enter the passage, the slab moves back into place as they disappear into the darkness.

INT. PASSAGEWAY - NO SENSE OF DAY OR NIGHT

Falkon and Mike descend the staircase. She is indifferent to the dark surroundings, having performed this routine countless times, but Mike is nervous, unsure of exactly what he is getting into.

MIKE

Come on, Falkon.

CONTINUED:

FALKON

What?

MIKE

What is this place?

FALKON

Frederic Bartholdi was one of us.

MIKE

That's great.

(beat)

Who is Frederic Bartholdi?

FALKON

He designed the Statue of Liberty.

(beat)

Don't you know anything about history?

MIKE

Sorry, I must've been absent that day.

So what do you mean "he was one of us" --
who's us?

FALKON

"We" are Disciples of the Mark. Our
group has existed since the dawn of
mankind. My family has served its cause
for ages. Our lives are dedicated to
preserving and protecting the mark.

MIKE

So you guys built all this -- like as a
headquarters or something?

FALKON

Something like that. This is one of our
many safe houses.

INT. CORRIDOR - NO SENSE OF DAY OR NIGHT

Falkon and Mike reach the bottom of the staircase and proceed
down a darkly lit, dank corridor.

MIKE

It feels kind of weird in here.

FALKON

We're underwater.

MIKE

Terrific.

INT. DOORWAY - NO SENSE OF DAY OR NIGHT

They arrive at a large, metal doorway at the end of the corridor. It looks more like a bank vault, with no door knob or key hole, and a long horizontal slot at eye level.

Falkon **KNOCKS** loudly with her staff.

MIKE

Forget your key?

FALKON

We don't need one.

(beat)

He'll let us in.

MIKE

Who?

FALKON

Ozymandias.

MIKE

Ozymandias?

Suddenly, the eye slot **OPENS**, and a pair of piercing eyes gaze out at Falkon and Mike. It is apparent from the look in his eyes that **OZY** is a peculiar man, but his wild, frenzied stare tells the most about him. Ozy's "eccentric."

OZYMANDIAS

What is it, Falkon?

Ozy's eyes nervously dart back and forth between Falkon and Mike.

FALKON

(patiently)

Let me in, Ozy.

OZYMANDIAS

But who is this with you?

FALKON

It's Michael.

(beat)

He's the new bearer of the mark, remember?

OZYMANDIAS

Show me the mark.

CONTINUED:

Mike holds up his palm, the MARK is apparent in the center. Ozymandias eyes widen with great awe. He quickly closes the eye slot and slowly opens the door.

Mike shoots Falcon a confused look as they enter the chamber.

INT. LIBERTY BASE ENTRANCE - NO SENSE OF DAY OR NIGHT

As Ozy holds the door open, Falcon ENTERS the vast chamber. Without hesitation, she moves toward one of several passage ways.

FALCON

(to Mike)

Wait here -- I'll be back in a minute.

As Mike ENTERS, he stops and looks at Ozy who is holding the door open for him. Ozy stares at Mike with near adulation, his eyes wide and unblinking. Ozy extends his hand as if welcoming him into his home. Mike forces a smile and takes a few more steps inward. Ozy quickly slams the door shut and locks it, causing Mike to flinch.

OZYMANDIAS

(to Mike)

My name is Ozymandias, king of kings,
look upon my works, ye mighty, and
despair!

MIKE

Right on.

Ozy scurries down the passage after Falcon.

Mike studies the vast chamber, taking it all in. It is circular, with aged walls carved from stone and several passageways leading to other unseen chambers.

Lining the walls are display cabinets, each featuring artifacts from different periods in world history.

Hanging on the wall near Mike is a painting, a seemingly ordinary depiction of MOSES PARTING OF THE RED SEA. But there's something peculiar about it. He walks over to investigate.

He leans close to the canvas and examines Moses. Clearly depicted on his right palm is the MARK. Mike's eyes widen with astonishment; he looks down at his own hand and the real MARK.

He quickly moves to a nearby cabinet. Inside are several artifacts from NAZI GERMANY.

CONTINUED:

Mike looks closely at a chart which shows how the SWASTIKA was a design based on the shape of the MARK. Near it, a photograph shows ADOLF HITLER showing a photograph of the MARK to one of his generals, who we recognize as Gates.

Mike looks at his palm again, this time, with panic stricken eyes. He quickly moves toward the doorway and is about to exit.

FALKON (OC)
Going somewhere?

Startled, Mike quickly turns around.

MIKE
Just thought I'd go for a walk -- I'm
feeling a bit...claustrophobic.

FALKON
You're also a bad liar. What's the
problem?
(beat)
If it's Ozy, you don't have to worry
about him, he's harmless -- he's just
been...cooped up here too long.

Ozy emerges from one of the other passages. He is
accompanied by BAPABBAS, a younger man who, like Ozy, appears
to be disenfranchised. Behind them, several more NOMADS
emerge -- some men, some women -- all with the same lost
look.

OZYMANDIAS
Leaving?!
(beat)
No, you can't leave?! Not yet.
(to Falkon)
He's not ready.

FALKON
He's not leaving.

MIKE
Oh, yeah, watch me. I'm not staying here
-- that's for damn sure.

FALKON
What's the matter with you?!

Mike walks over to the display cabinet with the Nazi relics.

CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE

This is what's wrong with me -- I was bad in history, but I recognize this guy. You didn't tell me I was joining a club where Adolf Hitler used to be a member.

FALKON

Just calm down.

MIKE

No, I don't want any part of this place or the mark!

FALKON

You don't understand -- Hitler and men like him are the reason we exist.

MIKE

So What are the bad guys called -- the "Agents of Doom?"

FALKON

Agents of Chaos.

MIKE

Of course.

FALKON

We exist to control the passage of the mark from one person to the next. Wars have been waged in pursuit of its power and countless lives have been lost defending it. Jacob was trained for years to take possession of it -- so was I. Until you came along.

MIKE

Sorry to rain on your parade.

FALKON

Now, I can show you what you'll need to know in order to survive, but you have to trust me.

(beat)

There has never been a time as dire as this. Every new millennium the nine planets converge, creating a cosmic storm that could lay waste to the entire planet. It's going to happen again May fifth.

CONTINUED: (3)

MIKE

Is that what's been causing all the craziness with the earthquakes an' stuff?

FALKON

Yes, and there's more to come. Some believe the great flood was caused by a similar alignment.

(beat)

You've heard of Noah, right?

MIKE

Is this for real?

FALKON

Very. The geological ramifications could be disastrous. Whoever possesses the mark at that time will either save the world or destroy it. If the Agents of Chaos seize the mark then a new age of darkness will fall over the world and all hope will be lost.

MIKE

An' what will we do with it?

FALKON

We will bring about a new age of enlightenment and keep the peace and order that we've fought so hard to establish.

MIKE

Where do I fit into all of this?

FALKON

For better or worse, Jacob chose you. I have to respect that and train you to take responsibility for the mark.

(beat)

Do you accept?

MIKE

It doesn't appear that I have much of a choice, do I?

Falkon nods her head, "no."

FALKON

Ozy -- why don't you give Mike his clothes.

CONTINUED:

FALKON
What?

MIKE
Nothing.

FALKON
Don't let our looks deceive you -- we're
more formidable than we appear.

Mike looks up at the lid as Ozy and Barabbas move it into
final position.

MIKE
Falkon, I --

FALKON
No questions.
(beat)
Listen and learn.

MIKE
But --

FALKON
Shh.

Having placed the lid on top of the cylinder, Ozy locks the
clamps into place, imprisoning Mike in the tube. He jumps
down and runs over to a nearby control panel.

OZYMANDIAS
Ready, Falkon.

MIKE
Ready? Ready for what?

Falkon lets a sly smile crease her lips.

FALKON
Lesson number one.
(beat)
Whenever you're ready, Ozy.

Ozy works the controls and WATER starts to rush into the
tube.

MIKE
What the --
(beat)
Hey, this is cold!

CONTINUED: (2)

FALKON

Concentrate -- the mark can regulate your body temperature.

The water continues to rush in and quickly rises to knee level. Ozy looks on, amused.

MIKE

It's a little hard to concentrate -- how about we start with something easier?

FALKON

The best way to teach a child how to swim is to throw him into the water.

MIKE

So what am I supposed to do -- escape?! I'm no Houdini!

FALKON

Neither was Houdini -- how do you think he performed all those tricks -- he bore the mark for years.

Mike struggles with the lid, trying to open it.

FALKON

Besides, you don't need to escape -- you can't drown.

He shoots her a panicked look as the water reaches chin level.

MIKE

You're crazy -- get me out of here!

Ozy and Falcon look on dispassionately as the water rises above his head and completely submerges him.

He opens his eyes and pounds furiously on the tube, holding his mouth tightly shut.

Falcon casually strolls up to the tube.

FALKON

Open your mouth, Michael -- it's okay!

He furiously shakes his head "No."

FALKON

You're going to run out of air soon, and you'll have to open your mouth.

CONTINUED: (3)

He shakes his head "No" again.

FALKON
Fine, we'll wait.

Falkon watches as Mike struggles to hold his breath. His eyes widen as his lungs begin to burn -- he pounds several more times on the tube, but to no avail -- Falkon refuses to let him out.

Finally, he can no longer endure the agony, and opens his mouth in what he believes is a final desperate scream for help.

Silence.

Mike looks through the tube at Falkon, suddenly realizing that he isn't drowning, that he is BREATHING WATER.

FALKON
You see, I told you.

Mike smiles. He blows several bubbles and puckers his lips like he's a fish. He's like a child who's discovered a new toy.

Falkon can't help but allow a slight smile in response to his antics.

CUT TO:

MIKE

outside the tank, several minutes later.

MIKE
How is it possible?

FALKON
The mark protects you. It gave you the strength to throw the man in the subway just as it gave you the ability to breathe underwater.

MIKE
(excitedly)
What else can I do?

FALKON
You'll be able to fly.

MIKE
Fly?! Superman style?

CONTINUED:

FALKON

Not exactly.

MIKE

What else?

FALKON

You'll age no further.

MIKE

What?! But Jacob was an old man.

FALKON

He was an old man when he received the mark. Jacob was almost 100 years old when he passed away.

(beat)

It will be a burden for you, Mike, as it was for him -- staying young while those you care about grow old and die.

MIKE

So you mean...I'll stay young and pretty forever?

FALKON

This isn't a joke -- there are no limits to the mark's power. That's why we have to train you, so you can summon its power on your own.

Mike thinks it over.

MIKE

Well, if nothing else, I can get a job as a magician.

(beat)

Okay, "Yoda" -- let's get to it.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

-- In a wooded area, early morning, Mike starts running and jumps in the air, crashing flat on his face. Behind him, Falcon shakes her head in disgust.

-- At Mike's apartment, Abrams and several of Gates' goons quietly break in, searching for him.

-- In the Liberty Base, Mike bends an aluminum baseball bat with his bare hands.

CONTINUED:

-- Back in the wooded area, early morning, Mike starts running and jumps into the air, suddenly EXPLODING with speed, like unseen rockets have just ignited in his feet. He careens out of control and SMASHES into a nearby tree.

-- Standing atop the Statue of Liberty, late at night, Mike's eyes are tightly shut. Finally he opens them. Falcon looks at him with a devilish gleam in her eye. Giving him a hard shove, she pushes him over the railing. Mike streaks to the concrete below and lands with a huge CRASH! He opens his eyes and looks around, realizing that he is unharmed. Looking irritated, he gets up, and dusts off his clothes.

-- Abrams and Gates' goons begin to ransack Mike's place, searching for clues to his whereabouts.

-- In the wooded area, mid morning, Mike takes another running start, this time tripping over a branch just as his flying power ignites. He streaks like a bullet and CRASHES into another tree.

-- With one hand, Mike is lifting a bed with Ozymandias lying on top. Pressing the bed up and down, Mike does several repetitions while Ozy holds on, his crazed eyes wide with fear. Mike gives Falcon a self-assured wink.

-- In Mike's apartment, Gates' goon walks up and shakes his head at Abrams, they've found no clue to Mike's whereabouts. They leave.

-- In the wooded area, around dusk, Mike looks over at Falcon.

MIKE

Double or nothing.

She smirks as he takes another running start, this time successfully launching. He is flying along, several feet above the ground. He maneuvers flawlessly through the trees, seemingly able to control the subtleties of acceleration. Nearing a lake, he tries to slow down, but can't. He begins to skid out of control, plowing dirt into the air as he skids toward the water. He covers his eyes as he CRASHES into the lake creating a huge WAVE. A moment later, he comes up from under the water, gasping for air. Falcon arrives at the lake shore. She takes a long exasperated breath. Time to go home.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBERTY BASE BEDROOM - NO SENSE OF DAY OR NIGHT

Sunday night.

CONTINUED:

Mike lays quietly on a bed eating from a pile of donuts.
Falkon knocks on Mike's door and ENTERS.

FALKON

Get some sleep. We've got a full day ahead of us tomorrow.

MIKE

Look, this weekend's been fun, but I've got to go home.

FALKON

Excuse me?

MIKE

Tomorrow's Monday. I've got to go home -- go to work.

FALKON

Mike, you're not leaving here. Not until we finish what we started.

Mike hits the mute button on his remote.

MIKE

What?

FALKON

The Agents of Chaos will be waiting for you at your apartment -- it's too dangerous. I'm sorry, you'll have to stay here.

MIKE

But what about my job? And my love life? Things were just starting to pick up with Julie and...

FALKON

The Mayor will get elected without you. As for "Julie," forget about her, the further you stay away from her, the safer she'll be. Look, Mike, if you're serious about bearing the mark and honoring Jacob, then this is how it has to be.

MIKE

Look, this is not what I want out of life. I didn't ask for any of this.

FALKON

Neither did we. I've been straight with you about all of your options. Stay and
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

FALKON (cont'd)

learn, and bear the mark with honor and discipline, or leave and be hunted. You're a marked man, Michael -- if we're to survive, you need to stay focused and alert.

Falkon pulls his door shut with a large CLANK!

Mike sits on his bed, looking like a prisoner who's just been told he's been given a life sentence.

CUT TO:

INT. GATES PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Abrams and the men stand before Gates and Wilson, who are seated on his couches, sipping brandy.

ABRAMS

There was nothing to indicate where he's gone, sir. Do you want us to maintain surveillance?

GATES

No -- they won't let him go back there.

WILSON

They?

GATES

He's gone underground -- and he's receiving help, I'm certain of it. No doubt the Disciples have made their contact.

ABRAMS

He's probably left the city by now, sir.

GATES

No, the mark is near -- I feel it.

(to Wilson)

You're certain about his family?

WILSON

His father's dead -- his mother lives in California.

Gates stands, and begins pacing the penthouse.

GATES

Girlfriend?

CONTINUED:

WILSON

Apparently he doesn't have one right now. However, he seems rather taken with one of my accounting personnel -- Julie Parkes.

Gates smiles; a plan is formulating.

GATES

Really?

(beat)

Does she deposit your campaign contributions?

WILSON

Of course, bright and early every morning -- at First Manhattan.

(beat)

What are you thinking?

GATES

If we can't find Mr. Collins, we'll simply have to flush him out. And I think we've just happened upon the ideal bait.

Gates smiles menacingly.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBERTY BASE - NO SENSE OF DAY OR NIGHT.

Mike is attempting to escape the base, moving carefully and quietly through the main chamber toward the front door.

He arrives at the door and reaches for the handle.

OZYMANDIAS

(OC)

You can't leave.

Mike turns to face Ozymandias and Barabbas who run up to him.

MIKE

Look, I'm just taking an early jog, you guys, okay?

OZYMANDIAS

Oh, Falcon wouldn't like that. I can't let you go.

Mike smiles and places his hands on Ozy. Barabbas looks on, cowering behind him.

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Look, Ozy, I'm just going home to grab a few things, then I'll come right back. Falcon won't even know I left.

OZYMANDIAS

I'm sorry, Michael, I wish I could help, but I have my orders.

Mike is frustrated, he takes a long breathe as he turns away from Ozy.

MIKE

All right, but you're forcing me to do this.

Suddenly, Mike spins around holding up his hand, brandishing the MARK at them.

MIKE

You see this -- this is the mark. The mark, you understand?!

Ozy nervously shakes his head, "Yes."

MIKE

And since I have the one and only all powerful mark, I suggest you step aside while I exit the premises, okay, Ozy?

Wide-eyed, Ozy shakes his head "Yes." Barabbas, cowering behind him, watches nervously.

MIKE

(more forceful)

Back off!

(beat)

Get back to bed.

OZYMANDIAS

Of course, Mike -- I'm sorry.

(to Barabbas)

Come on.

Ozy and Barabbas take several more steps backward before scampering off down one of the passageways. Mike smiles.

He moves to the door and quickly opens it.

CUT TO:

EXT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Nervously looking for any sign of trouble, Mike quickly ENTERS his building.

INT. MIKE'S HALLWAY - DAY

Mike hurries toward his door, but quickly stops, noticing that it is slightly ajar. He carefully approaches it.

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Inside, Mike can't believe the disarray. The place has been completely ransacked. He stands amid the debris, uncertain of what to do next.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - DAY

Julie walks through the bustling Monday morning foot traffic toward the First Manhattan bank.

EXT. FIRST MANHATTAN BANK - DAY

Parked in front of the bank, we SEE a nondescript blue van.

INT. VAN - DAY

Abrams and six of Gates' SOLDIERS sit in the van. They wear state-of-the-art body armor and automatic machine guns on shoulder straps. They are outfitted like militia commandos.

Abrams watches Julie as she walks to the front of the bank and ENTERS.

He picks up a cellular phone and calls Gates.

ABRAMS

She's inside.

GATES

(filtered)

Proceed.

Abrams hangs up and nods to his men. They all put on black masks to cover their faces.

ABRAMS

(to the men)

Remember, conventional tactics only.
Gates doesn't want us using the Amulets
in public -- understood?

CONTINUED:

The men nod.

ABRAMS

Let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. FIRST MANHATTAN BANK - DAY

Julie is at a TELLER window, depositing Wilson's check.

TELLER

How was your weekend, Julie?

JULIE

(laughing)

I worked, as usual -- how 'bout you?

INT. BANK DOOR - DAY

Abrams and the soldiers ENTER from the street door. Abrams quickly strikes the GUARD knocking him out.

INT. BANK - DAY

Abrams fires his weapon into the air. Several GUARDS reach for their guns. One of Gates' soldiers opens FIRE on a guard, riddling him with bullets. Julie reacts in horror and dives to the ground for cover as do the other CUSTOMERS.

Gates' soldiers quickly push the other guards face down to the ground.

ABRAMS

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a robbery.
I urge you to cooperate unless you want
to end up like that man over there.

(indicating the dead guard)

If you do what we say, you'll get out of
this alive.

SOLDIER #1 walks up to Abrams.

ABRAMS

(quietly)

Make sure the silent alarm's been
tripped.

(beat)

Then find the girl.

Soldier #1 nods. He heads toward the BANK MANAGER'S DESK.
The MANAGER sits with his hands in the air, terrified.
Soldier #1 ruthlessly throws him face down to the ground. He

CONTINUED:

sits behind the desk and triggers the alarm button on the floor. He nods at Abrams.

Julie looks up from the ground, her eyes wide with fear, as Soldier #1 and SOLDIER #2 begin to search the line of customers, checking each of their faces.

Finally, they arrive at her and pick her off the ground.

SOLDIER #2

Come on.

JULIE

(terrified)

What?! -- No!

SOLDIER #2

Shut up and come on.

Soldier #2 drags a trembling Julie to Abrams. He lights a cigarette and eyes her carefully.

ABRAMS

Do everything I say, and you'll live.
Understand?

Trembling, Julie nods, "Yes." Abrams removes a 9mm handgun from his chest holster. He pulls back the hammer, she makes a terrified GASP.

ABRAMS

(to Soldier #2)

Take her up front, stick this in her face. Make sure everyone gets a good look.

Julie appears frightened and confused as Soldier #2 drags her off toward the front of the bank.

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Mike is picking up the debris that is scattered throughout the apartment. He is angry, his life, such as it was, has been demolished along with his apartment.

MIKE

(to himself)

"Disciples of the mark," "Agents of
Chaos." Who needs it?

CONTINUED:

He picks up his remote, and flips on the TV. He begins changing the channels. Sportscenter. The Weather Channel. CNN. A live shot from mid-town Manhattan gets his attention.

CNN REPORTER

Again, we don't know exactly how many suspects are inside, but some say as many as five men entered First Manhattan bank approximately thirty minutes ago.

(beat)

To this point, they've made no demands, but they're using at least one customer as a hostage. Let's go live to that shot.

The CAMERA cuts to a live shot of the front of the bank. The shot TIGHTENS on the front door and we SEE Julie, her faced pressed against the glass, with Soldier #2 pointing the gun to her head. Shocked, Mike approaches the TV.

He begins to pace back and forth.

MIKE

(to himself)

Oh, man! Omigosh -- Julie!

(beat)

Gotta do something. Gotta help her!

(beat)

But how?! Damn!

Suddenly, Mike looks at the MARK.

MIKE

(to himself)

That's it! The mark. Gotta use the mark!

(beat)

What do I need?!

(beat)

A disguise -- I need a disguise!

Mike runs for his closet and rifles through a pile of clothes. He quickly finds a black leather biker jacket and puts it on over his T-shirt and jeans. He then pulls down a black motorcycle helmet from his top shelf and places it over his head.

He closes the door, revealing a full length mirror hanging on the front side, and gives his impromptu "costume" a quick inspection.

MIKE

Not bad.

CONTINUED: (2)

He races out his front door.

EXT. APARTMENT ROOF - DAY

Mike emerges on the roof and jogs to the edge, looking down. He turns around and runs back a few feet to give himself room. He takes off at a full sprint and runs toward the edge, stopping just before he reaches it. He looks down again, clearly nervous about the drop.

He backs up even further this time, and runs full force and jumps off the edge.

He explodes with a sudden burst of speed, as if rockets in his shoes have ignited, and flies away, completely out of control.

EXT. ROOFTOPS - DAY

Like a cannonball, Mike screams over the rooftops, knocking down antennas and clothes lines as he races through the air.

EXT. BUILDING - DAY

Mike flails his arms, SCREAMING, as he tries to control his flight path, inadvertently CRASHES into a building. He then plummets downward toward the city streets.

Twisting his body in mid-air, he uses his feet to push against the building and propels himself forward again, stopping his descent.

EXT. BUILDINGS - DAY

Regaining a measure of control, he flies UPWARD, past the level of the buildings and points himself toward mid-town Manhattan and the bank.

CUT TO:

INT. BANK - DAY

Abrams lights another cigarette as he converses with Soldier #3.

ABRAMS

Remember, as long as we have the girl --
he'll do whatever we say.

SOLDIER #3

Right.

CONTINUED:

Still pressing a scared Julie against the window, Soldier #2 spies something in the distance.

SOLDIER #2

I think I see something coming down the boulevard. Something...flying.

Abrams shoots Soldier #3 a confused look.

ABRAMS

Police helicopter?

SOLDIER #2

No, it looks more like --

ABRAMS

What?!

Both Julie and Soldier #2's eyes widen at the sight of something streaking toward them.

SOLDIER #2

Holy shit!

Soldier #2 lets go of Julie and hits the deck. She does the same just as Mike recklessly CRASHES through the front door glass, shattering it into a million pieces.

Abrams and the other soldiers immediately grab their weapons as Mike skids to a stop. Abrams and the Soldiers form a line, like a firing squad, and point their weapons at Mike.

Slowly, Mike gets off the ground, shaking his head from the force of the impact. He casually saunters toward Gates' men.

MIKE

Uh...you guys...better give up.

(beat)

Go ahead and drop your weapons.

Abrams gives his men a wry smile and FIRES his machine gun. The other Soldiers join him in kind.

Mike instinctively drops to the ground, lowering his head behind his flailing hands, but instead of wounding him, the barrage of gunfire deflects off his hands and arms. The men continue the onslaught until they are drained of bullets.

Realizing that he is unharmed, Mike slowly rises to his feet.

He quickly assumes a classic BRUCE LEE/MARTIAL ARTS stance and makes the accompanying high-pitched BATTLE CRY.

CONTINUED: (2)

Abrams and the Soldiers give each other an uneasy look. Abrams gestures for Soldier #3 to take the forward position. Soldier #3 pulls a 9mm from his shoulder holster and walks toward Mike, FIRING the gun.

Mike doesn't cower this time, he walks forward to meet the Soldier as the bullets deflect harmlessly away from him.

The two meet and Mike grabs the barrel of the gun, BENDING it upward in a feat of super human strength. He then grabs the Soldier by the collar and hoists him in the air. Julie and the other customers can't believe what they are seeing.

MIKE

(to the Soldier)

I guess it's just not your lucky day.

Mike flings the Soldier through the air into a nearby desk.

The other Soldiers immediately react and race toward Mike. He strikes SOLDIER #4 in the stomach, doubling him over and pushes Soldier #2 with such force that he goes flying into Soldier #1 who is behind him, and they both fly over the top of the Teller counter.

SOLDIER #5 runs up and punches Mike, but his fist merely reverberates uncontrollably. Mike holds the Soldier by the collar and punches with such force, the Soldier goes flying all the way across the bank through the shattered front door, finally crashing onto the hood of a parked Police car outside.

Mike stops and looks at his hand -- momentarily it turns CHROME SILVER. He shakes it and it returns to normal.

From across the bank, SOLDIER #6 opens fire at Mike with his re-loaded machine gun. Mike explodes from the ground and flies toward the man, his hands outstretched, deflecting the incoming bullets. He impacts the Soldier full force, sending him flying through the wall to the outside of the bank.

Mike turns to deal with the final robber. Abrams.

He slowly walks toward him.

MIKE

You boys picked the wrong bank to hold up today.

ABRAMS

We'll see about that.

CONTINUED: (3)

Abrams pulls out a knife and brandishes it at Mike. Mike moves toward him with his hands raised, instinctively wary of the blade. They begin to circle each other as Abrams takes several tentative jabs at Mike. Finally, Abrams unleashes with a huge thrust, right at Mike's chest. Mike dodges it, grabs Abrams' arm, and breaks it over his knee.

Abrams SCREAMS in pain as he drops to the floor.

MIKE

Told ya.

Mike walks over to Julie and helps her off the ground. All around them we SEE the bodies of the unconscious Soldiers.

MIKE

You all right, miss?

JULIE

I think so...I just...I don't know.

She looks at him, disbelievingly.

JULIE

Who are you?

MIKE

Just your friendly neighborhood superhero.

(beat)

Gotta go.

Mike LAUNCHES and flies through the front of the bank.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Mike FLASHES past the crowd of on-lookers, flying upward. He inadvertently IMPACTS a building, which causes him to ricochet away from the bank area at lightning fast speed.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Mike regains control of his flight in mid-air and lands in an alley way several blocks from the bank.

He carefully looks around, and takes off his motor cycle helmet. He tosses it into a dumpster and quickly does the same with the jacket.

CUT TO:

EXT. BANK - DAY

Julie sits on the edge of an ambulance, clearly shaken.

Mike runs up to the edge of the police tape near the ambulance.

MIKE

Julie!

She looks up, seeing him.

JULIE

Come over!

Mike slides under the tape, a POLICE OFFICER moves to stop him.

JULIE

No, it's all right -- let him through.

The cop backs off and Mike runs over to her.

JULIE

How'd you know?

MIKE

I saw it on the news.

JULIE

Oh, Mike, it was terrible.

Julie grabs Mike and pulls him into an embrace, crying.

MIKE

It's okay now -- you're safe.

Julie looks at him.

JULIE

Mike -- you're never going to believe what happened in there.

MIKE

Try me.

JULIE

There was this man -- and he...he was incredible.

MIKE

(sounds satisfied)
He was?

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

MIKE (cont'd)
... (now more quizzical)
I mean -- he was?

JULIE
Yes, if it hadn't been for him -- I'd be
dead by now. I didn't even have time to
thank him.

MIKE
I'm sure you'll get the chance.

The PARAMEDIC walks up.

PARAMEDIC
Time to go, ma'am.

MIKE
I'll go with you.

JULIE
No, I'll be okay. Thanks for coming.

MIKE
Listen, Julie...I'm leaving town for
awhile. Something's come up with my mom
out in California.

JULIE
(disappointed)
I'm sorry, I hope everything works out.

MIKE
Me too.
(beat)
Do me a favor, take care of yourself --
all right? No more bank robberies for
you.

Julie smiles, leans over and kisses him on the cheek. The
Paramedic helps her in and Mike forces a smile at her. The
medic slams the door shut.

Mike watches as the ambulance leaves, his melancholy
expression tells the whole story. His old life is gone
forever.

Slowly, he raises his hand and waves good-bye.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBERTY BASE - NO SENSE OF DAY OR NIGHT

Mike's sitting in a chair, arms folded, with a big smile on
his face. Across from him sits Falcon, clearly upset. Next

CONTINUED:

to her is Ozymandias and Barabbas. They are all watching a TV news report about the holdup. Several NOMADS mill about in the background.

REPORTER

(filtered)

...it's uncertain just who this mystery man is, but from all accounts he exhibited some very unusual abilities.

The screen cuts to outside the bank. One of the CUSTOMERS stands with the REPORTER.

CUSTOMER

He just threw this one man -- like he was shot out of a cannon, it was the most amazing thing I ever saw.

Mike shoots Falcon a satisfied smile. She does not share his feelings.

Another CUSTOMER appears on the screen.

CUSTOMER

I don't know who he was, but he saved our lives. He's a real hero--

Irritated, Falcon shuts off the TV. Ozy and Barabbas say nothing -- they know Falcon is angry.

FALKON

What were you thinking -- were you even thinking?!

MIKE

Listen, I can explain --

FALKON

No, you listen! Bearing the mark is a serious responsibility, and like it or not, you're stuck with it!

MIKE

But --

FALKON

If you had died this afternoon, anyone could've gotten the mark. It has its own will to survive, Mike -- when the bearer is near death, the mark doesn't do a background check on the next available candidate -- it just takes what it can get. In case you hadn't noticed, there are forces at work that are trying to

(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

FALKON (cont'd)

take the mark from you. They ambushed Jacob, there's no telling what they'll do to you.

MIKE

(angry)

Innocent people were in danger, and one of them happened to be someone I really care about. I saved their lives -- isn't that what I'm supposed to do with this thing?!

FALKON

(furious)

You're supposed to use your head! When you put the mark at risk you put all of our lives at risk as well. We have sacrificed everything to protect the sanctity of the mark. If the mark was to fall into the hands of chaos, humanity would pay the ultimate price.

(tries to calm herself)

All right. You made it back alive -- the mark is safe. But you know those banks have cameras -- people are going to wonder how you did those things.

MIKE

So what -- I wore a disguise.

FALKON

(exasperated)

A disguise -- you don't even need a disguise. You just don't get it.

MIKE

If you're looking for me to replace Jacob, I can't.

(beat)

I'm not Moses or King Arthur either.

(beat)

I want to use the mark to help people...to make a difference. That's what it's here for isn't it?

FALKON

Follow me.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATUE OF LIBERTY - NIGHT

Mike and Falcon are standing outside on the balcony of the TORCH.

CONTINUED:

FALKON

I want to show you something. Hold up the mark.

He grudgingly complies.

FALKON

Now concentrate.

Exasperated, he closes his eyes.

FALKON

Imagine you're in terrible danger.

MIKE

I'll pretend I'm trapped in an elevator -- with you.

FALKON

Concentrate.

Beat.

FALKON

Are you in terrible danger?!

MIKE

(annoyed)

Yes!

FALKON

Call the sheathe.

MIKE

The what?!

FALKON

Imagine your body encased -- in a cloak of silver.

MIKE

Like my hand -- that's what happened to my hand at the bank.

FALKON

Then remember what that felt like.

(beat)

Concentrate.

Mike scrunches his eye lids even tighter as he remembers the anxiety and fear he felt at the bank. Inside his head, we HEAR echoes of the gunfire and people SCREAMING.

CONTINUED: (2)

Suddenly, a silver sheathe emerges from the MARK and covers his hand.

FALKON

That's it. Keep going. Concentrate.

Mike takes a deep breathe and continues. The ECHOES return. The fear and anxiety are apparent on his face.

In a flash, the silver sheathe completely covers his body. It's as if he's encased in a skin-tight, chrome body suit.

Falkon gives him a satisfied look. She holds up a small mirror she has brought with her.

FALKON

Open your eyes.

Mike slowly opens his eyes. He immediately SCREAMS at the sight of his own reflection.

FALKON

Relax -- it's the mark. That's how it protects your body.

MIKE

From bullets?

FALKON

Bullets, fire -- just about anything. That's my point, Mike -- its power is limitless...do you understand?

Mike studies himself a moment.

MIKE

Chrome isn't usually my color, but I can hang with this.

(beat)

What else can I do with the -- what'd you call it?

FALKON

The sheathe.

MIKE

Come on, you want me to learn -- show me something else.

Falkon sighs.

FALKON

Walk on the wall over there.

CONTINUED: (3)

MIKE
Get outta here.

FALKON
Try it.

Mike raises his foot and places it against the base of the torch. He wiggles it a bit. It seems to react as if it were touching the ground.

MIKE
(astonished)
It's sticking.

FALKON
Your center of gravity will be adjusted
-- it's just like walking on the ground.

Mike closes his eyes and takes a big step with his other foot up the base of the torch. He is now standing horizontally. He smiles and takes a few cautious steps towards the top of the torch.

EXT. TORCH TOP - NIGHT

Mike reaches the top. He stands, overlooking the city, exhilarated.

MIKE
Outrageous. When I read comic books as a kid -- this was the power I always wanted.

Mike lifts one foot up and spins on the tip of the other -- in a somewhat half-baked Michael Jackson impersonation.

Falkon smirks.

FALKON
All right, get down. You've exerted yourself enough for one day.

Mike doesn't respond -- he is consumed with his newfound ability.

FALKON
Down.

MIKE
Okay, mom.

CONTINUED:

Mike jumps down onto the balcony. He concentrates for a moment and suddenly the silver sheathe is siphoned back into the MARK. Mike stares at his hand with newfound awe.

MIKE

It's incredible. I mean, how can it do all this stuff. Where did this thing come from -- was it left by aliens or something?

FALKON

Why don't you ask it -- it keeps a record of its own history.

MIKE

Come again?

FALKON

The mark acts as its own chronicler. I'll show you.

Falkon takes Mike's hand. She raises the MARK and gently presses it against Mike's forehead.

FALKON

Close your eyes -- think about the mark. Call upon its history.

Mike concentrates. Suddenly, a light emanates from his palm, illuminating his forehead.

CUT TO:

AN EXPLOSION OF IMAGERY

-- A SUBJECTIVE POV rushing down a corridor of light.

-- We then SEE MOSES standing before the RED SEA. He raises his hand to part it, the MARK clearly imprinted on his palm.

-- JULIUS CAESAR presides over the ancient Romans. He holds up a scroll in his hand, one of his decrees. The MARK is clearly visible on his palm.

-- JESUS CHRIST HEALS a humble peasant while others look on in amazement. We SEE the MARK on his hand.

-- GENGHIS KHAN gallops atop of a horse, in the heat of battle. He carries a shield which bears the emblem of the MARK.

-- KING ARTHUR pulls EXCALIBUR from the stone as MERLIN the MAGICIAN looks on. The MARK is emblazed on the hilt of

CONTINUED:

Excalibur. Merlin raises his hand in tribute, revealing the MARK on his palm.

-- HARRY HOUDINI submerged underwater performing the water torture cell just as we saw in the opening scene.

-- HITLER stands with his generals, showing them precise diagrams of the MARK.

-- JACOB receives the MARK from his father, showing a portion of what occurred inside the apartment from the opening scene.

-- JACOB in the alley, transfers the MARK to MIKE.

-- We SEE Mike's face, but he has been transformed. His eyes glimmer with a foreboding light, he smiles manically, revealing gnarled teeth. He is evil incarnate.

MIKE

opens his eyes, sweating, and breathing hard.

FALKON

You all right -- you look a little...faint.

Mike's eyes roll into the back of his head and he faints.

INT. MIKE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mike slowly wakes up. Falcon is sitting next to his bed.

FALKON

You okay?

MIKE

(breathing hard)

Yeah -- I'm okay. It's just...I can't believe it. All those stories from the bible -- the history...of everything. It's all connected to the mark?

FALKON

Yes. Good and evil have been at war since the beginning of time -- the mark has helped maintain the balance.

MIKE

But with all it can do, why didn't Jacob end world hunger, or stop war. Why was he runnin' a newsstand?

CONTINUED:

FALKON

Each carrier of the mark determines his or her own agenda. Some are more passive than others. Jacob used his position to influence those around him, and what better place to do so than a newsstand? Jacob believed that if we use the mark to manipulate the world, we'd be no better than those we fight against. We've done some good -- the world's still here, isn't it.

(beat)

Now do you understand why the mark can't fall into the wrong hands. It's important -- you're important -- that's why you can't pull stunts like that one from this afternoon..

MIKE

I don't wanna be important -- I want to be me, the old Mike Collins. Maybe I was a screw up, but at least it was me.

(beat)

I mean...Moses was a lonely guy. I've already sacrificed my job, and my friends -- I don't wanna live down here with the rats and the stink.

Ozy and Barabbas shoot Mike a questioning look.

MIKE

No offense, fellas.

FALKON

Mike, I'm going to be honest. I think Jacob was crazy to give you the mark. In fact, if I had to lay odds on our chances, I wouldn't bet on you.

Mike looks at her, upset -- now she's getting personal.

FALKON

In time, you'll be able to transfer it to someone else if you want without forfeiting your life, but for now it's not going anywhere.

(beat)

And neither are you. You need to prepare for the time of the convergence.

Falkon walks past him. She EXITS, slamming the door shut behind her.

CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE

(to Ozy)

She always this much fun?

OZYMANDIAS

It was hard for Jacob too -- yes, very hard to bear the mark -- I remember. I think.

(beat)

I'll get you some food.

Mike smiles.

MIKE

Thanks, Ozy.

Ozy starts for the door, Barabbas follows him. Mike goes back to watching TV. Ozy EXITS, but Barabbas turns, looking at Mike from behind. He shakes his head disdainfully. He doesn't share Ozy's sympathy for the new bearer of the MARK. Barabbas approaches Mike.

BARABBAS

You are not worthy of the mark. You are not fit to carry its legacy.

Mike looks at Barabbas, stunned by his statement.

MIKE

Okay.

BARABBAS

No. Not okay. You are dangerous. Not fit. Not worthy!

Mike EXITS in disbelief, leaving Barabbas staring after him in disgust.

MIKE

Man...tough crowd.

INT. CORRIDOR - NO SENSE OF DAY OF NIGHT

Mike storms past Falcon and Ozymandias. Falcon stops and watches Mike as he leaves. Ozymandias walks up behind her.

OZYMANDIAS

You're worried about him?

FALCON

Yes.

CONTINUED:

OZYMANDIAS

Because he's not good enough?

FALKON

He's too good -- that's what scares me.

Falkon walks off, leaving a confused Ozymandias.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GATES PENTHOUSE MONITOR ROOM - LATER THAT EVENING

Gates sits in front of a large wall, full of TV MONITORS. On each monitor, is footage from the bank security cameras. Several of Gates' SOLDIERS are watching too, as is Mayor Wilson.

Each Monitor shows a different angle of Mike flying in and taking down Gates' soldiers.

Gates studies the monitors intensely -- he is both awed by the MARK's power and irritated by the fact that he does not yet possess it.

Gates presses a button on his control board and freezes the various images on a shot of Mike tossing one of the soldiers.

SOLDIER

I've never seen anything like it before.
How do you stop this guy?

GATES

What about Abrams and the others?

SOLDIER

They'll be arraigned tomorrow. But don't worry, sir, they know better than to talk.

GATES

Make certain of it.

SOLDIER

(nervously)
Yes, sir.

GATES

He's taken to the mark more quickly than I anticipated. Helped along by Jacob's Disciples no doubt.

(beat)

But thanks to our new "friend," we can at
(MORE)

CONTINUED:

GATES (cont'd)

last deal with them, can we not, gentlemen.

WILSON

But what about Collins, if he's already this powerful, he's going to be hard to kill.

GATES

Agreed -- which is why killing him was always a last resort.

(beat)

Extorting the mark from him is still our most likely avenue of success.

WILSON

How?

GATES

Do we know where the girl is?

SOLDIER

She gave a report to the cops and left the city. She's headed for her sister's house in D.C..

GATES

Bring her back -- tonight, immediately.

SOLDIER

Yes, sir.

GATES

Mr. Mayor, what else did you find out about our young friend?

WILSON

Well, he's quite a gambler from what I understand -- he's impressed by wealth and men of influence.

(beat)

In fact, from what his friend Joe tells me, he all but idolizes you.

GATES

Indeed. How very fortunate for us.

(beat)

Johnson.

One of the soldiers steps forward.

GATES

Contact Mr. "Ransom."

(beat)

(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

GATES (cont'd)

Tell him we'll need him tonight for a very special job. Money is no object.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBERTY BASE - NO SENSE OF DAY OR NIGHT

Mike is eating from a bag of chips. All around him are empty containers of various types of junk food. Ozy enters carrying a television.

MIKE

(stuffing chips in his mouth)
Thanks, Ozy, you're a life saver.

OZYMANDIAS

Ozymandias is always proud to serve the bearer of the mark.

Ozy plugs in the television and starts to hook up the cable.

MIKE

Where'd Barabbas run off to?

OZYMANDIAS

Oh, he likes to go above at night -- but he always comes back before dawn -- always.

MIKE

Yeah, well, I just hope Falkon doesn't come back before dawn. That woman's getting on my nerves.

With a flick of the remote, Mike turns on the TV.

OZYMANDIAS

Falkon means well. She just -- she loved Jacob like a father -- she was very sad when he died.

MIKE

Really?

Mike starts channel surfing with the remote.

OZYMANDIAS

Oh, yes. Her father was a great warrior of the mark. He protected many of its carriers. After he passed away, Jacob raised her and took care of her like she was his daughter.

CONTINUED:

MIKE

Well, I guess I could cut her a little slack then — I didn't realize they were that close.

OZYMANDIAS

On the night Jacob was killed, she was meditating, preparing for the passing of the mark. She blames herself for his death.

MIKE

I didn't know.

(beat)

Tell me, Ozy, was it hard on Jacob — all this business with the mark?

OZYMANDIAS

He was a humble servant of the mark, he wore it with restraint and dignity.

MIKE

I feel like I've lost so much. It's just a lot to deal with...

OZYMANDIAS

Jacob lost his family, so did Falcon -- we have all lost something special. Try not to focus on what you have lost, but what you have gained. For some, the mark is a blessing, to others it is a curse.

Mike lowers his head, contemplating what Ozy has just told him.

Suddenly, CNN interrupts the sports coverage with a live report.

MIKE

Man -- they were just about to announce the winner of today's races.

The image cuts to BILL PARSONS, a bearded CNN news reporter. He is seated in a plush chair opposite Jonathan Gates. They are in Gates' penthouse apartment.

BILL

(filtered)

Less than an hour ago, the enigmatic Jonathan Gates broke his seven year silence by calling our news director to arrange this interview.

(beat)

(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

BILL (cont'd)

Mr. Gates, why have you chosen ~~this~~ night to break seven years of silence?

GATES

Well, Bill, as you know, the purpose of my visit to New York is to meet with my old friend, Mayor Wilson.

BILL

Yes, in fact, there was a great deal of speculation in the media, that you would be publicly endorsing Mr. Wilson's campaign. Is that why you're here tonight?

GATES

In part. It is true that I am here tonight to urge the fine people of New York to support Bill Wilson during tomorrow's primary, but that is only part of the reason I wanted this interview.

(beat)

The other reason I'm here is to publicly thank the gentleman who intervened at the First National Bank this afternoon and stopped those terrible gunmen.

MIKE

Me. You hear that, Ozy -- he's talkin' about me.

BILL

Truly an amazing story.

(beat)

Do you believe the account of this man's so-called superhuman abilities?

GATES

I'm not certain what to believe. All I know is that he risked his own life to save the lives of perfect strangers.

(beat)

In today's world, where selfishness and greed have replaced decency and honor, we need such heroes, and I for one, salute him.

MIKE

(to Ozy)

He salutes me -- can you believe that. Jonathan Gates salutes me.

CONTINUED: (3)

BILL

I think the question on everyone's mind is, who is this mystery man.

GATES

Trust me, Bill, I wish I knew. In fact, part of why I wanted to do this interview was so I could invite this man to my penthouse this evening.

(beat)

I believe with his unique abilities and my vast resources, we could work well together.

MIKE

I can't believe it -- this is our lucky day! Do you know how much bank he has? Man, we could get him to finance our whole operation.

OZYMANDIAS

Falkon wouldn't like that. We're supposed to be a secret organization.

MIKE

Look, you and Falkon may enjoy living in a cave, but I ain't like that.

(beat)

Just think, with his connections and my powers -- we could change the world, Ozy. I mean, we could change everything. We could make a real difference.

BILL

Well, Mr. Gates, thank you for this extraordinary opportunity, and I'm sure if our hero from the bank is listening, you've given him something to think about. Back to you in the studio.

MIKE

It's incredible. He wants to meet me.

Ozy rolls his eyes, and starts cleaning up the empty food wrappers.

Mike sits back, a broad smile on his face.

MIKE

Wow -- Jonathan Gates. I can't believe it. I'm going to take him up on his offer.

CONTINUED: (4)

OZYMANDIAS

Falkon will be back soon -- you'd better wait and talk to her.

MIKE

What do I need to talk to her for? I got it under control.

(beat)

Do me a favor, when she gets back, tell her we've hit the jackpot...and that I've gone to collect.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Falkon is walking through a desolate New York area cemetery. She's wearing a light jacket, and carries flowers in her hand.

The setting is tranquil, a slight breeze rustles the trees as she passes underneath. She eyes each of the tombstones carefully, in search of only one.

She finds it. It is a recently dug grave. The headstone reads: JACOB GOLDSTEIN. A quote underneath reads "WE HAVE PRESERVED PEACE IN OUR TIME." She kneels down, gently placing the flowers on the grave.

She tenderly runs her fingers along Jacob's name, fighting back the tears.

FALKON

I miss you all ready, old friend.

(beat)

Seems like you've been gone more than a few days. Seems like -- a lifetime.

Falkon sighs.

FALKON

I wish you were here now, Jacob. I wish you could tell me what to do. You've given me quite a handful with Mr. Collins.

(beat)

In the beginning, I thought it would be best to take the mark from him. But that would make me like the Agents of Chaos -- like the men who killed you.

(beat)

The truth of the matter is that he's taken to it faster than I would have

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

FALKON (cont'd)
 thought possible. He's a natural, Jacob,
 as much as I hate to admit it. I just
 hope that when the time comes, he has
 what it takes.

Falkon ponders this for a moment. In the distance, We HEAR
 the faint sounds of city traffic.

FALKON
 If I'd known things were going to turn
 out this way, I never would have left
 your side.
 (beat)
 I'll tell you this, if that kid doesn't
 behave, mark or no mark, I'm going to
 kick his ass into next week -- that's a
 promise.

She smiles.

FALKON
 Sleep well, old friend -- you deserve it.

Falkon touches the headstone one last time. As she does a
 flurry of DOVES flies overhead. Slowly, she rises to her
 feet and departs.

CUT TO:

EXT. GATES' BUILDING - NIGHT

Establish Gates' building. Even from the distance, we can
 SEE that the penthouse is lit up. A PARTY is underway.

Mike appears in the foreground, FLYING. He spies the
 penthouse and heads for the street.

EXT. GATES' BUILDING ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Mike LANDS at a discreet side of the building.

Holding up his hand, he concentrates and summons the MARK's
 SHEATH. Instantly, his body is covered by the metallic
 cloak.

Mike eyes the building.

Mike runs and jumps at the building. SLAM! He impacts the
 side of the building and sticks to it, like a fly caught on
 fly paper. He struggles for a moment, but finally manages to
 prop himself up on his feet and fingertips.

With lightning fast speed, he begins to ascend the building
 like a spider.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

A CLEANING LADY is listening to a walkman, vacuuming an office. Behind her is a large window.

Suddenly, we SEE Mike scurry past at lightning fast speed. The cleaning lady doesn't react.

EXT. GATES' BALCONY - NIGHT

Mike reaches the Penthouse. He peaks over the ledge of the balcony to make sure no one's around. It's clear. In one quick motion he jumps over the ledge and recalls the sheathe. He lands on his feet in normal attire and tries to stand nonchalantly, smiling at several people as they walk by.

INT. GATES' PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Mike ENTERS the Penthouse. He is awestruck by its splendor. He slowly works his way through the crowd, admiring the many beautiful women.

A waiter approaches and offers him a tray with champagne. Mike grabs a glass, and takes a big gulp. The waiter tries not to react to Mike's questionable manners.

Something on the wall catches Mike's eye and he starts over. He arrives at a large DISPLAY CASE. Inside are pictures of Gates' race horse, DESTINY. Several clippings show Gates with the horse at the KENTUCKY DERBY and other famous racing events. Mike looks at the horse and shakes his head incredulously.

GATES

(OC)

You admire my horse?

Mike turns to see Gates standing next to him. He tries to act as cool as possible.

MIKE

Well, actually, I was just thinking how much money Destiny's cost me over the years.

GATES

My sincere apologies. The horse is yours, consider it a gift.

MIKE

You're giving me the horse?

CONTINUED:

GATES

There isn't anything I wouldn't give you, Michael.

At Gates' gesture, a group of BEAUTIFUL WOMEN approach Mike. One pours him a drink, while another offers him a fruit platter. Another takes an olive and feeds it to him.

MIKE

You've got some nice friends, Mr. Gates.

GATES

They can be yours as well.

(beat)

Come, let me show you around.

Gates takes Mike to introduce him to some of his guests.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

On the shore of the island, a motorized RAFT lands. The occupants, black clad ASSASSINS, quickly exit the craft and run toward the base of the statue. They are armed with HK-21 submachine guns, nightvision goggles, and full body armor. Some have backpacks on.

EXT. LIBERTY BASE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The Assassins arrive at the secret entrance to the Disciple's base. Without hesitation, they locate the triggering mechanism and the stone slab slides OPEN, revealing the corridor.

With the precision of a special ops military unit, the assassins rush down the corridor toward the heart of the base.

INT. GATES PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Gates and Mike are looking at a display case which contains several artifacts from ancient Egypt, all painted in gold. Mike is clearly impressed.

Gates begins to walk, Mike starts after him.

GATES

So tell me, Michael, how is it that you are able to do such extraordinary things?

MIKE

What do you mean...exactly.

CONTINUED:

GATES

The bank, of course. Some reports suggest you actually flew through the air, unaided. How is such a thing possible?

MIKE

Well, you know how people tend to exaggerate.

GATES

A friend owed me a favor, and I was able to acquire copies of the bank surveillance tapes.

(beat)

You did fly, Michael.

Mike doesn't respond -- his discomfort now apparent.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBERTY BASE - NO SENSE OF DAY OR NIGHT

Ozymandias is sitting alone, watching TV. Suddenly, a strange look comes over his face. He hits the "mute" button on the TV remote control.

Slowly, he gets up and moves toward the door leading to the entrance chamber.

INT. LIBERTY BASE ENTRANCE - NO SENSE OF DAY OR NIGHT

Ozy ENTERS the chamber and nears the main doorway. It's as if he senses that something is wrong, but can't quite figure it out.

He cautiously moves toward the front door. He presses his ear against it and listens carefully. He slides open the eye-hole and takes a look.

OZY POV

The corridor leading up the doorway appears to be empty.

OZY

closes the eyehole and heads back toward the other room.

KA-BOOM!

The main door EXPLODES inward flying right at Ozy. The concussion of the blast knocks him over.

CONTINUED:

The assassins ENTER the base, HKs at the ready.

NOMADS ENTER the LOBBY to investigate the commotion.
Assassins open FIRE and riddle the NOMADS with bullets.

Several other NOMADS ENTER from the adjacent corridor. The assassins turn immediately and open fire, gunning them down without mercy. It is a massacre.

Silence. The assassins stop firing, maintaining their battle ready positions.

Suddenly, from behind them, another assassin ENTERS the chamber. It is their leader, RANSOM. He is at least seven feet tall with a muscular build. He stands for a moment, inspecting the carnage.

RANSOM

Team One, sweep the complex. Team Two --
set the charges. Five minutes. Go.

The assassins spring into action -- one group goes down the corridors looking for more subjects, the others remove C4 PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES from their packs and begin to set the charges.

CUT TO:

INT. GATES PENTHOUSE BALCONY - NIGHT

Mike and Gates have moved to the balcony. The view of the cityscape is dazzling, most apparent in the background is the Statue of Liberty.

GATES

As you can see, I allow myself all the
comforts wealth can provide.

MIKE

And god bless you for it, Mr. Gates.

Mike picks some grapes off the fruit platter.

GATES

We were discussing your abilities.

MIKE

(reluctantly)

Yeah, well -- y'know I've been working
out a lot lately.

Mike smiles at one of the girls, who smiles back.

CONTINUED:

GATES

Come now, Mike, you don't expect me to believe that what happened at the bank is the result of exercise.

MIKE

No, I guess not.

GATES

You have a secret, do you not?

Mike is becoming increasingly uncomfortable.

MIKE

Secret?

GATES

We all have secrets, Michael -- myself included. But you can trust me -- we both want the same thing.

MIKE

Which is?

GATES

To bring order to the world.

(beat)

I'd like you to accompany me to tonight's rally, Michael, so you can see what we can accomplish together.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIBERTY BASE - NIGHT

On the shore of the island, a second MOTORIZED RAFT arrives. Falcon disembarks and heads toward the secret door.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBERTY BASE - NIGHT

CRASH!

An assassin kicks a door in and SHOTS several Nomads.

Just then, Ransom walks up.

ASSASSIN

This section secure, sir.

CONTINUED:

RANSOM

Keep looking. If even one of them gets out of here alive, we're as good as dead.

ASSASSIN

Yes, sir.

INT. LIBERTY BASE CORRIDOR - NO SENSE OF DAY OR NIGHT

Falkon saunters down the corridor unaware of the danger ahead. She looks up and stops in her tracks.

FALKON'S POV

shows the open doorway, leading to the base entrance.

FALKON

immediately ducks for cover. She takes out a 9MM pistol, equipped with a nozzle suppressor, from under her jacket. She knows the base has been compromised.

She carefully moves down the corridor, toward the door.

INT. LIBERTY BASE ENTRANCE - NO SENSE OF DAY OR NIGHT.

Falkon peeks through the entrance. She is horrified to see the bodies of the nomads strewn about the chamber.

No sign of any of the intruders. She silently ENTERS.

CUT TO:

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER - NIGHT

We SEE a sprawling convention center in the heart of Manhattan.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

We SEE thousands of SUPPORTERS in the auditorium, awaiting the arrival of Wilson. A podium has been erected on stage underneath a huge banner which reads: "A NEW LEADER FOR A NEW MILLENNIUM."

INT. CONVENTION CENTER BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Several dozen CAMPAIGN WORKERS hurriedly prepare for Wilson's speech. Mike and Gates enter with a dozen of GATES' MEN directly behind them.

CONTINUED:

MIKE

So how did you know so much about the mark?

GATES

I've been a student of it for countless years.

Though he does his best to conceal it, Mike is clearly startled by this news.

MIKE

Did you know Jacob?

GATES

We were...acquainted. But he was a man who craved a simple life -- a man very different from you and I.

JULIE

(OC)

Mike!

Julie runs over and gives Mike a big hug.

JULIE

What are you doing here? I thought you were leaving town.

MIKE

Change of plans.

(beat)

Uh, Julie -- this is Jonathan Gates. Mr. Gates -- Julie.

Julie holds out her hand, nervously.

JULIE

(flustered)

It's an honor to meet you, sir.

GATES

Thank you, Julie.

JULIE

You've arrived just in time -- Wilson's about to give his speech.

From across the stage, Wilson sees the group and walks over.

WILSON

Jonathan -- thank you for coming.

CONTINUED: (2)

GATES

It's my pleasure, Mr. Mayor.

(referring to Mike)

I believe you know this gentleman.

WILSON

Of course.

(beat)

I'm delighted that you've decided to join
us.

Wilson's tone makes Mike feel uncomfortable.

MIKE

Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

WILSON

I told you before, call me Bill. We're
one big happy family here, Michael -- I'm
glad you've decided to help us usher in
this new beginning for mankind.

Wilson smiles at Mike, but his expression is cold, vacant.
Mike tries to hide his apprehension.

PA ANNOUNCER

(filtered)

And now ladies and gentlemen, the man
you've all been waiting for, the next
President of the United States...

WILSON

(to Gates)

That's my cue.

JULIE

Good luck, sir.

Wilson walks toward the stage curtain.

GATES

As you see, like us, Wilson is destined
to reshape this world. He is a great
man.

MIKE

Yeah...

(to himself)

I always thought so.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBERTY BASE ARMORY - NO SENSE OF DAY OR NIGHT

An assassin kicks open the armory door. He looks inside. No sign of anyone. He turns to find the barrel of Falcon's gun pointed in his face.

POOM! Falcon fires a single, suppressed gunshot. The assassin falls lifeless to the ground.

She quickly enters the armory and grabs a fighting SHAFT that is mounted on the wall.

She then takes an empty backpack and goes to a storage locker. Inside, are several charges of C4 PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES. She grabs one of them and shoves it into the pack.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBERTY BASE CORRIDOR - NO SENSE OF DAY OR NIGHT

An assassin is planting a C4 CHARGE in the corridor.

KLANK!

He hears something, looks down the corridor, but sees nothing. He finishes securing the charge to the wall and sets the timer.

Suddenly, Falcon appears behind him. She immediately chokes him with the fighting staff. He struggles to get free, but can't. Falcon uses the staff to twist the assassin's head.

CRACK! She breaks his neck and drops him to the ground.

Falcon looks at the explosive timer. It's counting down backward. It reads 9:55...54...53. Not much time.

She races down the corridor toward the main entrance.

INT. LIBERTY BASE ENTRANCE - NO SENSE OF DAY OR NIGHT

Several of the assassins are in the entrance area, having re-grouped.

ASSASSIN

(filtered - via radio)

Sector 7 secure. All subjects terminated.

ASSASSIN

That's the last of them. Not much of a challenge -- killing a bunch of homeless.

CONTINUED:

FALKON

(OC)

Bastards!

Enraged from what she's just overheard, Falcon bursts in from one of the corridors, firing wildly at the assassins. She has a gun in each hand, and walks forward, relentless.

The assassins fall one by one, unable to even return fire.

Falcon shoots the remaining assassin and he falls to the ground, she walks up to his body and shoots down several times.

KLICK! KLICK!

She's out of bullets. She looks down at his lifeless body with utter contempt.

FALKON

Rot in hell.

She quickly EXITS through the main entrance, heading for the surface.

Seconds later, RANSOM runs into the main chamber, seeing his dead men on the ground. He looks furious. He races out the door after Falcon.

CUT TO:

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - NIGHT

Wilson is on stage, standing at the podium. His supporters in the audience are in a near frenzy. He holds up his hand in an attempt to quiet the crowd.

WILSON

(filtered)

And now, I'd like to introduce a man who truly needs no introduction.

Just off stage, Mike and Gates watch Wilson deliver his remarks.

GATES

I want you to join me on stage. I want to introduce you to the world as the man who foiled the bank robbery.

MIKE

I don't know about that, Jonathan.

CONTINUED:

GATES

But why? These people should see the face of a true hero.

(beat)

You're no longer living in the shadows, Michael.

WILSON

(filtered)

He's been an inspiration to me and our party -- ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Jonathan Gates.

Gates walks out on stage and joins Wilson at the podium. Gates raises Wilson's hand in victory as the crowd CHEERS wildly.

Hundreds of camera FLASHES fire, bombarding the stage in STROBE LIGHTS.

From off stage, Mike stares at the barrage of camera flashes. He seems mesmerized by them, he can't look away. On a camera flash...

SHOCK CUT TO:

MIKE'S POV

We now SEE the COLISEUM of ancient ROME. Thousands of ROMAN SOLDIERS cheer their leader JULIUS CAESAR as they prepare for a coming war.

SHOCK CUT TO:

Mike shaking his head, trying to clear the image from his mind. He refocuses on the crowd and We SEE Wilson's supporters, cheering wildly. Another flash...

SHOCK CUT TO:

MIKE'S POV

We SEE a party rally in NAZI GERMANY. The fervent crowd is screeching "Sieg Heil" as ADOLF HITLER presides over them.

SHOCK CUT TO:

Mike shakes his head again, now rubbing his eyes.

He looks at the crowd and then at Wilson and Gates, who stand in the middle of the stage with their arms raised triumphantly. A horrified look comes over him as he is

CONTINUED:

struck by a sudden realization. These men are the new dictators. He is in the heart of the lion's den.

He looks over at Julie who is opposite him on the other side of the stage. She watches intently as Gates begins to deliver his speech. Standing behind her are two of Gates' men. He notices that they are wearing AMULETS just like the ones used by the men who killed Jacob.

He quickly moves around the side of the stage and moves toward her.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIBERTY BASE - NIGHT

Falkon has reached the surface of Liberty Island. She quickly exits from the opening. Suddenly, Ransom bursts out behind her.

At the last second, she spins and strikes with her shaft, but Ransom catches the shaft with one hand and grabs hold of her with the other.

Falkon's eyes widen at the size of her opponent. She goes for her gun, but Ransom drops the shaft and knocks it out of her hand in one quick motion.

He flings her against the concrete wall with tremendous force. She slinks down on the ground and winces in pain.

Ransom moves toward her.

Dazed, Falkon sees the shaft lying on the ground behind him. As he gets within a few feet of her, Falkon springs forward and slides on her stomach in between his legs.

She grabs the shaft as Ransom spins around. With a precise strike, she hits Ransom in the groin. He doubles over and she rolls to her feet, kicking him under the chin.

Ransom falls hard on the ground, and Falkon, stumbling as she runs, heads toward the entrance to the Statue of Liberty.

CUT TO:

INT. CONVENTION CENTER BACKSTAGE - NIGHT

Mike has moved to Julie's side of the stage and slowly walks toward her. Gates' men stand behind her near a doorway leading to a stairwell.

Mike reaches for Julie. Suddenly, he is startled by a VISION of the Statue of Liberty EXPLODING.

CONTINUED:

He takes Julie's hand.

MIKE

Come on, we gotta go.

JULIE

What?! I want to see the end of this --
isn't it exciting?

INT. CONVENTION CENTER STAGE - NIGHT

Standing at the podium with Wilson looking on, Gates raises his hand to silence the crowd.

GATES

(filtered)

And now, I have the honor of introducing
to you the hero who single-handedly
stopped a bank robbery at First Manhattan.

The crowd CHEERS.

GATES

This mystery man exists and he is here
tonight.

(beat)

But more importantly, he is here...as one
of us.

More CHEERS.

GATES

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome a true hero
-- Mr. Mike Collins.

The crowd explodes into a huge CHEER as Wilson and Gates
begin clapping.

Several seconds pass, but Mike does not appear. Gates looks
stage right. No sign of Mike. He looks to his left and
notices that the men he positioned near the door are gone.

Gates rushes off stage and throws open the door. His men are
lying on the ground, unconscious. Gates looks up the
stairwell, furious.

CUT TO:

INT. STATUE OF LIBERTY - NIGHT

Falkon bursts into the lobby and runs toward the staircase.
Her breathing is labored -- she's in bad shape.

CONTINUED:

Ransom crashes in behind her. She stops at the bottom step and turns. He walks toward her, menacingly.

Summoning all of her strength, she kicks Ransom, but he easily blocks the blow with his arm and grabs her by the collar, hoisting her into the air.

With all his strength he throws her across the room. She crashes into a large display cabinet, shattering it into a million pieces.

Ransom pulls out a hunting knife and moves toward her. Falkon looks up at him, barely conscious. She sees him coming, blade in hand. She looks around and spies a fragment of broken glass near her hand.

With unbelievable speed and precision, Falkon throws the glass as if it were a shuriken. It sticks in Ransom's arm, momentarily stopping him. Falkon grabs a bigger shard of glass and charges toward him.

She slices Ransom across the chest. He flails with his knife, cutting her across the leg.

Falkon stumbles back and rushes for the staircase, limping badly. She moves up the stairs.

Ransom grits his teeth and pulls the shard of glass out of his arm, HOWLING in pain as he does so.

CUT TO:

INT. CONVENTION STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Mike and Julie are running upstairs. Exhausted, Julie pulls at Mike and stops at the 5th floor landing.

JULIE

(breathing hard)

You mean that was you at the bank? This is crazy!

MIKE

Look, you're just going to have to trust me, all right.

JULIE

But Mr. Wilson --

Suddenly, TWO of GATES' MEN (not wearing Amulets) burst through the 5th floor doorway. The nearest one immediately tackles Mike.

CONTINUED:

Julie screams as a second man grabs her, pointing a gun at her side.

Reacting to Julie's scream, Mike spins and fires an ENERGY BLAST out of his hand which sends the man near Julie tumbling down the stairs. He then knocks the first man into the wall.

Mike grabs Julie by the hand and continues up the stairs.

JULIE

Wow -- that was you at the bank. How come you just didn't zap them all like that?

MIKE

I didn't know I could do that!

CUT TO:

INT. STATUE OF LIBERTY STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Ransom races up the stairs. He stops and pulls a device out of his jacket. It is the REMOTE CONTROL for the plastic explosives. The timer reads: 6:45...44.

Gates will kill him if Falcon escapes. He races up the stairwell after her.

CUT TO:

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER ROOF - NIGHT

Mike and Julie arrive on the rooftop. We SEE a HELICOPTER parked on a helipad and the Statue of Liberty shimmering in the distance.

JULIE

Why'd we come up here?

MIKE

We're gonna fly.

JULIE

(scared)

Mike, what's happened to you?

MIKE

Julie, I'll explain later -- we gotta go.

Three more of GATES' MEN burst on to the roof.

CONTINUED:

Mike picks up Julie and EXPLODES with speed, flying off the balcony in the direction of the Statue of Liberty. Gates' men can only stand on the roof and watch helplessly.

CUT TO:

INT. STATUE OF LIBERTY HEAD - NIGHT

Ransom reaches the top of the statue. Falcon is nowhere to be seen.

He carefully moves toward one of the viewports and looks out.

CRACK!

From outside, Falcon swings down and kicks Ransom full force. He flies backward, hitting the ground.

She moves to crush Ransom's skull with a kick. He rolls out of the way just as she stomps down and gets back on his feet.

RANSOM

You should have run, girl.

FALKON

After you're dead.

Falcon presses the attack and swings at Ransom, striking him across the chin. He retaliates with a vicious blow to her mid-section that doubles her over.

He then strikes the underside of her chin with his knee.

Falcon spews blood out of her mouth as she falls to the floor, wincing in pain.

CUT TO:

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER ROOF - NIGHT

Gates arrives on the roof with Wilson and several of his MEN close behind him.

GATES' MAN

He gotta away, sir.

WILSON

We'll never find him now!

GATES

You fool -- we know where he's going.
Get the helicopter and meet me at Liberty Island! Quickly!

CONTINUED:

Wilson scurries toward the copter.

In one fast motion, Gates twirls and TRANSFORMS into a MIST.

With lightning speed, the mist EXITS the chamber through the balcony in pursuit of Mike and the MARK.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

Mike lands and gently places Julie down on the ground.

MIKE

Wait here, I've got to find Falcon and the others.

Mike runs off.

JULIE

(calling after him)

Who's Falcon?

INT. STATUE OF LIBERTY HEAD - NIGHT

Ransom looks at his remote control. It reads: 01:02. Falcon is on the ground, struggling to get up.

RANSOM

Pleasant dreams.

Ransom scurries toward the stairs. He is about to go down, when Mike BLASTS through the head of the statue, tackling Ransom, driving him to the ground.

Falcon rises and lunges toward Ransom.

FALKON

You forgot something.

She takes the C4 explosive she put in her pack earlier and shoves it down the front of Ransom's pants.

Mike grabs Falcon and BLASTS through the opening in the head.

CUT TO:

KA-BOOOOOOM!!

We SEE the head of the Statue of Liberty EXPLODE. A few seconds later, the rest of the body EXPLODES in a huge

CONTINUED:

fire-ball. The concussion of the blast throws Mike and Falkon into the ocean.

CUT TO:

UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Mike, BREATHING WATER, swims toward Falkon's body. He holds up his hand and the MARK glows with a brilliant shade of white, illuminating the water.

MIKE'S POV

He sees Falkon floating in the water. She isn't moving.

In one effortless move, Mike scoops her up and flies out of the water.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

Mike lands and lays Falkon down on the lawn. Again, Julie runs over.

JULIE
(jealous)
Falkon, I presume.

MIKE
She's still breathing. Thank God.
(beat)
Falkon -- wake up, c'mon.

Slowly, Falkon begins to stir.

MIKE
That's it.

Falkon's eyes open. She looks up at Mike and smiles slightly.

FALKON
Maybe...maybe you are...the one.

Mike shoots her a broad smile.

BOOM!

Suddenly, Mike is struck by a large burst of ENERGY which sends him falling to the ground. Falkon gets up and rushes to his aid, as does Julie.

Mike is dazed.

CONTINUED:

FALKON

You all right?

MIKE

I think so -- what the hell was that?!

Mike and the others look toward the direction of the blast and see Gates' mist slowly descending. Behind it LIGHTNING flashes -- clouds that weren't there moments ago suddenly appear. The sky looks ominous.

The mist lands on the ground and begins to swirl. Slowly, it takes the form of a human shape. The shape becomes more defined. The figure is silhouetted, but we can clearly see that it is Gates.

Mike and Julie react in surprise, as does Falcon who seems the most shocked by Gates' appearance.

MIKE

(to Falcon)

Ladies, we've got a problem.

FALKON

(to herself)

Gates?

KRAKA-THOOM!

Lightning strikes again as the sky becomes more foreboding.

GATES

It is time for you to surrender the mark to me, Michael.

Defiantly, Falcon steps toward Gates.

FALKON

No!

Gates smiles.

GATES

Falcon.

(beat)

When was it we last saw each other?
Cairo, I believe -- on that occasion, you
and Jacob kept the mark from me, but as
you can see...

FLASH! Lightning strikes, illuminating Gates' face. He's transformed -- he appears aged, decayed. His eyes glow with piercing light.

CONTINUED: (2)

GATES

I am a very determined man.

Mike rushes up to Falcon.

MIKE

You know him?

FALKON

He had a different face then, but we've met before.

MIKE

Take Julie and run.

(beat)

He wants me and the mark, not you two.

FALKON

The time is drawing near, I can't let you face him alone.

MIKE

Protect Julie! And check on the others!

Begrudgingly, Falcon runs to Julie, takes her by the arm, but Julie breaks free of her grasp and runs to Mike.

JULIE

Mike, you can't do this.

MIKE

I have to.

(beat)

Don't worry, Julie -- everything's gonna be fine.

JULIE

(looking at Gates)

Are you sure you'll be okay?

Mike gives her a reassuring smile.

MIKE

You can bet on me.

Falcon grabs Julie by the arm.

FALKON

Come on!

The two run off toward the wreckage of the statue.

CONTINUED: (3)

GATES

Rest assured, once I have disposed of you, I'll deal with your friends.

MIKE

You aren't going to bother anyone ever again.

Gates laughs maniacally.

GATES

You think you can best me, Michael?!
Even without the mark, my will is
stronger than yours!

BOOM! Thunder is HEARD.

EXT. SPACE

We SEE a bird's eye view of our SOLAR SYSTEM as the nine planets slowly converge toward alignment.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

The wind suddenly increases, the water around Liberty island begins to swell, the rain starts pummeling the ground. Within seconds, the entire island is engulfed by a fierce TEMPEST.

Mike looks at Gates, disbelievingly.

A strange, ethereal AURA begins to surround Gates.

In a matter of seconds, the aura grows in size, extending outward, with Gates remaining at its center. Slowly, the giant aura begins to take the form of a creature, SERPENTINE in nature.

Gates begins to hover a few feet off the ground, his shirt and jacket become tattered by the maelstrom of energy which swirls around him.

The tattered clothes fall, exposing Gates' torso. As before, we SEE the tattoos and other symbols and his chest and back.

GATES

I have collected other symbols throughout time, but all of them pale in comparison to the mark of ages.

Mike stares at the serpentine manifestation, completely shocked. He raises his hand, cloaking his body in the MARK's sheathe.

CONTINUED:

CLOSE ON Mike and Gates's eyes as they size each other up. Their mutual hatred is evident.

Without making a sound, Mike and Gates EXPLODE with speed, rocketing toward each other like two missiles on a collision course. Rather than using their powers from a distance, they have chosen to fight up-close. This is personal.

They COLLIDE with a great force, simultaneously exchanging blows. Mike catches Gates across the jaw. Gates responds with a devastating punch to the mid-section, doubling Mike over.

They hover in mid-air, Gates leans toward Mike, whispering in his ear.

GATES

Tell me, Michael -- do you remember your lessons from Sunday school -- about the story of Moses?

MIKE

(struggling)

I saw "The Ten Commandments" six times.

Using his elbow, Mike strikes Gates in his mid-section, rocketing him through the air into a nearby tree. It EXPLODES in a huge fireball as soon as Gates' touches it.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

Falkon stops in a grassy area, with Julie right behind her. She clears away some shrubbery, exposing a hidden doorway.

JULIE

You don't think Mike was caught in that explosion.

FALKON

You'll be safe here -- I'm going to find out.

Falkon opens the doorway and drops down inside a storage compartment. Julie peers down.

JULIE

What's this?

FALKON

(OC)

Emergency supplies.

From below, we HEAR a large banging sound.

CONTINUED:

JULIE

What are you doing?!

Suddenly, Falkon emerges from the hole, holding a sleek looking BOW in one hand and ARROWS in the other.

FALKON

Re-loading.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

Establish several helicopters arriving at Liberty Island. They are being pelted by rain and jostled by the wind from the TEMPEST, which seems to have increased in power.

INT. NEWSCOPTER - NIGHT

A REPORTER sits in the passenger seat while her PILOT fights to get through the storm.

REPORTER

...a sudden storm has overtaken the island, it's very difficult to see anything, but we can confirm that the Statue of Liberty has exploded.

CUT TO:

INT. WILSON'S HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Wilson sits in the passenger seat. Several of Gates' GOONS sit behind him in the back as does Barabbas. Wilson is looking out the window at the newscopters.

WILSON

Damn it, the media's already here.

(beat)

We've got to find Gates, keep circling the island.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND LAWN - NIGHT

Mike arrives at the smoldering tree, looking for Gates. No sign of him anywhere. Mike smiles -- he can't believe it was that easy -- Gates has been destroyed.

He turns, looking the direction he sent Falkon and Julie.

WHOOSH! Suddenly, the CLAW of the serpent manifestation appears above Mike and snatches him from behind. Mike screams in surprise and struggles to free himself, but can't.

CONTINUED:

The claw turns him around and we see Gates, unharmed, hovering in mid-air, the serpentine aura cascading around him.

GATES

You're going to have to do better than that, Michael.

Mike struggles to free himself, but the energy claw only tightens its grasp, and draws him closer to Gates.

GATES

We were speaking of Moses.

MIKE

(struggling to free himself)
"The Ten Commandments," actually.

GATES

That picture took many liberties with history, but then again, I am biased. I witnessed this history -- first hand.

MIKE

F-first hand?

GATES

Moses came to the court of Ramses and transformed his staff into a snake.

(beat)

Ramses summoned the greatest sorcerers in Egypt to use their black arts to perform the same miracle. I was one of those magicians.

Gates uses the claw to draw Mike even closer to him.

GATES

But Moses possessed a power unlike any I had seen before -- a power which brought the plagues upon Egypt and parted the Red Sea. It was the power of the mark.

(beat)

When I found it again, it was in the possession of a young Nazarene.

Gates brings Mike face-to-face with him.

GATES

And you can be sure that when Herod crucified this man, I was there...waiting to take the mark from him. But when I

(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

GATES (cont'd)

rolled away the stone and penetrated his tomb, he was gone...and so was my prize.

Mike says nothing, continuing to struggle, trying to free himself from Gate's grasp.

GATES

I have pursued the mark throughout time, and unless you give it to me, not only will you pay the price, but so will the entire population of this city.

MIKE

What?!

GATES

Behold, the convergence begins!

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

Another view of the SOLAR SYSTEM as the nine planets are minutes away from perfect alignment.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

Slowly, we HEAR a faint rumbling which grows steadily. The ocean itself is stirring. The rumbling becomes louder as the ocean begins to rise. An enormous wave is forming.

A deafening roar fills the air as a gigantic WAVE, now three thousand feet high, begins to move toward Manhattan.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

Mike struggles to free himself from Gates, then starts writhing in agony as if acted upon by an unseen force.

GATES

Can you feel it, Michael? You're reacting to the convergence of the cosmos. As the planets align themselves a wave of cosmic force is pulling at every fabric of your being. You can barely hold yourself together, much less the planet.

Mike SCREAMS in pain.

GATES

Give the mark to me. Once it is mine, I will live forever; the forces of heaven and hell will be mine to command.

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

GATES (cont'd)

(beat)

Millions will die unless you give me the mark. Their blood will be on your hands.

Mike continues to struggle, but he looks exhausted, beaten.

MIKE

(pitifully)

No...

Gates shakes his head in disgust. Mike closes his eyes, searching for the strength of will to break free.

GATES

Give it to me and I'll save the city.

(beat)

Now, Michael, the wave is nearly upon them! Give me the mark!

Mike slowly opens his eyes. He looks at Gates defiantly.

MIKE

You'll never have it!

FHAP! Gates screams as an arrow STICKS him in the back.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUSHES - NIGHT

Falkon takes another arrow and puts it on the bow.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

Gates, stunned, loses his grip on Mike and he plummets to the ground. Gates turns and fires an ENERGY BLAST at Falkon who starts running. Gates goes after her.

Mike gets up and immediately looks in the direction of the wave. He has only seconds to act, he knows he must do something. He closes his eyes.

MIKE

(to himself)

Concentrate.

(beat)

Concentrate.

CUT TO:

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

The wave rumbles furiously on a direct course for Manhattan. It is titanic in size, it will drown the entire island if it crests.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

CLOSER on Mike with his eyes closed, concentrating.

Suddenly, he begins to glow with an unusual AURA.

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR - NIGHT

We SEE people panicking as the wave moves within a few hundred feet of the harbor.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

The aura around Mike increases, exploding into the form of a bird-like energy creature, similar in size and construction to Gate's serpent manifestation.

Mike, eyes firmly closed tight, holds out his hands.

MIKE

NOW!

Mike and the bird manifestation suddenly pulsate with light.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

Suddenly, the wave comes to a dead stop. The rumbling sound subsides. All is quiet.

EXT. HARBOR - NIGHT

The people stand awestruck by the sight of a three thousand foot wave, frozen still just short of Manhattan.

There is a tense moment as everyone waits to see what is going to happen next.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

Slowly, tranquilly, the wave begins to SUBSIDE.

EXT. HARBOR - NIGHT

The people on the harbor cheer in relief and celebration.

EXT. LIBERTY - NIGHT

The energy aura around Mike subsides.

His eyes remain firmly shut and he drops to his knees in exhaustion.

He opens his eyes timidly, looking in the direction of the city.

Mike breathes a sigh of relief.

MIKE'S POV

In the distance, we SEE the lights of Manhattan sparkling.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The moment is cut short by the sound of a distant EXPLOSION.

MIKE

Falkon.

Mike EXPLODES with speed and flies in the direction of the sound.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

Falkon lies on the ground which smolders from a recent energy blast. Behind her, Gates hovers in the air, the dragon aura surging around him, the arrow still protruding from his back.

GATES

This is long overdue, Falkon.

Gates fires a blast of energy at Falkon. At the same instant, Mike stops in front of her, using his body to deflect the blast.

Before Gates can fire again, Mike quickly releases small globs of sheathe which cloak her wounds. They resemble small patches of gelatinous metal.

He turns and faces Gates.

MIKE

(to Gates)

I took care of the storm. Now it's time to take care of you.

CONTINUED:

GATES

The storm was only the beginning. The end is near, Michael. Pass the mark to me so that I can save mankind.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

The nine planets approach perfect alignment.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

Mike drops to his knees, writhing in pain.

Gates looks at him and smiles. Suddenly, he transforms himself into an exact CLONE of Mike. Gates walks over and places a reassuring arm around Mike. Delirious from the pain, Mike looks up and sees himself.

GATES

I feel your pain. Let me share your burden, brother.

Mike feels another spasm of pain and SCREAMS.

GATES

Share the mark with me, Michael. Relieve yourself of this agony.

MIKE

(in agony)

N-no. S-some kind of trick.

GATES

Let me help you. We are two sides of the same coin.

MIKE

Y-yeah...y-you're the screwed up, crazy side.

GATES

(furious)

Give me the mark!

Mike looks at Gates and the warped reflection of his own face. Gates' eyes glow, his teeth are gnarled. It is the maniacal image of Mike we saw through his communion with the mark. Mike realizes that the vision was not a reflection of himself, but a warning about Gates.

CONTINUED:

MIKE
(relieved)
No way!

Mike unleashes an ENERGY BLAST, sending Gates into the air.
He rises to feet and starts after him.

FALKON
(barely conscious)
Mike.

Mike turns toward her.

MIKE
Just stay down -- the sheathe will heal
your wounds.

EXT. ISLAND SKY - NIGHT

Mike slowly rises, and hovers in the air, eye-level with
Gates who has resumed his own form. They exchange stares.
Regardless of the outcome, each knows that this will be their
final battle. Suddenly, Mike's face changes. He looks
timid, unsure.

GATES
Ready, boy?

MIKE
No.
(beat)
I can't beat you. I know it...
(beat)
...I'm gonna give you the mark.

Gates allows a wry smile. He can't believe what he's
hearing. He outstretches his hand.

GATES
Finally, you've come to your senses.

Mike slowly hovers closer to him, then stops.

MIKE
You're really sure you want this thing --
it's not all it's cracked up to be.

Gates frowns menacingly, clearly out of patience.

Mike takes a deep breath.

MIKE
Okay, have it your way -- here it is.

CONTINUED:

Mike grabs Gates' hand, clenching down on it like a vice. Instantly, the sheathe's gelatinous metal pours onto Gates's hand and arm.

Gates looks confused.

GATES
What are you doing?!

MIKE
Giving you the mark just like I said.

The sheathe envelops Gates' body, instantly covering him from head to toe. Gates panics and fires several energy blasts at Mike.

The bird-like aura manifests around Mike, absorbing the incoming blast.

Close on Mike's eyes -- his contempt for Gates is palpable.

The sheathe begins to IMplode on Gates. He screams and struggles to get free, but can't.

EXT. ISLAND - NIGHT

As the sheathe implodes, the tempest around the island begins to swirl violently, as if it's fighting for survival right along side Gates.

EXT. WILSON'S HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Wilson's helicopter begins to spin out of control, caught up in the violent winds of the swirling tempest.

INT. HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Wilson and the others react to being jostled.

WILSON
(to the pilot)
Get this thing under control!

EXT. HELICOPTER - NIGHT

The winds drive the helicopter into a tree top and it EXPLODES in a huge fireball.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Mike continues to uncoil the sheathe upon Gates as he drags him out over the water.

CONTINUED:

Gates struggles to free himself.

Mike eyes Gates contemptuously, then looks down at the water.

MIKE

You know what was the best part of the movie version of Moses -- the parting of the red sea!

Below them, the ocean begins to stir.

Gradually, it begins to part, forming a narrow corridor of land on the ocean floor.

Gates looks down, barely conscious.

MIKE

See that -- that's the power of the mark.

(beat)

That's the power you're never going to have!

Gates screams in agony as the sheathe collapses on him.

Mike smiles.

MIKE

This one's for Jacob.

CRACK! In a violent contraction, the sheathe reduces itself, crushing Gates, killing him instantly.

Mike discards Gates body, hurling it toward the center of the parted sea.

CRASH! Gates body lands violently on the ocean floor.

Mike smiles and snaps his fingers.

The sea begins to reconstitute, crashing down on Gates' body.

Mike hovers above, watching with satisfaction. Around him, the tempest dies down -- the winds calm and the rain disappears. The sky looks normal again.

MIKE

Moses has got nothing on me.

The bird-like aura subsides and Mike heads for the island.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

Mike lands and recalls the sheathe into the MARK.

EXT. SPACE

The nine planets CONVERGE into perfect alignment.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

Mike doubles-over in pain and drops to his knees. His eyes and mouth begin to GLOW.

Suddenly, he looks upright toward the night sky, surging with energy, as powerful bolts of white light shoot out from his eyes and mouth into the heavens.

All over the island, the ground begins to shake.

CUT TO:

WORLD WIDE EARTHQUAKE

In NEW YORK, LOS ANGELES, and TOKYO, the earth begins to SHAKE violently as a result of the simultaneous geological event.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

The bird-like aura reappears around Mike and begins to rise up into the sky.

It grows rapidly. Within seconds, it has engulfed the New York skyline.

The manifestation continues to grow and starts to blanket the earth.

EXT. SPACE

The nine planets begin to SHAKE violently.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

The bird-like aura begins to burn bright.

Mike SCREAMS in agony as the light reaches a blinding intensity.

Suddenly, the light is swallowed back inside of him.

CUT TO:

VARIOUS CITIES

Throughout the world, the earth stops quaking.

EXT. SPACE

The nine planets stop shaking, and then slowly begin to DIVERGE.

EXT. LIBERTY ISLAND - NIGHT

Mike falls over, breathing hard.

He eyes the MARK with a new found respect. For the first time since getting it, he looks comfortable with it, as if it's always belonged there.

FALKON

(OC)

Nice moves.

Falkon, her wounds still cloaked in the sheathe's patches, walks up with Julie.

FALKON

You've got a few I've never seen.

(beat)

Are you okay?

MIKE

Yeah, I think I'm getting the hang of this.

Falkon smiles. Julie walks up and hugs Mike. He returns her embrace.

In the distance, the surviving Nomads, led by Ozy, walk toward the trio.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HARBOR - DAWN

It is one week later. Falkon, Mike, and Julie stand near a parked CAR, looking out from the harbor toward Liberty Island.

On the Island, a large scaffolding is being erected -- Lady Liberty is being reconstructed.

Mike is holding a newspaper in his hand. He looks at the headline which reads: "MAYOR AND BILLIONAIRE AMONG VICTIMS OF COSMIC STORM."

MIKE

I tell you, life goes on, doesn't it?

(beat)

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

MIKE (cont'd)

Johnson's gonna win the presidency.
Power changes hands -- we get a new
statue.

(beat)

And it all gets blamed on the
convergence.

Falkon and Julie glance at each other, then shoot Mike an
incredulous look.

MIKE

(reacting to their stares)

I said almost.

They all smile and start to walk toward the car.

JULIE

Mike, are you sure about this -- I mean,
where will you go?

MIKE

Everywhere.

(beat)

Our group has safe houses all over the
world -- I need to learn the history of
the mark and the secrets of its power.

FALKON

The mark has many enemies -- there are
others like Gates who will stop at
nothing to obtain it.

MIKE

Exactly. I'm a target now -- if I
stay...

(he looks right at Julie)

...everyone I care about will be in
danger.

Falkon senses that she's in the way.

FALKON

(to Mike)

I'll meet you at the car.

(beat)

Good-bye, Julie.

JULIE

Good-bye.

They shake hands and Falkon EXITS.

JULIE

I'm going to miss you.

CONTINUED: (2)

MIKE

Me too. I'll send you a postcard from every port.

Julie smiles.

MIKE

Take care of yourself, all right.

She nods and stares at Mike, as if looking at him for the last time. Slowly, she leans in and kisses him.

They part and Mike gives her a reassuring smile. Mike watches her as she goes. He takes a deep breath and heads for the car.

EXT. CAR - SUNRISE

Mike climbs into the passenger side of the car. Falcon is behind the wheel.

MIKE

So where to?

FALKON

L.A. -- from there we can catch a flight to Japan.

MIKE

Cool. Listen, I've been meaning to ask you...have we got any bases in Las Vegas?

Falcon shakes her head. She turns on the car and starts driving.

EXT. HARBOR - DAY

The car drives off, as the CAMERA begins to ZOOM out.

MIKE

(OC)

How 'bout Atlantic City? Or Monte Carlo?

FALKON

(OC)

I can see this is going to be a long trip.

As the car drives out of frame, we pull out and see the Statue of Liberty scaffolding shimmering in the morning light. A new day in Manhattan, and a new beginning.

THE END