

IKTHUS

a screenplay by
Charles Leopardo

WGA #938839

1134 N. Sycamore Avenue, #109
Hollywood, CA 90038
323-462-3375 cell- 310-592-7365

EXT. BEACH, SANTA MONICA - DUSK

The sun descends into the Pacific; a picture postcard sunset that tints the sandy beach, low cliffs and palm trees a warm red. It is still and peaceful except for the piercing CRY of the seagulls and a RUMBLING surf that fills the air with a fine mist of sea spray.

On screen:

Earth
2087 A.D.

Through the glow, a YOUNG MAN appears and walks slowly but purposefully toward the water. He stops at the shore and gazes into the distance with a far away look in his eyes. He removes his shirt and carelessly drops it, loosens his belt and lets his pants and undershorts fall to his ankles. He steps out of them and walks naked into the swell of the waves, then continues straight out until his head submerges.

A dozen more YOUNG PEOPLE of both sexes arrive one by one, each in worlds of their own. They all repeat the same ritual; disrobe and slowly walk into the sea. As the waves close over them the disk of the sun disappears below the horizon and there is only the roll of the darkening water.

Suddenly the surface is broken by the shape of a dorsal fin, then another, then what appears to be a tail flipper.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SPACESHIP CABIN - SAME TIME

CLOSE

Air bubbles up through a cloudy greenish liquid. A motionless arm is suspended in the solution. A compressor HUMS.

WIDER

A coffin-like hibernation tank contains the indistinct form of a suspended male body.

EXT. IN SPACE NEAR JUPITER'S MOON EUROPA - SAME TIME

A cargo spaceship closes in on the icy fractured ball of the moon Europa, dwarfed by the gigantic orange presence of the mother planet Jupiter. The ship is a beaten-up hulk, pocked all over by meteor hits and scraped along the sides by sloppy docking maneuvers.

The ship is built in two distinct sections, like an eighteen wheel truck: a smaller "cab" with the flight deck and power plant, and a larger "van" for the cargo. On the "cab", badly stenciled letters proclaim it's name and home port:

PEQUOD II
New Austin

INT. SPACESHIP CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The cabin of the freighter is as badly maintained as the exterior. The bulkheads are festooned with exposed wiring, patched ducts and tubes, and the floor is covered with discarded food tins, beer cans, crumpled paper, and a large pile of dirty laundry. A couple of photos cut from girlie magazines are haphazardly taped to support girders. The cabin vibrates with the HUM of the engines.

In the front of the cabin is a flight deck with two seats and a windshield with a view of Jupiter.

In the rear of the cabin are two hibernation pods, the occupied one, and the one other empty.

Suddenly, an ALARM goes off, red lights flash, and the dashboard console lights up.

THE POD

On the occupied pod, a control panel activates and displays the message:

RESUSCITATION IN PROGRESS

WIDER

The cover swings open, and the pilot, JARED POTTS (45), struggles to sit up. He's just as rough-looking as his ship, with craggy features, beard stubble, and a scar across one cheek; a typical long-haul space trucker.

He squints against the glare of the warning strobe and covers his ears with his hands as he clammers naked out of the pod. Potts gropes around for a robe, finds one on the floor, wraps it on, and staggers over to the flight deck.

POTTS
(yelling at the console)
Cheryl you dumb broad! Shut that dang horn down!

The ALARM continues unabated as he flops heavily into the pilot's seat. Potts slams his fist down on a big red flashing button on the console and the warning signals instantly stop.

POTTS

I said shut it down! You want me to go deaf?!

CHERYL, the silky voice of the ship's computer, replies through a speaker on the dash.

CHERYL

Good morning to you too Captain Potts.

Potts quickly checks his readings on gauges and console displays. He lifts a cowboy hat off the co-pilot's chair, puts it on, and adjusts the brim.

POTTS

You're definitely ready for an overhaul you old bat. You woke me up a whole fifteen minutes early!

CHERYL

I'm sorry if I inconvenienced you Captain Potts but I was merely following proper procedure.

Potts flips a couple of switches.

POTTS

What are you talking about? Which procedure?

CHERYL

In the event of disruption to communications uplink pilot must be immediately informed.

POTTS

I know that. But I've got McIntyre on-line right here.

He points at a dial on the console.

CHERYL

That's correct. On this occasion it is communication with the Ambrose station that has been disrupted.

POTTS

Ambrose!? You think I give a good gol-darn if the earth link is up or not? We won't be back there for another month.

CHERYL

Just following normal procedures
Captain Potts.

POTTS

Good! Then why don't you just follow this procedure--- just shut up!

CHERYL

Are you requesting me to turn off my human speech interface?

POTTS

You got it sweetie.

CHERYL

It's always a pleasure to serve you.

It CLICKS off.

Potts GRUNTS with satisfaction, plucks A PHOTO off the console and leans back in his chair to contemplate it. It's a family picture with a clean-shaven version of himself, his son Jonah at the age of ten, and a torn off quarter where his ex-wife used to be.

POTTS

(to the photo)

I'll make it work this time son.
You'll see.

EXT. EUROPA - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Four enormous platforms that look like oil rigs prominently display the logo of the ALLIED EX CORP. They are the only structures in an unearthly glacial wasteland that stretches to the horizon. The ice is fractured into crevasses and pinnacles and exudes a fine reflective vapor into space.

The Pequod II's braking thrusters BLAST as it descends straight down to a large flat deck that crowns one of the rigs. Wheeled landing struts deploy and it touches down, with a bit of a jolt, on an illuminated bull's eye in the center of the platform.

The middle of the deck is an elevator that lowers the ship into a tube that penetrates the icy crust.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT - CONTINUOUS

The inside of the shaft is ringed with lights at intervals, that are passed at increasing velocity by the ship and platform. Hydraulics WHOOSH as it heads down, down---

INT. MCINTYRE FISHING STATION WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

A WARNING HORN greets the arrival of the Pequod II. The elevator slows and stops at the platform of an enormous gloomy warehouse, stacked with endless rows of crates and containers.

A GROUND CREWMAN in coveralls steps up with lit signal wands and waves up to Potts to proceed off the elevator. The ship slowly trundles forward on it's wheels, preceded by the Crewman. It turns a corner, stops, then backs up to a loading dock. The van SCRAPES against a padded pillar, BUMPS against the dock, and the engines WHIRR down.

Potts climbs down a ladder and walks stiffly to the back of his rig, and up a corroded flight of concrete steps.

INT. LOADING DOCK - MOMENTS LATER

The cargo doors are open to expose the huge maw of the ship's hold.

Potts walks in through a heavy steel door, and peers into the hold. GRUMMAN (36) a burly dispatcher, walks over to him. He's dressed in the ubiquitous coveralls with a name tag pinned on, wears a hard hat, and carries an electronic clipboard.

He reads the clipboard and sticks his hand out without looking up.

GRUMMAN
Bill of lading!

Potts reaches in his pocket, produces a diskette in a sleeve and hands it to him. Grumman sticks it in a slot in his clipboard, and checks off the readout with a stylus.

GRUMMAN

Okay. Usual shit. Five metric tons.
Have you on your way in about an
hour---

He finally looks up.

GRUMMAN

---Potts. I don't think I know you.
First time here?

POTTS

Yep.

GRUMMAN

I'm on lunch in a couple of
minutes. I'll give you the tour.
You eat yet?

POTTS

Oh--- 'bout two weeks ago.

GRUMMAN

The cafeteria food isn't too bad.
It's about the only good thing you
can say about this place.

INT. A CORRIDOR - A LITTLE LATER

Tough-looking WORKERS in hard hats walk in both directions through an industrial passageway lined with ducts and pipes. Somewhere a steam leak HISSES. Potts and Grumman navigate through the crowd.

GRUMMAN

You get a good deal on the load?

POTTS

That all depends on what the price
of Saarg is when I get to Earth. No
matter what, it has to be a lot
better than my last job. I used to
run minerals out of Titan for
Intercorp. They don't pay squat.

INT. CAFETERIA - CONTINUOUS

They enter a large lunch room that's furnished with Spartan tables and chairs. A queue of Workers shove food trays along a rail at a food service counter.

On one wall is a floor to ceiling window that offers a stunning view of the outside underwater environment. The water is aglow with a diffused blue-green light. Here and there little golden bursts of light twinkle like fireflies.

Potts stops short when he sees it.

GRUMMAN

Kinda pretty, huh?

POTTS

Water and "pretty" are two words that don't much go together for me.

GRUMMAN

Ah hell. You're not a Martian are you?

POTTS

Mar-tee'-an! Yep, that's right. I'm a Mar-tee'-an Colonist. You have a problem with that!?

GRUMMAN

Nope. No problem. You might run into a few guys here that do though. Might be a good idea to keep a low profile.

POTTS

Don't you worry none. I can take care of myself alright.

They move up to a bank of small glass doors that display an assortment of food. There are handles and slots to insert credit cards. Potts and Grumman get on the line. Grumman picks up two trays from a stack and hands one to Potts. He inserts his card and pulls out a plate that holds a large sandwich. Potts looks it over dubiously.

POTTS

What's that you got there?

GRUMMAN

Saarg burger. It's not bad. Check it out.

POTTS

Never touch the stuff.

GRUMMAN

Oh yeah, I forgot. No non-Martian food, right?

POTTS

That's right. Don't grow on Mars I don't eat it. That's what we call Marsfast.

GRUMMAN

There's some stuff for you guys over there.

He points at a section of the food windows that has a large "M" mounted on it.

INT. DINING AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Potts and Grumman sit at a table and dig into their food. As Potts watches the view out the window Grumman notices his preoccupation.

POTTS

I didn't think you'd have any sunlight this far down.

GRUMMAN

We don't. Light comes from the Nephrites, they're bio-luminescent.

POTTS

What in tarnation are Nephrites?

GRUMMAN

I see you read a lot. They're a kind of plankton. It's the only thing alive down here besides your Saarg-fish. That's all a Saarg ever eats.

POTTS

There must be an awful lot of them to produce that much light.

GRUMMAN

Better believe it. It's plankton soup out there. Saarg have it pretty easy. If they're hungry all they have to do is swim around a little and swallow.

A dark shape moves in the aqueous distance. Potts points at it.

POTTS

That one there?

Grumman swivels around to look.

GRUMMAN

Yeah. That's your Saarg alright.
He'll probably come right up to the
glass. They get drawn to the light.

On cue, the Saarg swims closer. It's a large, dark, ugly fish, like a small whale, with no eyes and a funnel-shaped scoop for a mouth.

GRUMMAN

Ugly looking son of a bitch, isn't
it? Sure tastes good though.

He takes a big bite of his sandwich.

POTTS

So I've heard.

GRUMMAN

Now don't take this the wrong way---
I got a lot of respect for your
dietary laws. Some of my best
friends are Marsh---Mar tee' ans.
But I really don't get why you guys
won't make an exception for Saarg
when you know it prevents cancer.

POTTS

I'll take my chances.

GRUMMAN

Okay. But what about your kids---

POTTS

(angry)

Leave my kid the hell out of it!

Grumman realizes he's hit a raw nerve.

GRUMMAN

Sorry. No offense intended. I'm
just like that. I always say the
first thing that comes to my mind.
It's like a disease.

Potts is somewhat placated.

POTTS

I'm just a little touchy about my
kid is all. My ex is an Earthling.

(MORE)

POTTS(cont'd)

She left me and took the boy with her to Earth six months ago. I'm sure she's stuffing him right now full of ungodly food and taking him to water sports tournaments---

CUT TO:

INT. A NEARBY WORK AREA - SAME TIME

A room with metal bulkheads hung with high tech. diving suits and an assortment of underwater equipment.

SANCHEZ, a worker, slowly walks up to a pressure door labeled AIR-LOCK. He inserts a card in a security lock and inputs a combination on a touch pad. Next to the lock is a WARNING sign. A bell RINGS and a green light flashes as the door swings open and he enters.

Another worker, MORRIS notices that Sanchez doesn't have a diving suit on.

MORRIS

Hey! What the hell are you doing!

He runs over to the air-lock but the door closes just before he gets there. Morris frantically tries to override the lock mechanism. Through the pressure door window, Sanchez can be seen removing his shirt. Morris bangs on the door and yells. Sanchez smiles blissfully back at him.

MORRIS

Come on! Open the door! Snap out of it! Shit!

He turns away from the door.

MORRIS

Help! Anybody! Help!

A SECURITY GUARD runs up, sizes up the situation, and inserts his own card in the lock.

GUARD

He's trying to open the outside door!

A sudden CONCUSSION shakes the bulkhead as water explodes into the airlock. A SIREN WAILS.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING AREA - SAME TIME

The SIREN resonates in the lunch room and everyone stops what they're doing. Grumman frowns and pulls a small communications device out of a pocket and pokes a couple of buttons on it.

POTTS
What's that siren for?

GRUMMAN
Don't know. Could be anything. Hold on.

He puts the device to his ear.

GRUMMAN
(to the comm. device)
Yeah!--- What!--- Again?!---Whose crew?--- Yeah. I'll be down in a minute.

He hits the off button, returns the device to his pocket, picks up his sandwich, and takes another bite.

POTTS
Well? What was it?!

GRUMMAN
Oh--- No big deal. Some guy just blew himself out an airlock.

POTTS
That's all? Dang, and I thought it might be an emergency or something.

GRUMMAN
It happens. Some guys just can't take it. They go wacko down here.

POTTS
Jesus!

GRUMMAN
What?

POTTS
I think that's what's left of your man.

Grumman turns to look as Sanchez' mangled body drifts slowly upward past the window.

The Saarg is drawn to the corpse, and nudges it. A second fish arrives, and together, they guide the body away into the depths.

Grumman has obviously lost his appetite. He sets the rest of the sandwich down and gets up.

GRUMMAN

I'd better get down there. It's too bad you had to see this on your first trip, but that's the way it goes here. This place is hell. Good meeting you anyway.

He shakes Pott's hand.

POTTS

I'll see you in a couple of months.

Grumman nods and walks away as Potts resumes his meal. With nothing better to do, he stares at the window.

THROUGH THE WINDOW

The golden glow of the nephrites flashes like a sea of miniature pulsars.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. IN SPACE NEAR MARS - TWO WEEKS LATER

A field of stars surrounds the reddish globe of Mars. The Pequod II enters frame on a heading toward the planet.

INT. SPACESHIP CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Potts is in the pilot's chair. He's wrapped in a bathrobe and roughly dries his hair with a towel.

CHERYL

Please avoid depositing bathing solution on the console. Careless dampening of the controls can be hazardous, causing fire or explosion, resulting in possible injury or death.

POTTS

Well you could use a good cleaning Cheryl.

He wipes his towel over the console.

CHERYL

Use of non-recommended solvents for routine maintenance can result in voiding of your warranty.

Potts looks over the instruments.

POTTS

You didn't wake me up early this time, so I guess that means all the beacons are online.

CHERYL

That is correct Captain Potts.

POTTS

Good. Dial up Ambrose. Let's hear if there's anything exciting happening on Earth today.

CHERYL

Beacon online.

The radio comes on with the ROAR of a CROWD, and the banter of a SPORTS ANNOUNCER.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

---What a play! These fans are going wild! The clock is running out---and this International Water Polo Championship is definitely going into overtime! What do you think about that stunt by McGuire, Chuck?

Potts reaches for a switch and unceremoniously shuts it off.

CHERYL

I thought you wanted to listen to that broadcast Captain Potts.

POTTS

I heard enough. They're still alive down there. That's all I needed to know. Don't have a hankerin' to listen to any more water sports bull. I'll take good old Martian baseball any time, thank you.

He touches the photo of his kid.

POTTS

Oh. There's one more job I need for you to do before we get to that inspection station.

CHERYL

How can I be of service?

POTTS

Run a systems diagnostic. I don't want to hear any sass from Jonesy this time.

EXT. NEAR MARS - CONTINUOUS

Potts' ship is on approach to a large circular space station in orbit around the red planet. It's perimeter is studded with space docks jammed with ships of all sizes.

INT. INSPECTION STATION LOADING DOCK - LATER

A hatch like a huge camera aperture opens on a view of the stars. The Pequod II approaches and docks nose in. The hatch closes snugly behind the "cab" of the ship. A pressure pump HUMS loudly and BLASTS air into the lock.

A door on an inner bulkhead opens and a five-person INSPECTION TEAM strides in. They wear dark uniforms with matching caps, sidearms, and "MARS INSPECTION" silk-screened on their backs.

The Chief Inspector, SARAH "JONESY" JONES (35), waves up at Potts. He waves back through the windshield. She's athletic, beautiful in a slightly tomboyish way, and walks with a military swagger.

INT. PEQUOD II FLIGHT DECK - CONTINUOUS

Potts flips overhead toggle switches and pokes a touch pad on the console.

POTTS

Here we go. Okay Cheryl. Shut it down except for essentials--- and the reefer. Watch that like a hawk! You copy?

CHERYL

Yes Captain Potts. My voice recognition software is operating quite well. Memo-
 (imitates Potts' voice)
 Don't make an ass of yourself with the Chief Inspector.

POTTS

Right!

He looks around the cabin, walks over to the bulkhead, pulls down the girlie pictures, and throws them in a locker.

The boarding hatch suddenly swings open and Jonesy walks in.

POTTS

Howdy Chief Inspector Jones. It's great to see you again.

He tips his hat.

JONESY

Can the small talk Potts. What kind of contraband are you carrying this time?

POTTS

Contraband? You're hurting my feelings Jonesy. I'm strictly an honest, hard-working trucker now. You know that.

JONESY

Yeah, yeah. Let's just see your bill of lading cowboy.

POTTS

Got it right here.

He hands her the diskette. She slips it into her hand-held computer with just the slightest hint of suggestiveness.

POTTS

See. All legal and proper.

She looks over the readout.

JONESY

Five tons of Saarg! I'm impressed. Who did you have to bribe to get this job?

POTTS
Actually nobody. Allied EX is
pretty hard up for truckers these
days it seems.

Jonesy glances around the cabin.

JONESY
I guess they must be. Okay, let's
check the reefer.

Potts leads her to a hatch at the back of the cabin, and
inputs some numbers on a touch pad next to the door. It
slides back and there's a HISS as the pressure equalizes.

INT. SPACESHIP VAN - CONTINUOUS

They step into a dimly lit corridor that's crammed with
refrigeration equipment, HUMMING compressors, ducts and pipes
and controls. A foggy vapor hangs in the air.

Directly opposite the door is a pressure hatch with a thick
frosted-over glass window. Jonesy walks over to it, scrapes
the ice off with her hand and peers into the hold.

The wall is covered with condensed drops of water. She
notices it and wipes it with her hand.

JONESY
Dehumidifier's not working very
well, is it? If this plumbing
corrodes you'll have a whole mess
of problems.

POTTS
It was working great right up 'til
yesterday. I was definitely meaning
to have that fixed before I left.

JONESY
Good. You read my mind.

She pulls a retractable cable out of her notepad and plugs it
into a control console.

JONESY
Now let's see exactly what this
reefer's been up to.

She watches a list of readouts.

JONESY

Well---

POTTS

Lookin' good, right?

JONESY

I've seen better Potts. Look at this variation here--- three degrees over to six degrees under.

POTTS

I'm allowed ten ain't I?

JONESY

Technically. But this means you probably have a leak or a faulty compressor somewhere.

POTTS

I just ran a diagnostic. Everything checks out.

An ASSISTANT INSPECTOR (Male 30) walks through the hatch and stands at attention.

ASSISTANT

The outer hull integrity looks okay Inspector.

JONESY

Good. Double check the coupling.

ASSISTANT

Aye aye sir.

He marches off.

JONESY

I don't know if I can pass this cargo through Potts. This junky old equipment can go any minute.

She walks over to check the compressor. Potts follows after her.

POTTS

Oh come on Jonesy. Don't give me no-

He stops himself.

POTTS

---please don't do this to me! The readings are okay. You saw it yourself. Do you know how much money I put into this here reefer hold you call old junk? Twenty thousand credits is how much. If I get hung up here I'm gonna' be up Shit's Creek.

She shakes her head.

JONESY

I don't know--- Saarg spoils real easy. Earth native bacteria grows on it like crazy. If I pass it and somebody gets food poisoning there'll be hell to pay.

POTTS

Well, of course I know you have a job to do and all---

He moves in closer to her.

POTTS

And I sure wouldn't want to see you get in trouble or nothin'---

He lays his hand on her shoulder, at first buddy-like. Then he massages it and gazes earnestly into her eyes.

POTTS

---'specially over the likes of a feller like me.

She almost succumbs to his charm, but snaps herself out of it and playfully knocks his hand off.

JONESY

Sweet talking me won't get you nowhere pardner.

POTTS

Please, Jonesy. I need this break.

Jonesy looks thoughtful as she walks to the exit. She turns back around.

JONESY

I'll tell you what. We'll run our own diagnostic and if it comes up to specs. I'll pass you.

POTTS

Thank you Jonesy. You won't regret it. I promise.

JONESY

I better not. Why don't you go get a bite to eat or something. This might take a while.

She leaves and he breathes a deep SIGH of relief.

CUT TO:

INT. MARS SPACE STATION GALLERIA - A LITTLE LATER

A mall-like area with services that cater to spaceship crews and passengers. It has the over all interior shape of a huge curved tube that reveals the doughnut form of the space station. The outside quarter, from the middle of the ceiling to half way down the wall is constructed of girder-reinforced glass and offers a view of the stars and the nearby planet.

MOVING

Potts strolls through a motley INTERPLANETARY CROWD and takes in the sights and sounds.

He passes a restaurant with a neon "Saarg" sign, a kiosk with a sign that advertises "Saarg Burgers", a fancy clothing store, and a bar with an open door that blares LOUD WEIRD MUSIC.

A HOMELESS YOUTH approaches Potts with an extended plastic cup. He's big, tall, and scruffy.

HOMELESS YOUTH

Spare credits?

Jared looks him over.

POTTS

Can't say that I do son. Why don't you just get a job?

HOMELESS YOUTH

I've tried mister. I got laid off from my job here on the station. Now I don't even have the money for the shuttle back to New Austin.

Unconvinced, Potts shakes his head.

POTTS

Seems to me you've been living like this a long time. If you really want a job I know just where you can get one. Big feller like yourself can always get work as a miner on Titan.

He reaches into a pocket and takes out a tiny computer notepad.

POTTS

I just happen to know the man in charge of the---

HOMELESS YOUTH

Shit man! There's no reason to insult me!

He stalks off and Potts grins after him.

MOVING

Potts walks across the concourse to a bar and grill that's emblazoned with the words "TRUCK STOP".

INT. TRUCK STOP BAR AND RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Jared walks into the establishment. Austere and brightly lit, it contains a bar and a dining area equipped with booths occupied by fellow TRUCKERS. They're a rough antisocial lot and each one takes up a whole booth by himself.

A large holographic monitor at the bar shows a baseball game in progress. Smaller monitors around the dining room display text and pictures of news, departure and arrival schedules, and the time.

Potts finds an empty table and sits down. A WAITER who looks as tough as the clientele he serves, walks up to him with two small folded cards in his hand, one red and one blue.

WAITER

Martian or Terran?

POTTS

Now what do you think?

The Waiter sets the red card down on the table.

WAITER

Beer?

POTTS

Yep. Make it Sam Houston Dark.

The Waiter walks off. Potts watches the information scroll by on the nearest screen. The following text appears:

**Earth News: Dateline Los Angeles
The Plague Spreads**

It's accompanied by a small video clip of a NEWSMAN in front of a wire frame globe constructed of longitude and latitude lines. The announcer's lips move but there is no sound. Potts reaches up and touches an immaterial holographic button. A gauge is activated and widens as the audio volume increases.

NEWSMAN (V.O.)

---and the epidemic of Infectious Dehydration Syndrome, or I.D.S., has claimed another ten thousand victims during the past month alone.---

Potts listens intently.

POTTS

Shit!

NEWSMAN (V.O.)

---Researchers say that it will be at least another year before a vaccine is available. Experts are still stumped about the origin of the mysterious disease which---

CUT TO:

INT. INSPECTION STATION LOADING DOCK - SAME TIME

Jonesy watches the readout on a portable console that is wheeled up to Potts' ship. A cable snakes from her equipment to an electrical port on the hull.

The Assistant Inspector marches over to her and stands at attention.

ASSISTANT

We've completed the checklist,
Inspector.

Jonesy's pocket emits a series of BEEPS. She reaches in and pulls out a small communicator. It's screen flashes a message:

REMOTE DOWNLOAD IN PROGRESS

She flips the cover closed and replaces it.

JONESY

It's about time for my break and there's a message I have to view in my quarters. Record this data when it's finished compiling.

ASSISTANT

Aye aye sir!

CUT TO:

INT. JONESY'S LIVING QUARTERS - A LITTLE LATER

A small living space that looks like a second class stateroom on a cruise ship.

Several family photos adorn the walls. The largest is a picture of a slightly younger Jonesy with her father, GIDEON JONES (65). They're both smiling and he has his hand on her shoulder.

Jonesy walks over to a console, pokes the touchpad, and a holographic screen materializes. She sits down on a couch to watch. In a corner of the blank screen this message appears:

Earth Transmission 5.13.2087 10:49.45

An image of her father suddenly fills the screen. He looks very old and shrunken and she's shocked by his appearance.

JONESY

Daddy?!

The image comes to life.

GIDEON JONES

Hello Sarah. As you can see, I'm not doing very well. There's no easy way to say this--- I've been diagnosed with I.D.S., and they're only giving me a few weeks to live. Please come here as soon as you can.

(MORE)

GIDEON JONES(cont'd)

I really want to see you one last time, and I have some important things that I can only say to you in person. In the meantime--- this is very important--don't break Marsfast--- even when you get to Earth. I've attached an encrypted file--- you remember our old secret code, right? Follow the instructions exactly. I'll explain when you arrive here. I miss you.

He smiles gamely and manages a feeble wave. The image disappears. Jonesy is distraught.

JONESY

No!

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK STOP BAR AND RESTAURANT - A LITTLE LATER

Potts is on his second beer, still zoned out on the news report.

Jonesy barges in and looks around frantically. This causes a slight panic among the Truckers who are all certain that she's there to bust somebody.

She homes in on Potts and unceremoniously jumps into his booth.

JONESY

Potts, I need your help!

He snaps out of his stupor.

POTTS

What!? What are you talkin' 'bout?

JONESY

It's my father---

She chokes up and tears well up in her eyes. Potts softens up.

POTTS

What's the matter now Jonesy?

She pulls herself together with an effort.

JONESY

I just found out he has the I.D.S. virus--- he's dying. I need to get to Earth right away. Will you take me there?

POTTS

Now what kind of man do you take me for? Of course I'll bring you to see your Daddy.

JONESY

Thanks Jared. This means a lot to me. Bless you.

POTTS

Think nothin' of it. I just saw a news story about that damn earth disease. Now I REALLY gotta get my kid the hell out of there!

She jumps up, takes a couple of steps and turns back around.

JONESY

I just have to grab a few things.

POTTS

I'll meet you at the dock in fifteen minutes.

She runs off and he chugs the rest of his beer.

POTTS

The good Lord sure does work in mysterious ways.

He wipes his mouth with his sleeve.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT, SANTA MONICA, EARTH - DUSK

A small, sparsely furnished apartment with a view of the Pacific.

Jared's ex-wife LILA (38), her beauty marred by a bitter etched frown, sits at a kitchenette table opposite their sulky son JONAH (12).

She digs into a plate of Saarg, potatoes, and vegetables. Jonah avoids the fish and picks unenthusiastically at the greens. She looks up and notices.

LILA
Why aren't you eating your fish?

JONAH
I don't like it.

LILA
How do you know that you don't?
You've never tried it.

JONAH
It's just, you know, not Marsfast.

She elegantly wipes her mouth on a napkin.

LILA
We're not on Mars anymore, Jonah
Potts. This is Earth. You can't
keep Marsfast here. Those beans
you're eating weren't grown on Mars
either.

JONAH
I know. But we grow veggie's like
this on Mars. We don't grow
Saargfish.

LILA
(getting annoyed)
That's ridiculous! I work hard to
make money and cook for you. The
least you can do is eat your food!

JONAH
Dad said I should never eat---

LILA
(angry)
Your father's not here! If he cared
so much about how you're raised he
would have made enough money to
support you!

JONAH
He's working hard now! He told me
he's going to make a lot of money
trucking Saarg.

LILA
Sure, sure. Another one of his fish
stories. You know, the one that got
away was this big!

She stretches her arms out.

JONAH
Don't talk like that about him!

He throws his fork down, bolts from the table, and runs to his room.

LILA
Jonah!

The door SLAMS. Lila gets up, starts in the direction of Jonah's room, and thinks better of it. She turns back to the kitchen area, picks up the dishes and carries them to the sink. She turns the tap on, starts to scrape the plates off into the garbage disposal, then turns the water off and drops them into the sink.

Lila SIGHS with frustration, pushes her hair back with her fingers, and walks out of the kitchen.

EXT. LILA'S DECK - CONTINUOUS

She opens a sliding door and walks onto a patio that overlooks the ocean, leans on the rail and gazes pensively at the setting sun.

CUT TO:

INT. MARS STATION LOADING DOCK - A LITTLE LATER

Three CREWMEN prepare the Pequod II for takeoff. A fuel hose is screwed off by Crewman #1, while Crewman #2 disconnects an external electrical hookup from the belly of the ship. Crewman #3 gives the engines a last-minute visual inspection.

Crewman #1 waves up at the flight deck and gives Potts the thumbs-up sign. The Crewmen leave the dock and the pressure door closes behind them.

INT. PEQUOD II FLIGHT DECK - CONTINUOUS

Potts is in the pilot's chair inputting data into the console. Jonesy stands behind him and watches over his shoulder.

POTTS
Cheryl, are you there?

CHERYL
Where else would I be Captain
Potts?

POTTS
How do we look?

CHERYL
All systems are operating within
specified parameters except for
one.

POTTS
Which one?

CHERYL
The maximum number of zero
passengers has been exceeded.
Departure cannot proceed.

Potts and Jonesy glance at each other.

POTTS
Oh that's okay Cheryl. Chief
inspector Jones here requested that
we take her along for an emergency
family leave.

CHERYL
Last minute changes to the
passenger manifest must be cleared
through the central flight command
database.

POTTS
How long will that take?

CHERYL
Approximately five Terran hours.

POTTS
What!? Dammit Cheryl, you---

CHERYL
Of course if Inspector Jones were a
certified copilot instead of a
passenger---

POTTS
Right! That's right! She IS a
certified copilot.

CHERYL
 Regulation 1329, subsection B
 stipulates that the copilot must be
 in the copilot's seat during
 departure sequence.

Potts glances at Jonesy and gestures toward the seat next to
 him. She sits down and buckles up.

POTTS
 Happy now Cheryl?

CHERYL
 Ready to initiate departure from
 space dock.

POTTS
 Thank you.
 (to Jonesy)
 All those rules and regulations
 sure can be a big pain in the butt,
 huh?

He pushes a button and speaks into his comm.

POTTS
 Pequod Two flight 7 to Mars Tower
 3. We are ready for departure.

There's no response.

POTTS
 Mars Tower 3, do you read me?

FLIGHT CONTROLLER (V.O.)
 Pequod II, I'm afraid there's going
 to be a slight delay. We just
 received word to hold all flights
 to Earth until further notice.

POTTS
 What!? Why!?

FLIGHT CONTROLLER (V.O.)
 New Austin just declared a
 quarantine on all travel to Earth
 due to the plague there.

POTTS
 Any idea for how long?

FLIGHT CONTROLLER (V.O.)
 Indefinitely.

Potts switches the radio off.

POTTS
Great! Just Great!

JONESY
I don't believe this! What are we
going to do?!

POTTS
We're royally screwed is all.
You'll never get to see your daddy
again, and I'll be stuck with a
worthless five tons of spoiled
Saarg, no paycheck, a repossessed
rig, and no way to get my boy back!
Or maybe ever even see him again!

JONESY
There's got to be a way.

POTTS
I'm open to suggestions.

JONESY
I could manually override the
controls on the space doors.

POTTS
(half to himself)
We'd have to equalize the pressure
first or we'll be squashed through
that hatch before it can even open
a centimeter.

He thinks for a beat.

POTTS
I've got an idea. You think you can
jam the pressure door so we don't
get any visitors?

JONESY
Should be no problem.

He hits a couple of switches and gets up.

POTTS
Cheryl. Mind the store.

INT. LOADING DOCK - MOMENTS LATER

Jonesy is at the pressure door. She keys a combination into an electronic lock that raises the inner door part way. Another couple of pokes and it descends. Before it's closed all the way, she takes out her sidearm and BLASTS the mechanism. The door locks up with the edge about an inch from the floor.

At the outer hatch, Potts opens the cover of a large electrical junction box that's crammed with wires and diodes. At a loss, he stares at it and tries to figure out what goes where. Jonesy runs over.

POTTS
You said you knew how to hot wire
this mess?

He hands her the end of a rolled up cable that splits into a series of connectors.

JONESY
Piece of cake.

POTTS
Just be careful now.

She gives him a "back off" look.

POTTS
Okay. You're the expert.

He unwinds the cable toward the ship and connects the other end into a port on it's underbelly.

JONESY
That should do it.

POTTS
Let's go!

INT. PEQUOD II FLIGHT DECK - CONTINUOUS

Potts and Jonesy run through the hatch onto the flight deck and jump into their seats.

POTTS
Fire should activate the pressure
release valves right?

JONESY
If it's hot enough.

POTTS
I think we can arrange that.

He dials in some settings.

CHERYL
Captain Potts. We have not received
departure clearance. In addition
the lock pressure has not been
equalized. It is unsafe to start
engines in---

POTTS
Cheryl. Armadillo turd!

JONESY
What?

POTTS
That's just a slightly illegal
override command I hacked in.
She'll be a mite more cooperative
now.

He pulls some levers and pushes his foot down on a brake
pedal.

POTTS
Hold onto your hat.

INT. LOADING DOCK - CONTINUOUS

Pequod II's engines come to life and BLAST rocket flames.
Smoke billows through the dock and sprinklers activate and
douse the ship with fire retardant. An ALARM sounds.

INT. SPACE STATION CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

FIREFIGHTERS run toward the door of the loading dock. They
wear hazmat suits with fire extinguishers and oxygen tanks on
their backs. ALARMS sound and red lights flash. A LIEUTENANT
reaches the door and dials commands into the electronic lock,
but the door is jammed shut.

INT. PEQUOD II FLIGHT DECK - CONTINUOUS

Potts and Jonesy operate the controls. Fire retardant splatters on the windshield. The engines STRAIN and the ship SHUDDERS.

POTTS

Come on! Come on! Open up!

JONESY

Pressure's in the red!

Suddenly there's a loud HISS.

POTTS

That's it!

He POWERS DOWN the motors and hits some keys.

INT. LOADING DOCK - CONTINUOUS

The outside hatch slowly opens. The ship reverses thrusters, glides out into space, turns, and BLASTS away from the station.

INT. PEQUOD II FLIGHT DECK - SAME TIME

POTTS

We'd better put the hammer down.
Some of your "Smokey Bear" friends
are liable to follow us.

JONESY

Too late. There's a patrol ship on
our tail.

She points at a scope on the dash. Potts checks it out.

POTTS

There's just one. Not a problem.

JONESY

You can't outrun it with this
crate!

The bright light of a warning shot GOES OFF in front of the ship's nose.

POTTS

Armed too I see.

The radio CRACKLES and an OFFICER comes on.

OFFICER (V.O.)
Mars Patrol Alpha to Pequod II. You
are in violation of System Law.
Shut down your engines and prepare
to be towed.

JONESY
We're screwed.

Potts holds up his index finger to sign "just one second".

POTTS
Just hold your horses.

He reaches down, opens a hidden compartment, and takes out a black box that's covered with buttons and dials. Potts mounts the gizmo on the dashboard, pulls a wire out of the back and plugs it into a port. He turns the box on and it emits a HUM.

JONESY
What's that?

Potts grins.

POTTS
It's what you call your Fuzz
Buster, darlin'.

He SNAPS a toggle switch.

EXT. IN SPACE NEAR MARS - CONTINUOUS

Potts' ship races along with a sleek patrol ship in hot pursuit. It has lights that flash like a patrol car.

Suddenly a small hatch opens on the back of the Pequod II and hundreds of tiny golden balls fly out.

INT. PATROL SHIP - CONTINUOUS

The Police Officer and a PILOT operate the controls. The back of Potts' ship is visible through the windshield, as is the expulsion of the balls.

PILOT
He's deploying something.

The Officer's eyes bulge.

OFFICER

That son of a---. Take evasive
action!

The Pilot quickly turns the ship, but not fast enough. The little balls GO OFF like a fireworks display, and a storm of electricity erupts in the cockpit. Arcs travel across the console and course through the Pilot and Officer.

PILOT AND OFFICER

Yaaaaaaaauuuuuugh!!

INT. PEQUOD II FLIGHT DECK - CONTINUOUS

POTTS

EeeeeeeHaaaw! That ought to slow
them down a bit.

JONESY

Fuzz busters!? I thought you said
you were a strictly honest
businessman now.

POTTS

I am. I got this unit to take care
of hijackers.

She looks askance at him.

POTTS

I wouldn't cast no aspersions on
old Jared if I were you. You and me
are both on the wrong side of the
law now.

JONESY

Not really. As far as Mars Command
is concerned I'm taking my leave on
Mars at this very moment.

He swivels around to face her.

POTTS

Why you devious---

JONESY

And since I deleted your manifest
from the database they'll be hard
put to prove that you're not there
with me.

POTTS

Now that's what I like. A woman who plans ahead.

(to the console)

Okay Cheryl, you can wake up now.

There's no response.

POTTS

Up and at 'em Cheryl!

CHERYL

I heard you the first time Captain Potts. I'm just trying to compile all of this data. What happened?

POTTS

Oh just a little power glitch Cheryl. Nothing for you to worry your pretty head about.

He gets up and stretches.

POTTS

Time to hit the hay.

JONESY

After you.

Potts grins and heads for his hibernation pod.

CUT TO:

EXT. EARTH, LOS ANGELES - SAME TIME

FLYOVER

An enormous complex of spired skyscrapers rises in the center of downtown Los Angeles. Small hovercraft BUZZ around the vicinity like flies.

AT STREET LEVEL

The tallest and gaudiest building has a large sign over the lobby entrance that says-

ALLIED EXTRATERRESTRIAL IMPORTS INC.

SYSTEM HEADQUARTERS

INT. ALLIED EX LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

An enormous interior space is decorated with large transparency images of the planets, and views of Allied Ex operations on different worlds, including the fishing station on Europa.

PASSERSBY walk through the lobby or ascend escalators.

THE ENTRANCE

A handicapped access door swings open to admit a motorized wheelchair. It carries DR. SIMEON TRAPP (63), an atrophied professorial remnant in a tweed jacket with bow tie.

He rolls a short distance to a security station by an elevator that's manned by a pair of armed GUARDS. He hands Guard #1 an electronic pass. The Guard inserts it in a slot on his console as Dr. Trapp lays a shaky hand on a security scanner. The equipment emits a BEEP of approval.

GUARD #1

Good morning Dr. Trapp. You're going to the fifty-seventh floor?

DR. TRAPP

That's right Mike.

GUARD #1

They're expecting you.

He hands Dr. Trapp his I.D. Card, and the elevator door opens. Dr. Trapp rolls in, swings a one-eighty, and the door closes.

INT. ALLIED EX OFFICES - MOMENTS LATER

The elevator opens and the invalid wheels out and heads for a desk staffed by a female RECEPTIONIST. They greet each other and she points down a hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dr. Trapp approaches large wooden double doors that sport a metal plaque that reads "BOARD ROOM". Several VOICES are heard from inside, unintelligible at first, but as he gets closer snatches of shouted argument can be distinguished.

VOICES

---how do we know that!--- Do you mean to say we--- it's just not possible--- there's no way to spin this--- No! Absolutely not!

The doors swing open automatically to reveal a contentious board meeting in progress.

The CEO, JONATHAN STARK (53) and the President, J. THOMAS DODGE (70), are both on their feet and lean in from opposite sides of a meeting table like two schoolboys calling each other out.

DODGE

(shouting)

---and I'm telling you that all hell is going to break loose if a word of this gets out!

STARK

(shouting)

That doesn't have to happen unless somebody here has a big mouth!

The seven other BOARD MEMBERS watch them like spectators at a boxing match.

Stark glances at the door and notices Dr. Trapp.

STARK

Oh. Dr. Trapp. Come in! Come in!

Trapp moves forward and the doors close behind him.

INT. BOARD ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He swivels his wheelchair over to an empty space at the table.

DR. TRAPP

Good morning John--- Jay---

He wanly smiles a greeting at the others.

STARK

Good morning doctor. We were just talking about how important your input is, especially at a time like this.

He glares at Dodge.

DR. TRAPP

Exactly what kind of time is it?

DODGE

The time right before Allied EX stock plunges through the basement and we all get arrested, put in jail, and they throw the key away.

STARK

I believe that Jay and I have slightly different evaluations of the evidence, or lack thereof, that supposedly implicates our fish as a possible cause of the I.D.S. epidemic.

DR. TRAPP

There is no connection. That data is totally flawed. All of our research supports the original FDA analysis. There are no ill effects that can be attributed to consumption of Sargus Europias. On the other hand, the health benefits are well-documented.

STARK

There! You see?

DODGE

I'd like to believe that Doctor. Help my unbelief.

CUT TO:

INT. PEQUOD II CABIN - TWO WEEKS LATER

Jonesy, sits on the edge of the hibernation pod huddled in a heavy bathrobe that's stained with a tinge of green by the solution that drips from her hair. Potts is still unconscious in his pod. Jonesy gets up and leers a little at the sight of his naked body through the partly fogged glass. She checks the controls on his pod, and seems satisfied that it's okay.

Jonesy heads to one of the bulkheads. She opens a door, and inside is-

A SHOWER STALL

It's a small cubicle with a recess that has a plastic curtain over it. She presses a button and a heat lamp comes on, accompanied by a HUM.

Jonesy slips out of her bathrobe, drapes it on a hook, gets in, and pulls the curtain shut.

She pokes another button and the "shower" comes on. Instead of water, it's a kind of oily antiseptic spray that covers her from head to foot. She turns it off and lifts a vacuum cleaner-like appliance with a retractable hose, and proceeds to use it to suck off the excess fluid.

Suddenly, the curtain flies open. A naked, still groggy Potts gapes at her. She SHRIEKS.

POTTS

Oh! Uh, sorry!

He quickly closes it.

JONESY

Can't a girl have any privacy around here?

POTTS

Sorry. I just plum forgot you were on board. Haven't had my cup of coffee yet.

JONESY

Well you just wait your turn.

POTTS

Don't rush for me. I'll just mosey on over to the cockpit and see what Cheryl is up to.

He walks to the door, and stops for a beat.

POTTS

By the way Jonesy---

JONESY

What?

POTTS

---that sure is one great body you've got there.

Instantly, a brush wings out of the shower and SMACKS him in the back.

POTTS
 (laughing)
 Ow! I'm a' goin', I'm a' goin'.

CUT TO:

EXT. IN ORBIT OVER THE EARTH - LATER

The Pequod II is on approach to a huge space station that's in high orbit around the blue curve of the Earth. It looks almost like an advertising blimp with the words ALLIED EX painted on the side.

Potts' ship slows to a synchronized speed a short distance behind the station.

INT. PEQUOD II FLIGHT DECK - CONTINUOUS

Potts is in the pilot's seat furiously pushing buttons. Jonesy jumps into the co-pilot's chair and notices the grim expression on Potts' face.

JONESY
 What's the problem?

POTTS
 Their tower's not responding.
 Somethin' ain't right.
 (to the radio)
 Allied Ex Port One, do you read me.
 This is Pequod two requesting
 clearance to dock. Allied Ex Port
 One, this is Pequod---

A DEAD ASTRONAUT drifts slowly past the windshield. Inside the spacesuit, his horrific freeze-dried face stares at them sightlessly.

Jonesy SCREAMS.

POTTS
 Mercy!

They watch in horror as the corpse drifts from view.

POTTS
 Cheryl---

CHERYL
 Yes Captain Potts.

POTTS
Do you know if the station's
systems are on line?

CHERYL
Yes they are.

POTTS
Can you patch into it?

CHERYL
Yes. It has a microwave port, but
you'll need a password to open the
bay doors.

POTTS
Now how the heck did you know
that's what I was going to do?

CHERYL
It was a simple calculation of
probability.

POTTS
Well you just attend to that there
link and I'll get us the dang
password!

Potts opens a drawer, takes out a disk and inserts it into a
port on the console.

JONESY
You really think you can get us in?

POTTS
Yep.

A program displays on the console.

POTTS
This here is state of the art hack
software; get into anything; even
Mars Command's database if I wanted
to. Never know when you might need
somethin' like this.

JONESY
I don't think I want to hear any
more about it Potts. I'm a peace
officer, remember?

Potts punches a few commands.

POTTS
Yep. I surely do.

The console emits a couple of BEEPS.

Got it! Ready Cheryl?

CHERYL
Yes I am Captain Potts.

POTTS
Here goes.

He touches a button and a light blinks on the console.

EXT. IN ORBIT OVER THE EARTH - CONTINUOUS

Large CREAKING space doors open on the Allied Ex station. Potts' ship fires it's thrusters for a beat, approaches and slowly drifts into the hold.

INT. ALLIED EX SPACE STATION, CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

As a door-sized pressure hatch slides open, Potts and Jonesy walk warily through the aperture. She has her sidearm out and ready.

A large room HUMS with electronic equipment and consoles that automatically monitor the systems. Empty padded chairs built into the tiered work stations are turned at random angles. Here and there are signs of a hasty evacuation: an upended toolbox with it's contents strewn on the floor, spilled coffee mug, a valise left on a chair.

JONESY
What happened here?

POTTS
It looks like they just plum up and left, except for our friend outside that is. I guess he missed the last train.

JONESY
But why?

POTTS
Beats me.

He peers intently at a console, leans over and pokes some commands in.

POTTS

Dang it!

JONESY

What?

POTTS

Can't get through to Earth! The god darn Ambrose beacon is down again!

JONESY

I have to get in touch with my father somehow. I have to!

POTTS

Tell you what Jonesy. Why don't you just set here and try to get through. I'm going to go see if somebody left a four-wheeler behind.

JONESY

Okay.

She looks discouraged.

POTTS

Now don't you worry none. We'll get you there one way or the other.

She sits in a chair and puts on a set of headphones.

CUT TO:

INT. ALLIED EX SPACE STATION LOADING DOCK - A LITTLE LATER

The cavernous loading area of the space station is bare except for a single delta-winged space shuttle. It has the usual Allied Ex logo on it's tail and a string of numbers and letters along the fuselage. Rear cargo door are open to reveal an empty cargo hold.

Potts operates a fork-lift that carries a pallet stacked with frozen Saarg that's bound together with plastic shrink-wrap. He raises the load and deposits it inside the shuttle.

Potts backs out, climbs off the truck, and goes over to a control box on the shuttle craft. He punches a button and a display lights up.

Potts keys in some numbers and there is a sudden WHOOSH of forced air and HUM of a compressor. Cold vapor wafts from the hold. He checks the temperature readout, then keys in a command and steps back onto the deck as the ship's cargo doors slowly close.

POTTS

Okay. That'll do it. I hope.

He leans against the fork lift. In a sudden fit of anger he brings his fist down on the machine.

POTTS

It damn well better!

He covers his face with his hands and suppresses a sob.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARS (FLASHBACK, ONE YEAR BEFORE) - DAY

An arid plain marked by boulders and dunes. Huge craggy mountains loom in the distance. The colony of New Austin rises amidst the desolation. It's like a small city covered by an enormous transparent dome. Within the enclosure are hints of green amidst an interconnected hive-like web of buildings.

A network of tubular structures radiate out from the central enclosure that connect to smaller domes that contain the "suburbs". Further away are a series of lower modular domes that are connected together into vast areas for farms and livestock.

The Martian version of a dune buggy careens across the barren reddish soil. The vehicle turns and heads toward the colony.

THE DUNE BUGGY

Potts drives like a rodeo cowboy. Jonah, riding shotgun, holds on for dear life while grinning from ear to ear. Both wear pressurized outfits that look somewhere between space suits and mountaineering gear, with New Austin flags embroidered across their chests, identical to the "Lone Star" flag of Texas but with the colors transposed.

They hit a big bump, catch air, and bounce like a they're on a trampoline.

JONAH

Waaaahoooo!

POTTS

Hold onto your hat boy! If we don't get back home right quick you'll be late for dinner and your momma will have my scalp.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO NEW AUSTIN - MOMENTS LATER

The dune buggy roars up to a bare concrete arch that frames buildings and plants beyond. There's a loud WHOOSH as the vehicle passes through an invisible pressure barrier and enters the tunnel-like vestibule.

I/E. NEW AUSTIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

Potts and Jonah take off their helmets and drive through downtown New Austin.

The city is a bizarre hybrid of futuristic technology and the wild west. MARTIAN COLONISTS, most dressed in cowboy hats and blue jeans, drive dune buggies or saunter on the walkways. An occasional hovercraft ZOOMS overhead through a matrix of transparent tubes and ducts that conduct bubbling liquids to glass and steel buildings. The street is festooned with potted plants, trees, and cacti.

A saloon called "Pair of Dice" has a swinging-door entrance beneath a digital display sign, through which two brawling ROUGHNECKS catapult. One smashes a whiskey bottle across the other's head, and Potts and Jonah duck as the shattered glass flies past them.

Nearby, several WHORES strut their stuff, a few yards from a Bible-toting PREACHER on a soapbox who's ignored by the passersby he harangues.

PREACHER

The Bible teaches that the wages of sin is death! Repent while there's still time!

They turn a corner past a small stockyard filled with dwarfed cattle. An AUCTIONEER chants to a group of CATTLEMEN who raise their hands to bid.

AUCTIONEER

Three and a quarter now, hi, hey, whaddaget 375, whaddaget 400 and a quarter and now whaddaget 450, now 75, whaddaget 500 dollars. Yes! 500 and now \$550. And now \$600, here---

EXT. NEW AUSTIN APARTMENT COMPLEX - MOMENTS LATER

The dune buggy SCREECHES into a parking space. Jonah and Potts climb out and head down a path toward a row of multi-story pre-fab housing units.

Jonah turns to his father.

JONAH

Dad---?

POTTS

Yeah Jonah.

JONAH

How come you and momma don't live together no more?

POTTS

Well, I'm afraid we're just really different people with different ideas about what's important son. She is an earth woman after all. Don't rightly know why we got together in the first place.

CUT TO:

INT. MARS APARTMENT - A LITTLE LATER

A FISH TANK

A single large dark fish swims past the bubbles rising from the HUMMING filter. A woman's hand appears and shakes out some fish food, which is ravenously gobbled up.

Seen through the prism of the glass and water, Lila Potts paces by, nervously pushes her hair back with her fingers and MUMBLES to herself. The apartment is furnished with sleek modern furniture interspersed with plants.

WIDER

The front door swings open, and Potts and Jonah walk in, still grinning from their fun excursion. Lila casts a baleful eye on them.

LILA

Where were you two? You're an hour late!

The smile immediately disappears from Pott's face and he looks down at the floor.

POTTS
Sorry, we just sort of lost track
of time. I---

LILA
Lost track?! I can understand an
excuse like that from Jonah, but
you're supposed to be the grownup.

POTTS
Well look now, we were just havin'
some quality time together. Didn't
want it to end I guess.

LILA
Did you know he hasn't done his
homework yet?!

POTTS
No. I didn't.

He looks at Jonah.

POTTS
Is that right boy?! You got
homework you didn't tell me about?

JONAH
Well, I just have a couple of pages
of math, and my reading assignment--

POTTS
I'll take that as a yes. Now you
just get your ass in your room and
finish that goddamn work right now,
y'hear!

JONAH
Yes sir.

As he hustles out of the room Potts yells after him.

POTTS
And don't go sneakin' on the damn
view-screen neither!

He turns to Lila.

POTTS

Okay. So I guess I screwed up again. I---

LILA

How many times do I have to tell you to watch your mouth around him!

POTTS

Sorry. I just forget sometimes. It's the way I'm used to talkin' is all. That's just the way I am.

LILA

Enough! I don't want to hear any more of your working class hero nonsense. You have two phd's and you talk like a redneck Martian low-life!

Potts gets hot.

POTTS

At least I ain't no snooty hi-falootin' earthling, like you.

LILA

I can't do this anymore! No more fights! Just leave. Now!

Potts looks poison at her.

POTTS

I'm gittin'. But don't you be tellin' me how to talk to my own son.

He walks to the door and opens it.

LILA

You won't be seeing him much if I decide to move back to earth with him.

Potts takes a step onto the landing and stops in his tracks.

POTTS

You wouldn't dare do that.

LILA

Wouldn't I. I hate this place. I'd go in a minute.

POTTS

(enraged)

Figures. That's been your damn agenda all along, ain't it?! I wouldn't move to your slimy freak-infested planet so you kick me out! Now you think you can just go waltz off with our son.

LILA

I have custody. Where I go he goes. That's the law. Look it up.

POTTS

Yep. I'm sure it is. But this is Mars, remember. We're not very civilized here. You try and take him away and I'll see you dead first!

There is silence for a beat and then the door SLAMS in his face.

EXT. APARTMENT BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

Outside the door is a second floor balcony that connects to the other apartments on that level.

Potts shakes with rage as he decides whether to smash the door in or not. He takes a couple of steps back, but then notices that he's being watched. The OLD MAN next door, stares aghast at Potts. His keys are in his hand, which is frozen in position as he was about to open the door to his apartment. Potts turns on him.

POTTS

What the hell are you lookin' at, huh!? Go mind your own goddamn business!

The frightened Old Man quickly opens his door, rushes inside and closes it.

CUT TO:

INT. ALLIED EX SPACE STATION LOADING DOCK - CURRENT TIME

Potts snaps out of his reverie, stares up at the ceiling, and shakes his head.

POTTS
 (to himself)
 Hadda go and say that, right Jared--
 - hadda go and open your big stupid
 mouth.

Jonesy walks into the loading area.

JONESY
 You found one!

POTTS
 Yep. She's all fueled up and ready
 to roll. Any luck with that radio?

JONESY
 (fibbing)
 Uh--- no. All the channels are
 still dead.

POTTS
 Well, that's all right. You'll be
 with your daddy in no time at all.
 Let's go.

JONESY
 Thanks Jared. This means a lot to
 me.

He gets off the fork-lift.

POTTS
 Think nothin' of it pardner.

Potts affectionately pats her shoulder.

POTTS
 I just hope I can get somebody down
 there to take this dang load off my
 hands.

CUT TO:

EXT. IN ORBIT OVER THE EARTH - A LITTLE LATER

Doors open on the side of the space station and the shuttle
 craft emerges. It's thrusters FIRE, and it banks gracefully
 toward the Earth.

CUT TO:

EXT. OVER LOS ANGELES - MORNING

The shuttle breaks through the clouds and descends toward the futuristic, hi-rise version of Los Angeles that's spread out below. There are high speed maglev trains in place of freeways, and small hovercraft vehicles that navigate an invisible grid.

INT. SHUTTLE CRAFT - CONTINUOUS

The pilots are surrounded by the gizmos and gauges of a cramped flight deck. Jonesy has the controls while Potts speaks into the radio. The ship bumps and SHUDDERS slightly as it encounters air turbulence.

POTTS

Allied Ex shuttle A-50 to Allied Ex spaceport tower. Requesting landing clearance and vector.

A FLIGHT CONTROLLER answers.

CONTROLLER

What's your cargo A-50?

POTTS

Just some Saarg-fish tower.

The radio is silent for a beat.

CONTROLLER

Roger A-50, you're cleared for landing. Lock autopilot to beacon Delta.

POTTS

Roger. Autopilot on Delta.

Potts pushes a couple of control buttons, then leans back, relaxes, and looks out the window.

JONESY

Great view huh?

POTTS

Guess so. If you don't mind overcrowding, pollution, crime--- water.

EXT. BEACH, SANTA MONICA - CONTINUOUS

The shuttle comes in low over a beach crowded with BATHERS. On the water, YOUNG PEOPLE cavort on futuristic jet skis like a pod of leaping dolphins.

CUT TO:

INT. SPACEPORT WAREHOUSE - A LITTLE LATER

The shuttle is towed by a small tractor into a large, practically empty hangar. A gangway rolls over, the hatch opens, and Potts and Jonesy deplane.

The shuttle is suddenly surrounded by a SWAT TEAM cohort, armed to the teeth. Potts and Jonesy stand stock still and expect the worst.

POTTS

What's all this about?

The officers keep their eyes straight ahead and no one answers.

A nerdy Allied Ex manager, PETE MARCOVICH (30), wriggles through the line of officers and bustles over to greet Potts and Jonesy.

MARCOVICH

Uh hi. I'm Pete Marcovich. I work for the company. Who are you guys anyway?

POTTS

My name is Potts. I'm an owner operator. This here is Inspector Jones from the Mars station. What's the welcoming committee for?

MARCOVICH

To guard the shipment of course. Since the Saarg shortage started there's been looting. We had to shut down the orbiting spaceports because there was an epidemic of I.D.S. up there. Now Mars won't let our trucks dock, so we have to ship directly from Europa on Heavy Lifters.

POTTS
I'll bet that means that the price
of Saarg has gone up.

MARCOVICH
It's worth more than gold.

Potts takes a computer disk out of his pack.

POTTS
Well, well that is a shame. Now if
you'd care to sign off on my bill
of lading, I'll just mosey on over
to headquarters to get paid.

CUT TO:

INT. ALLIED EX RESEARCH BUILDING, LOS ANGELES - SAME TIME

A superbly equipped research facility with a lot of high-tech
gizmos and dozens of RESEARCHERS in white lab. coats.

Dr. Trapp navigates his wheelchair along an aisle that cuts
through a warren of cubicles and work areas. One by one, the
Researchers respectfully greet him.

RESEARCHERS
Good morning Doctor Trapp.

He makes a right angle turn and approaches a set of double
doors that automatically swing open at his approach.

INT. LABORATORY - CONTINUOUS

Experimental equipment is arranged on lab. tables in a
sterile room.

The Associate Director of the facility, DR. JULIA STEINER,
peers into a microscope-type contraption. Dr. Trapp wheels up
to her.

DR. TRAPP
Good morning Doctor Steiner.

She's slightly jolted by the interjection.

DR. STEINER
Oh. Good morning, Director.

DR. TRAPP
Any progress to report?

DR. STEINER
The curve is behaving exactly as
your model predicted.

She bustles over to a console and calls up a chart that
features a bell curve with a steep drop.

DR. TRAPP
Good work Doctor.

He looks at his wristwatch.

DR. TRAPP
The Senate hearing is in five
minutes. I'll review your data in
my office.

INT. DR. TRAPP'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Trapp's office is half filled with a large curved computer
console that has a recess built into it to perfectly
accommodate his chair. He rolls in and docks into the
machine. The only decorations on the wall are framed photos
of TWO YOUNG MEN in military dress uniforms. A single
casement window admits a shaft of sunlight.

The computer has a synthesized male voice named GEORGE.

GEORGE
Good morning Doctor Trapp.

DR. TRAPP
Good morning to you too George. I'd
like access to my private directory
please.

GEORGE
Awaiting password.

Dr. Trapp keys a series of numbers into a touchpad, and the
machine responds with a directory display.

DR. TRAPP
Let's open chart 762 Beta.

A chart, similar to the one seen previously, is shown. It's
marked by three curves.

DR. TRAPP
Now fetch the latest chart in Dr.
Steiner's public directory.

The computer displays Dr. Steiner's chart alongside his.

DR. TRAPP
Superimpose please.

Steiner's curve moves and fits exactly over the middle of Trapp's chart.

GEORGE
You have an incoming teleconference call Dr. Trapp.

DR. TRAPP
Thanks George. Put it on the screen please.

Trapp wheels around to face a large view screen that takes up the better part of a wall.

It flickers for a moment and an image appears of a Senate chamber with a committee of grave SENATORS seated at a rostra. In the middle of the group is the chairman, SENATOR FRANKLIN DAVIS. To his right is SENATOR BERTHA MORRIS (50), her face set in a prosecutor's mask.

SENATOR DAVIS
Good morning Dr. Trapp.

DR. TRAPP
Good morning mister Chairman, and to you honored Senators.

SENATOR DAVIS
Since you are already sworn in we can proceed directly to today's business. Do you have anything new to add to your report?

DR. TRAPP
Yes we do Mr. Chairman. According to the latest data the I.D.S. plague has in fact run it's course exactly as we predicted. There will still be some isolated cases for the next several months, but the epidemic is over. We've already sent our data to the CDC.

SENATOR MORRIS
That is a great relief of course Dr. Trapp.

(MORE)

SENATOR MORRIS(cont'd)

But it still doesn't address our concern about the relationship between I.D.S. and Saarg-fish consumption.

DR. TRAPP

I assume that the Senator has not been reassured by our previous testimony or research results.

She fixes him with an intensified baleful glare.

SENATOR MORRIS

Hardly. Both the CDC and independent researchers have established a probable connection.

DR. TRAPP

As I previously stated, their data is flawed. And we're now in a position to demonstrate that beyond any shadow of a doubt.

SENATOR DAVIS

You've discovered the plague's origin?

DR. TRAPP

Yes. The virus is in fact native to Titan. It was brought to Earth undetected in some shipments of bauxite several years ago. The relevant research is included in my official report.

SENATOR DAVIS

That's quite a relief Doctor. I for one would like to nominate you for a Nobel prize.

DR. TRAPP

Thank you Mr. Chairman. But it's really my team that deserves the credit.

Senator Morris doesn't appear to be convinced.

SENATOR MORRIS

There's one thing I don't understand. If the disease originated on Titan then why aren't there any cases on Mars? They also receive mineral shipments from Titan.

DR. TRAPP

It's probable that the epidemic can be traced to only one or two shipments. Besides that we believe that the pathogen requires moisture in the atmosphere to spread effectively.

Morris looks crestfallen.

SENATOR DAVIS

Thank you Doctor. We won't take any more of your valuable time. We're eager to see your research.

The Senators, except for Morris, APPLAUD.

DR. TRAPP

Thank you Senators. Summaries of our findings will be sent to each of you momentarily. Good day.

The screen image dims. Dr. Trapp breathes a SIGH of relief and turns back to his console.

DR. TRAPP

(to the computer)

George. Let's see that last chart again please.

The same chart as before is displayed.

THE CHART

To the right, another curve ascends in a steep straight line. At the top of it are the words:

PROJECTED EXTINCTION

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGLEV TRAIN PLATFORM - A LITTLE LATER

A long concrete platform lined with advertising posters for: Saarg Burgers, Saarg Supplements, water sports tournaments, and a public service announcement about I.D.S.

Potts and Jonesy are there waiting for a train.

POTTS

You're sure you don't want me to go with you?

JONESY

No. I'll be fine. Go get your money.

POTTS

Buzz if you need me. Otherwise we'll meet at eighteen hundred hours, okay?

She nods as a maglev train glides almost silently into the station.

POTTS

Here's your train.

JONESY

Jared---

POTTS

Yep---

JONESY

Thanks.

She hugs him and plants a kiss on his cheek. The train doors open and she jogs over and boards. The doors close and Potts smiles as he watches the train moves off.

INT. MAGLEV TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Jonesy walks down the aisle of the train past rows of blank-faced PASSENGERS ensconced in plush chairs. She finds an empty seat next to a YOUNG WOMAN who also seems to be in a trance. Jonesy glances over at her, then looks around quizzically at the others, and shrugs her shoulders.

She reaches for a set of headphones that are slung behind the seat in front of her, and puts them on. This activates a screen that emerges from the seat and automatically adjusts it's angle to her line of sight. An image of Senator Davis appears, surrounded by reporters on the steps of the Capitol in Washington.

SENATOR DAVIS (O.S.)

---and we now have irrefutable proof that the I.D.S. Plague is on the wane. The cause of the disease has been traced to a virus native to Titan that was brought to earth inadvertently by---

CUT TO:

INT. ALLIED EX PERSONNEL OFFICES - LATER

On the ground floor of the Allied Ex building, several dozen PILOTS are lined up to a series of bulletproof teller's windows in an area that looks like a bank.

A BURLY PILOT walks away from one of the windows and checks his bank balance on a hand-held computer. Potts is next in line. A light flashes at the free teller station, and he steps up to it.

TELLER

Next.

Behind the Plexiglas, a FEMALE TELLER greets Potts with a pasted-on smile.

TELLER

Good afternoon sir. How may I help you?

Potts holds up a computer disk.

POTTS

I want to cash in this here bill of lading.

She presses a button and a tray, like a c.d. player juts out with a WHIRR. He places the disk into the receptacle and it quickly retracts.

The Teller examines it's contents on a display screen, and pushes a few buttons on a touchpad.

TELLER

I'm sorry sir, but this account is not negotiable at this time.

POTTS

What!!?

TELLER

This is no longer a valid---

POTTS

What the hell do you mean, not at this time!!? That's a damn validated bill of lading!

TELLER

Yes, I know sir. But when I try to transfer the funds it says that they're not available.

POTTS

Why not!?

TELLER

That information is not accessible at this workstation. Perhaps you would like to speak to a Financial Manager?

POTTS

You're damn right I would!!

She pushes a few more buttons.

TELLER

Mr. Sumner will see you now. His office is just down the hall, room 107.

The disk ejects, and Potts grabs it up.

TELLER

Thank you for your patience.

POTTS

Yeah, right.

He rushes off.

THE TELLER

Up close her eyes are clearly robotic. The irises narrow and widen like a camera lens and produce a little WHIRR.

TELLER

Next.

CUT TO:

INT. FINANCIAL OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

A small glass-enclosed cubicle.

HARRY SUMNER, a bureaucratic middle-manager type, is behind a desk that supports a computer, a goldfish bowl, and a picture of his wife and kids.

Potts is perched on the customer's chair with both elbows on the desk and a ferocious look on his face.

POTTS

I risk life and limb to get the goddamn shipment here and this is the thanks I get!?

SUMNER

Now Mr. Potts, please try to keep your voice down. Don't get excited.

POTTS

Excited! I haven't even started to get excited!

SUMNER

Look. Let's just see if we can find out what your problem is, okay?

POTTS

I can tell you what my problem is! I should never have gone to work for a bunch of thievin'---

SUMNER

(to his computer)

Sabu. Please open captain Potts' file.

SABU

Your wish is my command oh master.

Potts looks askance at Sumner.

SUMNER

Well at least somebody has to treat me with respect! Okay. Here it is.

He studies the file intently, scrolls down a bit, and mumbles to himself as he reads.

POTTS

Well!

SUMNER

It appears to be perfectly in order.

POTTS

So that means I get paid, right!?

Sumner takes out a handkerchief and wipes beads of perspiration from his brow.

SUMNER

Actually no. I meant that the withholding of payment is correct. Boy, it's getting hot in here. Do you feel warm?

POTTS

Damn right I do! What's the damn thing say?!

Sumner looks at the golfish bowl, wipes off some condensation with his hand and dabs it on his flushed cheeks.

POTTS

Well!?

SUMNER

Oh! Uh--- it says that the shipment had to be quarantined because of the risk of I.D.S. contamination.

He loosens his tie and returns to his fascination with the bowl.

POTTS

(trying to master his rage)

Now how could the durned cargo pick up the virus on Europa or Mars, when the only I.D.S. cases that have been reported are here on Earth.

Sumner sticks his hand into the open neck of the vase. Perspiration pours down his cheeks. He's PANTING.

SUMNER

I--- uh--- look, it's because they found out the I.D.S. virus came from bauxite shipments from Titan. That was your last cargo. There could have been residue in the hold-- I--

POTTS

That's bullshit! That there hold was cleaned and irradiated. Ain't no viruses alive in there.

SUMNER

I--- can't---

He looks like he's having a heart attack. Potts finally notices.

POTTS

What the hell is the matter with you!?

SUMNER

---breath!

He suddenly snatches up the fish bowl and pours the water over his head.

The goldfish tumbles out, bounces off his chest, lands on the desk, and flops around gasping.

For a beat, Sumner seems to breath easier, but then he's seized by spasms, hyperventilates and lets out a bloodcurdling SCREAM.

Potts gets up to help him, but it's too late. A flood of serum bursts from every pore of Sumner's body, and he instantly shrivels up and dies like a slug doused with salt.

Potts jumps back in horror and revulsion.

POTTS

Aaaaaauugh! Shit!

CUT TO:

INT. ALLIED EX FINANCIAL OFFICE - LATER

Potts stands awkwardly by and watches an EMS TEAM carry out a stretcher that supports what's left of Sumner in a body bag. Potts an EMS WORKER by the arm.

POTTS

So that's what I.D.S. does?

EMS WORKER

Only the sudden-onset type. Usually the dehydration takes weeks, or even months to kill you. This guy was lucky. He hardly knew what hit him.

POTTS

Yeah. Lucky. I guess.

EMS WORKER

The quarantine seems to be working though. This is the first new case I've seen in a week.

POTTS

You mean the epidemic's over?

EMS WORKER

Looks that way.

He grabs up some medical equipment and leaves.

Potts takes out a pocket communicator, and calls Jonesy.

POTTS

(to the phone)

Hi. Jonesy? It's me, Jared. Look, I've hit a little bump in the road here. This might take longer than I thought--- yeah, I will. See ya.

CUT TO:

INT. LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL, HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Jonesy pockets her communicator as she walks down a hospital corridor. She looks up at the room numbers, finds the right one, takes a deep breath, and opens it a crack.

INT. PRIVATE HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jonesy tentatively opens the door and peeks in.

Gideon Jones is asleep in bed, hooked up to a panoply of high tech monitoring equipment. He's shriveled up like a prune, and breathes laboriously with the assistance of an oxygen tube.

Filled with trepidation, Jonesy enters the room and slowly approaches her father.

JONESY

Daddy? It's me, Sarah.

His eyelids flutter.

GIDEON JONES

Sarah? I--- can't see very well. Where are you?

She pulls up a chair and sits down next to him.

JONESY
I'm right here Daddy.

His sunken eyes turn toward her and he smiles wanly.

GIDEON JONES
I'm so happy you're here.

She tenderly holds his hand.

JONESY
How are you feeling.

GIDEON JONES
Like a piece of beef jerky.

Involuntarily, she CHUCKLES.

JONESY
You still have your sense of humor.

GIDEON JONES
Listen, Sarah--- I don't have very
long---

JONESY
Don't say that!

GIDEON JONES
Oh don't be silly. That's just
reality. I need you to be strong
now.

JONESY
Okay---

GIDEON JONES
There hasn't been a transmission.
Didn't you do what I asked?

JONESY
I did. The virus download went
okay. But the Ambrose beacon is
down. The global transfer can't
take place until it comes back on
line.

GIDEON JONES
But it's set up to go?

JONESY

Yes.

GIDEON JONES

Thank God.

JONESY

I still don't understand what all this cloak and dagger stuff is about.

GIDEON JONES

Come closer. The walls have ears.

She moves her chair closer to the bed and leans in.

GIDEON JONES

Before I got sick I was working on this damn disease at the lab. We were on the right track--- really close. Then they pulled the plug on us--- the cause was found they said.

JONESY

Yes I heard. Contaminated bauxite---

GIDEON JONES

It's a lie.

JONESY

What?

GIDEON JONES

A lie! The data's been falsified to protect Allied Ex--- and the government. The real cause is Saarg consumption.

JONESY

I thought that Saarg-fish don't carry any microorganisms.

GIDEON JONES

We were fools! Stupid arrogant fools! As though that fish were evolving there for millions of years just so we could come along and eat it!

Excited, he struggles to sit up.

JONESY

Please try to rest Daddy. You're getting upset. We can talk about this some other time.

He grabs her arm with a skeletal hand.

GIDEON JONES

No! I have to tell you. Bring me my robe Sarah.

He points at a chair in a corner that has a bathrobe draped across it. She reaches over and hands it to him. The dying man digs into a pocket, produces a plastic card, and hands it to his daughter.

GIDEON JONES

Here--- take this--- it will get you into the lab--- you'll see--- the evidence---

He GASPS for breath and collapses back on the bed.

JONESY

I'll call a nurse---

GIDEON JONES

No. Listen--- The reason--- Saarg doesn't carry pathogens is--- it IS the pathogen.

His breath RATTLES in his throat and he dies.

JONESY

Daddy? Daddy!

She kneels by his bedside and SOBS.

JONESY

No! Oh no!

CUT TO:

INT. ALLIED EX HEADQUARTERS, RECEPTION AREA - SAME TIME

A waiting room with potted plants, chairs, magazines, and a RECEPTIONIST behind a counter who's in the middle of a altercation with Potts. Potts leans over the counter and glowers at her, the latest obstacle between him and his money.

POTTS
I ain't leavin' until I see
somebody who's in charge!

A door opens and two goons dressed as SECURITY GUARDS stride in and get on either side of Potts. They're suited up like riot police with helmets and sidearms, and look like they mean business.

SECURITY GUARD #1
Please come with us sir.

Potts turns, about to argue, but notices that their hands are resting on their weapons.

POTTS
Uh. Sure. Sure. Lead on.

Security Guard #2 Grabs him from behind, and they push him out the door.

EXT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The Guards walk on either side of Potts down a long apparently abandoned service corridor.

POTTS
Where are we going?

They just stare coldly back. The Guards stop at a door. Guard #1 presses his thumb to a security lock and it opens with a loud CLICK. They wave Potts inside.

SECURITY GUARD #1
Let's go!

Potts looks from one to the other and walks in.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

It's a dim, claustrophobic meeting room with a long table surrounded by chairs. On the far end sits the CEO of Allied Ex, Jonathan Stark.

STARK
Have a seat Captain Potts.

Potts glances again at the grim faces of the Guards and sits down.

POTTS

Do I know you?

STARK

No. But I know who you are. I'm Jonathan Stark, the CEO of Allied Ex. I understand that you have a grievance?

POTTS

You might say that. I want my money.

STARK

We'll go over that in a minute. I have a few questions to ask you first. If you're cooperative--- we'll see about that payment.

POTTS

What's this all about?

STARK

Who are you working for?

POTTS

Last I looked I was working for you. I think I'll be quitting as soon as I get paid though. This company really sucks to work for.

STARK

Maybe your memory needs refreshing. This morning, there was an attempt to transmit a computer virus to every major news organization, government and private laboratory worldwide. It contained classified information that could have been used against this company. Luckily, we were able to intercept it in time. Does this ring any bells for you?

POTTS

What the hell does that have to do with me?

STARK

Stonewalling will get you nowhere, Captain Potts. We traced the signal to our orbiting dock.

(MORE)

STARK(cont'd)

It commenced within an hour of your arrival there.

POTTS

This is crazy! The only thing I did was transfer my cargo to a four-wheeler so I could short-hop it to earth.

STARK

Then you know that the station was unmanned except for you and your female companion---

Stark hits a button and a hologram appears in the middle of the table that shows Potts and Jonesy at the spaceport.

POTTS

Maybe somebody had it timed to download right then. It's just a coincidence I was there the same time.

STARK

Not likely. The security software would have picked it up.

He points at the hologram.

STARK

Who is she?

Potts considers for a beat.

POTTS

Well--- I guess you'd find out anyway---. That there's Inspector Sarah Jones. She came aboard as a passenger. Her father's dying in the hospital, so she asked me to take her here to visit him.

STARK

A Mars Inspector---?

He pushes another button and a screen lights up on the table.

STARK

(to the computer)

Search--- Sarah Jones--- Mars Inspection.

THE SCREEN

A mug shot of Jonesy appears with a short biography.

CLOSER

Under the heading "PARENTS" is the following paragraph:

Father- Gideon Jones- Research Geneticist, Allied
Extraterrestrial Imports Corp., Edge Bio-Research Division,
Los Angeles.

ON JONATHAN STARK

STARK

He's one of ours.
(to Potts)
He's sick you said?

POTTS

Yep. Dying from the I.D.S. plague.
Now can I have my credits?

STARK

Certainly, Captain Potts. A deal is
a deal.

Stark gets up.

STARK

I'm sorry for the inconvenience.

Potts stands up and they shake hands.

POTTS

Well now that's better. Apology
accepted.

Stark looks at Security Guard #1.

STARK

Escort Captain Potts to Payroll.

He raises an index finger and points upward.

Security Guard #2 opens the door and holds it open for Potts
and the other Guard.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Potts and the Security Guards walk further along the empty
hallway.

POTTS

Well that's sure a relief. I thought he was going to turn me in to the police or something.

His grim-faced escorts don't respond.

POTTS

You fellers sure aren't very talkative are ya?

SECURITY GUARD #1

This way.

Security Guard #2 leads the way through another door.

INT. UNDERGROUND GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

A dimly lit concrete enclosure contains a number of small hovercraft.

POTTS

Hey. I thought we were going to payroll.

SECURITY GUARD #1

It's not in this building.

Security Guard #2 opens the door of a nearby hovercraft with the word "SECURITY" stenciled across it in large letters.

SECURITY GUARD #1

Get in!

POTTS

Now just one minute here.

The Guard unholsters his sidearm and points it at him.

SECURITY GUARD #1

I said get in!

POTTS

Well--- sure! I guess I will.

He takes a few steps, then suddenly whirls around and grabs the Guard's wrist and jacks his arm up. The pistol goes off and BLASTS a hole in the ceiling as Potts pins the Guard against a column with a forearm to the throat. He twists the gun away just as Guard #2 draws his weapon.

Potts spins around the column and BLAM, Security Guard #1 gets it in the chest and drops, and BLAM, Potts returns fire. Security Guard #2 is blown apart and gears and electronic components fly around. The torso falls on it's side and electrical sparks arc through a big hole that's been gouged through the chest.

POTTS
Shit! Goddamn androids!

He looks down at the body of Security Guard #1. The gory corpse lies in a big pool of blood.

POTTS
Well, one of you was anyway.

He looks furtively from side to side and slinks quickly away, just as an ALARM goes off.

CUT TO:

EXT. A CULVERT NEAR ALLIED EX HEADQUARTERS - A LITTLE LATER

Potts crouches down in a shadowy corner of a storm drain with the gun still at the ready. A police SIREN dopplers by.

He reaches into his pocket, takes out his communicator, and pushes a button with his thumb, then holds it to his ear for a beat.

POTTS
Come on Jonesy. Pick the dang thing
up!

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL - SAME TIME

A "Security" hovercraft lands in front of the main entrance. Two jack-booted Guards get out and walk up a flight of steps to the door.

CUT TO:

INT. LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL, HALLWAY - SAME TIME

A distraught Jonesy sits on the floor in front of her father's room with her head supported on her knees.

The communicator BEEPS insistently from her bag, but she's too absorbed in her grief to hear it.

CUT TO:

INT. LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL, LOBBY - SAME TIME

A hospital reception area sports potted palm trees and a female AIDE at a counter.

The Guards stride through the lobby to an elevator. An OLD MAN is waiting for it but he shrinks back to get out of their way. The doors open, and two NURSES, an INTERN, and several VISITORS get out. The Guards get on the elevator and the doors close.

CUT TO:

EXT. CULVERT NEAR ALLIED EX HEADQUARTERS - SAME TIME

Potts is still waiting for Jonesy to pick up. There's a CLICK on the line.

JONESY (V.O.)

Jared?

POTTS

Yep, it's me. Listen---

She SOBS over the phone.

JONESY (V.O.)

My father--- just passed away---

POTTS

I--- I'm sorry Jonesy. That's hard.

JONESY (V.O.)

At least I saw him--- I spoke to him---

POTTS

Jonesy. I know how you feel right now, but please listen---

CUT TO:

INT. LOS ANGELES GENERAL HOSPITAL, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The guards walk off the elevator and head for the room where Gideon Jones died. Jonesy is no longer around.

CUT TO:

EXT. A MIDDLE SCHOOL IN SANTA MONICA - LATER

School has just gotten out, and the SCHOOL KIDS, strangely quiet and subdued, walk away from the exits. A school bus floats down that looks like a big, weird futuristic dirigible, a hatch lowers, and a line of kids files on.

Jared's son Jonah walks along a sidewalk by himself with a valise similar to a system bag under his arm. As he passes a row of hedges, Potts suddenly reaches out of the greenery, grabs him, and pulls him into the bushes.

BEHIND THE BUSHES

POTTS
Ssshhh! Keep your voice down.

JONAH
Dad!

POTTS
Howdy son.

He gives the kid a papa bear hug.

POTTS
Your momma treating you alright??

JONAH
Okay, I guess---

POTTS
How's school?

JONAH
It really sucks. I want to go back home to Mars. Are you taking me back with you?

Potts bows his head for a beat.

POTTS
I'm trying to son. Tryin' my durndest.

(MORE)

POTTS(cont'd)

Might take me some more time though. Best for you to be patient and attend to your schoolwork in the meantime.

JONAH

I hate it here. Earth people are weird. All they care about is water sports and eating fast food. Nobody even plays baseball.

POTTS

Yep. I know son, I know. You're not eating any of them terrafood victuals are you?

JONAH

No. And they can't make me neither!

POTTS

That's my boy. I'm proud of you. Never forget that you're a Mar Tee' An. Hold your head high.

He gives the boy an affectionate chuck on the jaw. Jonah smiles proudly.

POTTS

You'd best be headin' home. Don't tell your momma you seen me now. Okay? This is just between you and me.

JONAH

I promise Dad.

Potts reaches in his pocket and hands Jonah a small plastic card.

POTTS

Here's a few credits to get somethin' for yourself.

Jonah puts the money in his bag.

JONAH

Thanks dad.

He gives his father another hug.

JONAH

I'll see you soon, right?

POTTS

You can bet on it. Real soon!

He pats Jonah on the back, and musses his hair. The boy walks back into the hedge, turns, and waves.

JONAH

Bye Dad.

POTTS

Bye, Jonah.

Potts smiles as he watches him go, then his expression changes to grim determination. He takes out his communicator and pushes a button.

POTTS

Hello, Nate? How the hell are you.
It's me Jared. Yep. Listen--- I
have a little business proposition
you might be interested in.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. TRAPP'S HOME - LATER

A dinghy, Spartan apartment where the main decoration consists of floor to ceiling bookcases.

The front door opens and Dr. Trapp wheels in. His dog MENDEL, a big friendly mutt, excitedly rushes over to greet him. Trapp roughs him around the ears.

DR. TRAPP

Hello boy. Yes, I'm happy to see
you too. Okay, we'll go for a walk
in a little while. First let's eat.

THE KITCHEN

He moves into a galley kitchen that's designed with all of the counters and appliances at the right height for his chair-bound condition. He opens a can of dog food, empties it into a bowl, and lowers it to the floor on a small elevator built into the counter for the purpose. Mendel happily digs in.

Dr. Trapp opens the door of a freezer and takes out a frozen dinner that has the words: "Saarg ala Newburg" over an idealized picture of the thawed entre. He swivels and deposits the contents into a sort of built-in microwave oven.

DR. TRAPP
 (to the microwave)
 Frozen dinner!

The appliance immediately lights up and HUMS.

DR. TRAPP
 (to Mendel)
 Well it won't be much longer now
 boy. Don't you worry. I have
 everything arranged for after I'm
 gone. You'll want for nothing.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLIED EX SPACEPORT - DUSK

Pete Marcovich exits the spaceport through a hangar door and walks a short distance to his "car"; which is actually a sporty-looking hovercraft. He opens a door and gets in.

INT. HOVERCRAFT - CONTINUOUS

Marcovich belts in and flips a couple of switches. He freezes as Potts' voice booms from the back seat.

POTTS
 Howdy Mister Marcovich!

MARCOVICH
 What! Who---?

Marcovich looks over his shoulder as Potts pokes his head up.

MARCOVICH
 You're that trucker---

POTTS
 That's right. The one who's been
 screwed out of his paycheck.

MARCOVICH
 Hey. That's not my fault. I don't
 make those decisions. Go take it up
 with the main office. And get the
 hell out of my car!

He picks up a communications device, but a gun gripped by Potts' hand angles around his seat. Marcovich's eyes bulge when he spots it, and he puts the communicator down.

POTTS

Done that, been there; went right to the top. I still didn't get my money and got shot at in the bargain. You can appreciate that I might not be in a very happy frame of mind long about now. Now where's my damn cargo?!

MARCOVICH

It- it's not here anymore. The guys from central shipping came and got it.

POTTS

And took it where?

MARCOVICH

I--I really don't know--- for sure-- I mean it's--- probably to the incinerator!

Potts cocks the gun.

POTTS

Maybe we should just mosey on over there and find out.

MARCOVICH

Uh--- sure. Uh--- right now?

POTTS

Yep. Now would be a good time.

MARCOVICH

Okay. I'm going to start it up. Just don't shoot me--- please! I've got a kid!

POTTS

So do I mister. So do I.

CUT TO:

EXT. HEAVENLY BURGERS RESTAURANT - SAME TIME

Jonah and Lila are near the entrance to a gaudy fast food joint that's in the shape of a Saarg fish. The front door is through the scoop-shaped mouth.

LILA
I've had enough of this nonsense.
It's late! I'm too tired to cook
tonight!

JONAH
I ain't eating it!

LILA
You AIN'T?! Use proper English,
Jonah!

JONAH
"Ain't's" proper on Mars.

LILA
You're not on Mars anymore. This is
your home now. You have to accept
that fact.

JONAH
We'll see---

Her suspicions are piqued.

LILA
Have you been talking to your
father?

JONAH
No---

He's a bad liar.

LILA
(a little panicky)
Is he here!?

JONAH
No. But he will be soon! And then
he'll take me back home with him!

Suddenly enraged, she SMACKS him across the face.

LILA
Don't you ever say that again! Do
you hear me!?

He looks poison at her.

JONAH
He's my daddy!

LILA
And I'm your mother! I---

She's ashamed at her outburst.

LILA
I'm sorry. I--- shouldn't have hit
you.

She touches him tenderly.

LILA
I'm sorry.

JONAH
Okay. I'm sorry too.

She gives him a hug.

LILA
You know I get grouchy when I
haven't eaten. Come on, let's get
some food. You can order a veggie
burger if you want.

He nods.

LILA
Oh. I forgot my money in the car.
Go get us a table Jonah. I'll be
right in.

He heads into the gaping maw of the Saarg restaurant. Lila
walks a few steps, takes a phone out of her purse, and puts
it to her ear.

LILA
Hello. I'd like to speak to
Inspector Petersen please. Yes.
Thank you.

She waits for a beat.

LILA
Inspector? This is Lila Potts---
right. I'm calling because it looks
like my ex-husband is back, and
he's violated the restraining
order.

CUT TO:

EXT. OVER LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Marcovich's "car" flies slowly a few hundred feet above the ground, stuck in a hovercraft traffic jam. They're stacked up four high and follow an invisible electronic freeway in the air.

INT. MARCOVICH'S HOVERCRAFT - CONTINUOUS

Potts still has his gun trained on the manager.

POTTS
Damn traffic!

MARCOVICH
Well what do you expect. This is
L.A.

POTTS
Just shut up and drive!

MARCOVICH
I was just wondering---

POTTS
What!

MARCOVICH
Uh--- well--- what are you going to
do if you find the shipment?

POTTS
What's it to you?!

MARCOVICH
Just curious--- that's all.

POTTS
Okay. I'll tell you. I'm going to
sell it on the black market to the
highest bidder. That alright by
you?

MARCOVICH
Doesn't it bother you that you
could start another I.D.S.
epidemic?

POTTS
There ain't nothin' wrong with that
fish. My van was sterilized.

(MORE)

POTTS(cont'd)

You and your company are the ones with the dishonest dealin's goin' on.

MARCOVICH

What dealings?

POTTS

All's I know is they were ready to kill me because they thought I knew something. You tell me pardner!

MARCOVICH

Really---? Actually kill you?

POTTS

Yep. Two big fellers in Guards uniforms tried to take me for a ride on direct orders from Mr. Stark.

MARCOVICH

No shit! What happened?

POTTS

Well it's not polite to talk about the dearly departed.

Marcovich glances at the gun and GULPS.

MARCOVICH

Unless--- No! That was disproved.

He hesitates.

POTTS

What!?

MARCOVICH

Some scientists thought for a while that I.D.S. was caused by the Saarg meat itself; like an allergic reaction or something. But our lab debunked that.

POTTS

Unless they're full of shit, and they're hiding something. Personally, I don't care. All I want is what's owed to me.

He rubs his chin and thinks for a beat.

POTTS
(to himself)
Jonesy---

CUT TO:

INT. ALLIED EX RESEARCH LABORATORY - NIGHT

The lab is dark except for a couple of utility lights. A door opens a crack, then slowly widens and Jonesy slips furtively through. She walks stealthily past the cubicles, looks around, and spots a door with a plaque that says "GENOME RESEARCH". She inserts her father's card into a slot near the door jamb.

After a soft BEEP she withdraws the card and carefully opens the door.

INT. GENOME RESEARCH LAB - CONTINUOUS

Jonesy closes the door, switches on a small desk light and goes to a workstation that's apart in a separate cubicle. She sits down, pushes the card into a slot on the console and turns the computer on.

A holographic "screen" appears that first displays a splash of a smiling face and then a series of photos of the Jones family that include kid pictures of Jonesy. The COMPUTER intones a greeting with a female voice.

COMPUTER
Good morning Dr. Jones.

She smiles and LAUGHS, but her expression quickly turns to sadness as she remembers her father's passing.

She recovers, remembers why she's there, and works the touchpad.

JONESY
Okay. Here goes.

A series of electronic files open: graphs, text, and a 3-D image of a Saarg. She studies it with intense concentration for a couple of beats, then pokes the touchpad again.

JONESY
Okay. So---

More material is displayed that includes Saarg DNA charts.

Jonesy leans in closer to the images and her eyes widen with horror.

JONESY

My God!

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. MARCOVICH'S HOVERCRAFT - NIGHT

Marcovich's hovercraft descends toward the lights of a processing plant complex that can be seen through the windshield.

POTTS

Is there a security barrier in the parking lot?

MARCOVICH

No. My car is electronically I.D.'ed.

INT. PARKING LOT, ALLIED EX PROCESSING PLANT - MOMENTS LATER

The hovercraft lands in a half-empty parking field near the back entrance of the factory, an area is cordoned off with high security fences.

Nearby, freight hauling spacecraft and aircraft are parked at loading docks.

INT. PROCESSING PLANT DISPATCHER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The night dispatcher, HARRY SCHMIDT, an overweight slob, settles in for his shift.

He's in a cramped office with a plate glass window that looks out on a warehouse filled with stacked up pallets and crates. Schmidt is surrounded by electronic equipment, a computer console, and security monitors that display images of various locations around the complex. Every flat surface in Schmidt's area is littered with empty coffee cups and soda cans.

There's a KNOCK on the door and Marcovich walks in, with Potts looming behind him.

MARCOVICH

Uh, hi Harry.

SCHMIDT
Hey, Pete! What brings you here
this time of night?

MARCOVICH
Just following up on a shipment.

Schmidt notices Potts.

SCHMIDT
Who's your friend?

MARCOVICH
Oh, this is Jarred---

ZAP! Potts nails Schmidt with blast from his gun, and the
dispatcher is slammed backwards in his chair onto the floor.

MARCOVICH
Jesus! What did you do that for!?

Jared adjusts a setting on the side of the gun.

POTTS
Don't you worry none. I had it set
on low amplitude. He'll just have
one hell of a headache when he
wakes up.

He points the gun at Marcovich.

POTTS
It's back on "high" now.

Marcovich gets the picture.

MARCOVICH
Right! Let's see where your
shipment is.

He stoops and pushes the computer touchpad. Shipping lists
are displayed.

POTTS
Well---?

MARCOVICH
Take it easy! I'm looking! One
second! Got it! Loading bay twelve--
scheduled 1:00 AM departure--- It's
already loaded.

He shuts down the computer.

POTTS

Where were they going to send it?

MARCOVICH

What? Oh--- I didn't notice--- I---

Potts puts the gun to Marcovich's nose.

MARCOVICH

Phoenix! Phoenix distribution
center---

POTTS

You mean those sons of bitches were
going to sell my shipment!?

MARCOVICH

Well--- I don't know---

POTTS

Those thieving--- sneaky---
earthling bastards!

BLAM BLAM BLAM! He blasts the computer to smithereens.
Marcovich looks like he's about to have a heart attack.

POTTS

Let's go!

MARCOVICH

Uh--- right--- Have you ever
considered taking a course in anger
management?

POTTS

Yep. Court ordered me to take one
for six months. Did me a lot of
good too. I'm a lot calmer than I
used to be.

Potts waves the gun in the direction of the door.

MARCOVICH

Oh--- good---

INT. PROCESSING PLANT WAREHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Marcovich and Potts sneak around stacked up crates past a
series of loading bays. They approach a loading dock that has
the number twelve mounted over the door.

As Five SHIPPING WORKERS in hard hats approach, Potts shoves Marcovich out of sight against a container and claps the muzzle of the gun to his head.

WORKER #1

You get that reefer running Joe?

WORKER #2

Got it. What about the Peterbilt?

WORKER #1

Just left.

The Workers walk past unaware and turn down another aisle. Potts cranes his neck around the crate to make sure that they're gone.

POTTS

Okay. Let's go.

Potts and his hostage walk quickly to an open door next to the loading bay.

INT. BREEZEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Potts pushes Marcovich through an enclosed ramp that leads from the warehouse to the door of the "truck's" cockpit.

INT. HOVERCRAFT TRUCK COCKPIT - MOMENTS LATER

They enter the cockpit. Potts motions to Marcovich to close the hatch and he complies.

POTTS

I think it might be best if you drive.

He points with his gun at the pilot's seat.

MARCOVICH

But I don't have a license to---

Potts looks daggers at him.

MORRIS

Sure. What the hell. So I get a summons. So what? Right?

He sits carefully down.

POTTS
Come on. Let's go!

Potts jumps into the co-pilot's chair.

POTTS
First I'd better check---

He hits a button, the console lights up, and he checks the display readings to make sure that his shipment is on board.

POTTS
---Yep! It's in there. Rev 'er up.

Marcovich hits some buttons on the console and the "truck" responds with a WHINE OF JET ENGINES powering up.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The noise of the ENGINES REVVING reverberates through the walls. The Shipping Workers stop in their tracks.

WORKER #1
What the hell---?

They turn in the direction of the noise. A red light flashes near loading bay twelve.

EXT. WAREHOUSE LOADING BAY - CONTINUOUS

A big ungainly hovercraft truck trundles away from the dock, goes a short distance, then takes off vertically with a big WHOOSH.

CUT TO:

INT. GENOME RESEARCH LAB - SAME TIME

Jonesy is still engrossed in her father's research notes. She leans in close to the display, reads for a beat, then turns off the machine. Jonesy leans back in the chair and rubs her eyes.

She sits back up straight, reaches for a desk drawer and pulls it all the way out. She places it on the floor, gets down on one knee, reaches into the cavity, and fishes around inside. Jonesy pulls out another plastic card and looks at it closely.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOJAVE DESERT - NIGHT

A flat, empty, dry wilderness is illuminated by the full moon. The hovercraft truck flown by Marcovich and Potts comes in for a landing and kicks up clouds of dust.

INT. HOVERCRAFT TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Marcovich touches a couple of switches and the engines WHINE DOWN to an idle. He looks apprehensively at Potts, and the gun that's still trained on him.

MARCOVICH

Now what?

POTTS

Now you get out.

MARCOVICH

Here!? In the middle of nowhere?

POTTS

Yep. I figure by the time you get to a phone I should be somewhere past the old man in the moon with a big fat deposit in my credit account.

Potts pushes a button and the hatch swings open.

POTTS

Nice making your acquaintance.
Nothin' personal.

Potts waves the gun at him and tips his hat, and Marcovich clambers out the door. Potts hits the switch again and the hatch closes.

EXT. MOJAVE DESERT - CONTINUOUS

Marcovich stumbles away as the hovercraft stirs up more dust and lifts off with a loud RUMBLE.

The manager frantically looks around in a full circle.

MARCOVICH

Where the hell am I!

The darkness is unbroken except for one distant light. He spots it and trudges in that direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. IN ORBIT OVER THE EARTH - SAME TIME

A view of the Allied Ex space station as it follows the curve of the Earth.

INT. ALLIED EX SPACE STATION, CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The workstation previously used by Jonesy springs to life. A row of lights flash in sequence on the console, accompanied by electronic BEEPS like a dialing modem.

EXT. IN ORBIT OVER THE EARTH, AMBROSE BEACON - CONTINUOUS

A huge communications array, studded with antennas and electronic gizmos, circles the globe. It's name is emblazoned across one large panel: AMBROSE.

The communication BEEPS from the Allied Ex station are heard, then get LOUDER as the Ambrose beacon amplifies and retransmits the signal.

CUT TO:

INT. HOVERCRAFT TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

As Potts flies the truck he puts on a headset and turns on the radio.

POTTS

Red Desert this is Redneck Twelve.
Do you read me. Over.

The voice of Potts' fence, NATE, comes over the radio.

NATE (V.O.)

Howdy there Redneck. Over.

POTTS

I'm about fifteen minutes out of Barstow. You ready for the delivery? Over.

NATE (V.O.)

Ready and waiting. Ten four.

POTTS
(to himself)
All right!

Suddenly, LOUD STATIC blasts from the console. Potts rips off his headphones.

POTTS
Whoa! What the hell---?

He messes around with the console, and tries changing bands, but the same noise is on every channel. A small holographic screen appears on the dash and a man's image resolves out of the static.

It's Gideon Jones. Since the recording was made during the early stages of I.D.S., he exhibits few signs of the wasting disease.

GIDEON JONES
This transmission is an urgent message to the people of earth broadcasting on all frequencies. I only have a minute before it's cut off by the authorities, so please listen carefully. My name is Gideon Jones. I'm a scientist who formerly worked for the Allied Ex corporation, and researched the cause of the I.D.S. plague. We discovered that it was caused by consumption of Saarg meat, but Allied Ex officials and certain members of the government conspired to cover up the truth. As heinous a crime as that was, most of those involved did not understand the full dimensions of the danger. In fact, I.D.S. is just the first mutation of a disease that, if unchecked, will eventually destroy all life on earth. The proof of my assertion has been downloaded to every news organization worldwide. I call upon all scientists, political leaders, and health workers to direct all of their efforts to finding a cure that will reverse this process. There's very little time. In the meanwhile I say to all citizens, please heed this warning. Stop eating Saarg. May God have mercy on us.

The image resolves back into static and then disappears.

POTTS
I'll be damned!

He takes out his pocket communicator and dials Jonesy.

POTTS
Jonesy! I just heard your daddy's
broadcast. Is there something
you've been wanting to tell me?

JONESY (V.O.)
I'm just learning about it myself
Jared.

POTTS
Listen! Your download to the news
organizations didn't happen. Allied
EX intercepted it.

JONESY (V.O.)
What?!

POTTS
That's right. It was never
transmitted. Where are you anyway
girl?

CUT TO:

INT. ALLIED EX RESEARCH LABORATORY - MOMENTS LATER

Jonesy works her way past the cubicles to Dr. Trapp's office,
inserts the card, and opens the door.

INT. DR. TRAPP'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

She moves a chair over to the computer console and the
machine springs to life.

GEORGE
Good evening Dr. Trapp.

Jonesy takes out a disk and places it in a drive.

GEORGE
Awaiting password.

JONESY
 Let's just hope this hack disk is
 as good as Jared says.

Lights blink on the computer for a beat.

JONESY
 Come on--- come on---

GEORGE
 Password accepted.

JONESY
 Yes!

The display comes on and a splash screen appears with an
 image of a saarg-fish.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOJAVE DESERT - DAWN

Potts sits on a rock and stares thoughtfully at the "van" of
 the hovercraft truck. The "cab" has been separated and parked
 a short distance away. The DRONE of hovercraft motors
 approaches.

Three vehicles touch down nearby. A hatch opens, Nate gets
 out and walks over to Jared. He's a former Martian colonist
 who looks like a wild-west outlaw.

NATE
 Howdy Jared.

Potts stands up.

POTTS
 Howdy there Nate.

They shake hands. Nate looks over at the "van".

NATE
 Can I assume that's our shipment?

POTTS
 Yep. Sure can.

NATE
 Well, let's get moving before the
 Smokeys show up.

POTTS
You have no idea how sorry I am
about this, pardner.

NATE
'bout what?

POTTS
I'm afraid the deal is off.

He presses his thumb down on the button of a detonator device that he's holding and KA-BOOM the van erupts in a huge fiery explosion. Potts and Nate are knocked down by the concussion.

EXT. MOJAVE DESERT - MOMENTS LATER

Nate struggles to his feet, covered with dust and pieces of mashed Saarg-fish. Jared sits up and looks around for his hat. He spots it, dusts it off, and puts it back on.

POTTS
That charge was a mite stronger
than I figured it would be.

NATE
What did you go and do that for!?

Potts gets up, dusts off his pants and picks off pieces of Saarg.

POTTS
It turns out that Saarg isn't safe
for children and other living
things.

NATE
What!?

POTTS
Just found out from a very reliable
source that it'll eventually kill
anybody who eats it.

NATE
That's ridiculous---

POTTS
I understand that the first thing
to shrivel up is your pecker.
'Course you and I are Marsfast so
we don't have to worry 'bout that.

Nate GULPS and looks down at his pecker.

POTTS

We'd best be goin' before the Bears
get here.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. TRAPP'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Jonesy is deep into Dr. Trapp's Saarg files. A large, detailed hologram of a Saarg-fish is displayed, alongside tables of numbers and DNA charts. She MUMBLES some of the text under her breath.

Jonesy presses a button, the view-screen lights up, and Senator Bertha Morris appears.

SENATOR MORRIS

This is a secure channel. How did
you gain access to it? Who are you?

JONESY

I'm Inspector Sarah Jones from Mars
Station Alpha. I've gained access
to secret files at the Allied Ex
Corporation that corroborate what
my father said in his message. His
original data was intercepted.

SENATOR MORRIS

I've always suspected that the
plague was caused by consumption of
Saarg, but---

JONESY

You were right! You're all in grave
danger! The threat is worse than
you could have imagined. I'm
uploading the data to you now. If
action isn't taken immediately, the
human race will become extinct on
this planet, just as my father
predicted.

SENATOR MORRIS

My God!

Jonesy presses the touchpad.

JONESY

---sending.

Senator Morris watches the download on her end.

A soft SCREECH is heard at the door. It opens and Dr. Trapp wheels in. Jonesy is so absorbed that she doesn't notice.

DR. TRAPP
Beautiful. Isn't it?

Jonesy GASPS and whirls around. Dr. Trapp points at the 3-D image of the Saarg.

DR. TRAPP
The perfect adaptation.

JONESY
You're Dr. Trapp.

DR. TRAPP
Yes. And you, I suspect are Sarah Jones, the daughter of my dear, recently departed colleague, Gideon. Am I right?

JONESY
That's right.

DR. TRAPP
Please accept my heartfelt condolences. Your father was a true scientist. I counted him as a friend.

WIDER

Jonesy glares at him ferociously.

JONESY
And YOU are the worst mass murderer in all of human history.

He smiles and CHUCKLES.

DR. TRAPP
Hardly that my dear. I've never intentionally harmed anyone in my life. All this---

He waves at the computer display.

DR. TRAPP
---is not my invention. I could never have imagined it.

JONESY

But you knew! You knew! My father and millions of other people are dead because you did nothing! You covered it up! Why!?

SENATOR MORRIS (V.O.)

You lied to us!

Trapp turns to the communication screen.

DR. TRAPP

Ah! Senator Morris! I assume that you've been chatting with the Inspector here. You are both very quick to judge me. This is bigger than all of us. Who are we to try to stop it?

JONESY

It's not over! I.D.S. is only the beginning!

He trundles a few feet and looks at the two pictures of the young soldiers on the wall.

DR. TRAPP

Those are my sons; John and Mark. They're both dead. I lost them in the last war. Then I was crippled by a piece of shrapnel from a terrorist bomb. Millions died in that war. No more. It will never happen again. Thank God!

JONESY

Well that's just brilliant! Of course there won't be another war! Everybody on earth will be dead! You maniac!

She unholsters her sidearm and trains it on him.

DR. TRAPP

Are you going to shoot a cripple?

SENATOR MORRIS (V.O.)

No! Stop!

JONESY

Only if you don't answer my questions truthfully. Is there a cure?

DR. TRAPP

There might have been. But now it's too late. The process has already gone too far.

Jonesy strides over and claps the gun to his head.

JONESY

Tell me where the formula is. Now!

He hesitates for a tense beat, but the determination on Jonesy's face clearly communicates that she really is prepared to blow his brains out.

DR. TRAPP

All right. You win. You would have found it eventually anyway.

He keys a number into the touchpad and a file that contains chemical formulae is displayed. Jonesy steps over to the computer and examines it.

JONESY

Senator, I'm routing this to you now.

She pushes some buttons.

DR. TRAPP

As I said. It's too late anyway.

DR. TRAPP'S HAND

His finger surreptitiously pushes a small button on the side of his chair. A tiny diode blinks.

JONESY

If you're right then everyone who has ever eaten Saarg will die a horrible death. And you'll be responsible.

DR. TRAPP

No. You still don't see the big picture.

JONESY

What do you mean?

DR. TRAPP

Tragically, some people will die. Some already have.

(MORE)

DR. TRAPP(cont'd)

They're mostly the ones who ate the least amount of Saarg, like your father. He only broke Marsfast on "special occasions" you know. In general, the more Saarg a person has eaten, the smoother the transformation will be.

SENATOR MORRIS

Transformation? What transformation?!

DR. TRAPP

I'm truly sorry for your loss Sarah, but there was no way of knowing that small doses of Saarg DNA would cause an auto-immune reaction in some people.

Dr. Trapp waves at the display, and the Saarg hologram enlarges.

DR. TRAPP

Sargus Europias evolved the perfect defense against predation. That's why there are no other complex life forms on Europa. When consumed, the hardened DNA in it's somatic cells migrates into the predator's bloodstream and eventually takes over all it's stem cells. The tables are turned and the predator is slowly turned into it's prey--- into a Saarg-fish.

SENATOR MORRIS

What!? Am I hearing this right!?

JONESY

I know. I figured that out.

DR. TRAPP

But that's not the whole story.

He stops and takes a deep breath.

DR. TRAPP

See if you can follow this. The real source of the genetic mutation isn't the Saarg, it's the nephrites, the plankton they eat. The Saarg just represent the final stage of evolution in the limited European ecosystem. But on Earth---

BLAM! A sniper shot intended for Jonesy misses, drills a hole through Dr. Trapp's chest, and BLASTS the view screen. His eyes roll up and he dies instantly.

BLAM! BLAM! Jonesy fires back through the door and dives for cover, as more shots ZIP past her.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOJAVE DESERT - SAME TIME

Pete Marcovich stumbles along through the dust and the sage.

The DRONE of hovercraft emerges from a huge cloud of dust in the distance. All at once, they're all around and above him, a swarm of hovercraft of different shapes and sizes. Marcovich waves his arms around to get someone's attention.

MARCOVICH

Hey! Help! Help me!

A four-seat hovercraft lands right next to him. It's driven by a YOUNG DUDE with TWO PRETTY GIRLS in the back seat.

YOUNG DUDE

Looking for a ride to the beach?

MARCOVICH

Yeah! You're going there too?

YOUNG DUDE

Sure. Everybody is.

MARCOVICH

Great! Thanks a lot.

He climbs into the front passenger seat.

PRETTY GIRL #1

Hi! I'm Michelle and this is Fran.

What's your name?

CUT TO:

INT. DR. TRAPP'S OFFICE - MORNING

Jonesy is still hunkered down under a workstation with shots WHIZZING by. She sticks her arm out and BLASTS back.

INT. ALLIED EX LAB. - CONTINUOUS

Two ROBO SECURITY GUARDS take cover behind the equipment and fire at Jonesy's position. Suddenly, fire comes at them from a different angle. They're both hit, and EXPLODE into a shower of nuts and bolts. Jared Potts steps out from behind a cabinet.

POTTS

Jonesy?

Jonesy warily emerges from Dr. Trapp's office.

JONESY

Jared!

Obviously relieved, he runs over to her, and it looks like he'll throw his arms around her, but he stops short.

POTTS

Let's go!

JONESY

Where are we going?

POTTS

To find my boy before all hell breaks loose.

INT. DR. TRAPP'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

THE COMPUTER

The open file on the antidote closes and is replaced by a flashing prompt that says:

CATALYST DEPLOYED

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLIED EX LAB. - MOMENTS LATER

Jared's truck "cab" takes off from the parking lot and flies away.

CUT TO:

INT. EUROPA, MCINTYRE STATION WAREHOUSE - SAME TIME

The whole warehouse level is flooded with water that HISSES from burst pipes and cascades from the walls and ceiling. Shorted-out wiring sparks and CRACKLES.

A panicked Grumman swims through the eddies and floating cargo boxes. GASPING for air, he grabs onto a crate, and looks around in desperation for an escape route. Suddenly, there's a RUSH of water nearby, like a toilet flushing, and a whirlpool forms and sucks him down.

BELOW THE WATER

Grumman struggles helplessly as he's dragged into the dark depths of a drainage shaft. As he sinks, a Saarg-fish appears and trawls casually by.

CUT TO:

INT. HOVERCRAFT TRUCK - SAME TIME

Jared glances out the window.

POTTS

Looks like I'm not the only one who
heard your daddy's broadcast.

EXT. SANTA MONICA STREET - CONTINUOUS

On a pedestrian promenade lined with stores, a huge riot is in progress. LOOTERS hurl trash cans and smash windows.

INT. HOVERCRAFT TRUCK - SAME TIME

Potts looks down at the controls and notices three blips on a radar-type display.

POTTS

Uh-oh!

He pushes a throttle and the engines respond with a RUMBLE of increased power.

EXT. ALOFT OVER LOS ANGELES - CONTINUOUS

The hovercraft truck cab barrels through the air a few hundred feet above the ground. In the distance three police craft are in pursuit.

Jared's hovercraft weaves awkwardly as the three police craft fire warning SHOTS at it.

INT. HOVERCRAFT TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Potts desperately tries to shake the police pursuit. The radio lights up, and the voice of INSPECTOR PETERSEN comes on.

PETERSEN (V.O.)

This is Inspector Petersen of the L.A. Police department. Descend and land immediately, or we will shoot you down.

Potts quickly checks his readings on the dashboard.

POTTS

You want me to descend? Okay.

He flashes Jonesy a wicked grin.

POTTS

Hold onto your hat.

EXT. ALOFT OVER LOS ANGELES - CONTINUOUS

Potts pushes the "truck" into a steep dive, but the police craft stay close. As he pulls level, one of the "cars" gets right on his tail. Suddenly, Potts dips and-

ZAP!!! The police craft flies right into a barrier of high-tension wires and KA-BLAM! It explodes and breaks up.

INT. HOVERCRAFT TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Jared pulls the craft back up and banks it as SHOTS flash by the windows.

POTTS

Oh Lordy! Mrs. Potts baby boy is in big trouble now!

EXT. OVER SANTA MONICA - CONTINUOUS

Potts' "truck" dives down between buildings with the two police craft on his tail. He makes a sharp turn around a corner just as they fire at him again.

BLAM! BLAM! One shot misses but the second wings him.

Police craft #1 ascends quickly and gets a bead on the "truck" from above. Potts frantically weaves from side to side, caroms off the buildings, and flies out the end of the street over a large lot filled with parked hovercraft.

ZAP! Police craft #2 fires and hits one of the "truck's" engine rotors. It wobbles wildly out of control and CRASHES down onto the roofs of the parked hovercraft. A dozen of them are squashed, and parts fly in every direction.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Fire erupts from the truck's damaged engine. The hatch opens, Potts helps Jonesy to stand and both stagger away and-

KA-BOOM! A huge explosion blasts the truck to smithereens.

Unhurt, Potts and Jonesy crawl out from between two damaged hovercraft, stand up and look at the burning remains of the "truck".

The two police craft descend behind them and Inspector Petersen's voice blares over a bullhorn.

PETERSEN (V.O.)
Freeze! Put your hands behind your
head!

Jared and Jonesy comply. They await further orders from the police, but there is silence.

POTTS
So? You fellers want us to lie face
down, or what?

There's no answer, so Potts glances over his shoulder, squints, and slowly twists around. He lowers his arms and stares in amazement.

WIDER

The two police hovercraft are parked with their engines on idle, but the cockpits are empty and the Officers are nowhere to be seen.

POTTS

What in tarnation!?

A deafening CHEER rings out, and Potts and Jonesy whirl around to see where it's coming from.

The leading edge of an enormous festive CROWD marches down the street.

EXT. ABOVE SANTA MONICA - SAME TIME

The beach, a pier with amusement rides and the downtown area are spread out below. The Crowd covers the shore and all of the streets are filled with people heading toward the water like a migration of lemmings.

CUT TO:

INT. LILA & JONAH'S APARTMENT, SANTA MONICA - SAME TIME

The crowded beach can be seen through the open door to the deck. The Crowd ROARS occasionally, like spectators at a ball game. Jonah sits at the dining room table with his nose in a school book and tries to study in spite of the din. Lila appears at the door and walks over to him.

LILA

Come on. Let's go.

JONAH

Go where?

LILA

To the beach of course. Everyone else is. See? Why are you just moping around?

JONAH

I don't feel like it. Can't I just stay here and finish my homework?

LILA

You have all weekend to do that. Let's do something I want for a change!

He looks up from his work and gives her a curious look.

JONAH
Is anything wrong?

LILA
Of course not. Why do you ask?

JONAH
It's just--- you're acting kinda
weird--- Okay. I'll go.

CUT TO:

INT. ALLIED EX HEADQUARTERS, STARK'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

In a spacious corporate office, CEO Jonathan Stark paces and surveys the scene on the street below through large plate glass windows. An INTERCOM BUZZER sounds on his desk, and he walks over and pushes an "answer" button.

STARK
Yes, Miss Roberts?

His secretary, MISS ROBERTS voice comes over the speaker.

MISS ROBERTS
Mister Stark, there are two
gentlemen from the F.B.I. here to
see you.

STARK
Thank you. I'll be with them in a
moment.

He sits down at his desk, rubs his forehead thoughtfully for a beat, opens a drawer and takes out a handgun.

Deliberately and dispassionately, he points the gun at his own head, squeezes the trigger, and BLAM, his brains are splattered all over the wall.

CUT TO:

EXT. EDWARDS AIRFORCE BASE - SAME TIME

The tarmac of a large military airfield.

PILOTS and GROUND CREW muster a squadron of futuristic fighter planes.

The first wing takes off straight up and ZOOMS away in formation at tremendous speed.

CUT TO:

INT. PENTAGON WAR ROOM, WASHINGTON - SAME TIME

A dimly lit room, with digital maps and schematics on all the walls. OPERATORS man workstations watched by ARMY BRASS, while TECHNICIANS and ASSISTANTS bustle around.

Senator Morris, strides briskly in accompanied by a male AIDE. She's immediately intercepted by GENERAL GEORGE BRADLEY, a four-star bastion of military propriety.

GEN. BRADLEY

Good of you to come Senator.

SENATOR MORRIS

I appreciate the invitation. How does it look?

GEN. BRADLEY

Not good I'm afraid. As you know, the President has declared a state of emergency. The chaos has become global. There currently are major civil disturbances in every country on earth. People are migrating to the coastlines like lemmings and smashing anything that gets in their way.

SENATOR MORRIS

What about the antidote?

GEN. BRADLEY

The appropriate facilities have been requisitioned and production has already started. Every aircraft in the military is ready to deliver the drug from the air. In fact, the first squadron has been loaded and has already embarked on it's mission.

SENATOR MORRIS

Excellent!

GEN. BRADLEY
 But we're racing against the clock.
 Our own people are being affected
 too. Have you had your dose yet?

SENATOR MORRIS
 No.

He takes a packet out of his jacket pocket.

GEN. BRADLEY
 Hold out your hand.

She does, and he pours out a small quantity of a white powder
 into her palm. She waits for instructions.

GEN. BRADLEY
 It's an aerosolized powder. You
 have to breath it in.

The Senator holds her hand to her nose, snorts and grimaces.

SENATOR MORRIS
 Ahhhhh!

GEN. BRADLEY
 I know. It stings. But it's a lot
 better than the alternative.

SENATOR MORRIS
 Will it work?

GEN. BRADLEY
 It's too early to tell.

CUT TO:

INT. LILA AND JONAH'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

The POUND of a fist on the door echoes through the empty
 apartment. Potts' muffled shout follows.

POTTS
 Lila! Open up! This is an
 emergency!

It's quiet for a beat, then there's a SMASH as Potts throws
 his weight against the door, then a loud CRASH as the lock
 gives, the door is flung open and Potts barges into the
 living room. Jonesy follows close behind.

POTTS

Check the patio Jonesy.

He points in the direction of the deck, then rushes toward the bedrooms. Jonesy open the patio door and looks outside.

Potts runs back into the living room.

POTTS

They're gone! I just hope we're not too late!

JONESY

There must be a million people out there on the beach.

POTTS

We've got to find them! Come on!

He bolts for the door.

EXT. BEACH AT SANTA MONICA - MOMENTS LATER

A raucous CROWD fills the beach and gambols in the surf. Not far from the water a group of DRUMMERS pound a tribal beat on a variety of percussion instruments. They're accompanied by impromptu DANCERS of both sexes and led by a BIG MAMA who swings her generous hips with abandon. A SCRAWNY MAN carries a wooden staff adorned with feathers and beads that he swings around like a shaman casting a spell.

NEARBY

Three young CHRISTIAN EVANGELISTS support a life-sized wooden cross and quote verses out of a Bible to no one in particular.

EVANGELIST #1

"---The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Messiah, and he will reign forever and ever."

NEARBY

Lila and Jonah are on a small beach blanket surrounded by the crowd. She has a paperback book open and reads, apparently unaware that anything unusual is going on around her. By contrast, Jonah is obviously tense, and glances around at the crowd nervously.

JONAH

Let's go home. It's too crowded here.

Lila looks up at him with annoyance.

LILA

That's just because it's such a beautiful day. Don't be such a spoil-sport.

JONAH

Something bad is going to happen. I can feel it.

LILA

You're always worrying! What could possibly happen?

WIDER

A squadron of military aircraft suddenly zooms past with a loud ROAR and drops a fusillade of small bombs that EXPLODE high over the heads of the crowd.

The people on the shore stand up, and CHEER like it's just another fireworks display.

INT. AIRPLANE COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The SQUADRON COMMANDER checks his gauges and speaks into a communications device.

COMMANDER

Red Flight this is Red Leader.
Starting orbit right.

PILOT (V.O.)

Red Three, roger, I, whu-whu---

His voice becomes unintelligible. It sounds like his mouth has been gagged.

COMMANDER

I didn't copy that Red Three.

PILOT

Wha-whu-whu-whu---

EXT. BEACH AT SANTA MONICA - CONTINUOUS

As the squadron banks for another pass, one of the planes peels off, heads straight for the water and crashes with a huge SPLASH.

LILA and JONAH

They both shield their eyes from the glare of the sun and watch the airplanes. Jonah can't see much over the crowd. A fine white dust falls on and around them like snow.

JONAH
What's happening?

The dust makes him COUGH.

LILA
I-I don't know. I think one of the planes just crashed.

Suddenly, as though on a signal, the remaining aircraft go haywire. They flip and roll and dive in different directions. Two of them collide in mid-air with a fiery CRASH and the pieces fall into the water. The crowd SCREAMS.

EXT. SANTA MONICA PIER - SAME TIME

Potts and Jonesy lean on the rail of a large pier that juts out into the ocean and overlooks the beach.

JONESY
Why did they crash!?

POTTS
I guess your daddy's prediction is starting to come true.

SPLASHES are heard as dozens of ONLOOKERS suddenly hurl themselves off the end of the pier.

POTTS
I don't see them. Let's get down on the beach.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH AT SANTA MONICA - CONTINUOUS

A BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM erupts close to Lila and Jonah. They turn just as a HEAVYSET MAN in bathing trunks falls to the ground. The crowd pulls back as he writhes around violently on the ground face down. A SURFER stoops to help him as a LIFEGUARD pushes his way through the crowd.

LIFEGUARD
What's the problem?

SURFER
Looks like this dude is having a seizure.

The Lifeguard turns the Heavysset Man over then jumps back.

LIFEGUARD
What the hell---!?

The Heavysset Man's face is distorted, his lips impossibly elongated into an open funnel shape that exposes his teeth and drools copiously.

As Lila, Jonah, and the rest of the crowd watch in horror, he continues to transform with increasing speed. His arms shrink into flippers, his skin turns gray, his eyes are sucked into his head.

JONAH
(panicked)
What's happening to him!?

LILA
Wha- whu- whu- whu---

Jonah turns to look at his mother who is now also in the throws of the transformation. He SCREAMS.

JONAH
No! No! No! This isn't happening!
It's not real!

Like a chain reaction, the transformation spreads through the whole crowd. SCREAMS resound, followed by the cacophonous din of people trying to talk through elongated lips.

EXT. THE EDGE OF THE BEACH - SAME TIME

Potts and Jonesy struggle in a vain attempt to push through the crush of the crowd.

POTTS
It's happening! It's happening
right now.

He cups his hands to his mouth and shouts at the top of his lungs.

POTTS
Jonah! Jonah!

EXT. THE WATER'S EDGE - SAME TIME

Half-transformed people slowly crawl into the water like sea turtles.

NEARBY

Lila drags a struggling Jonah toward the water.

JONAH
No! No! No! Aaaaaaaghhh!

As her hands turn more flipper-like she loses her grip on him. What's left of her legs can no longer support her and she sinks to the sand. She looks back and forth at the water and then at Jonah.

JONAH
No! Momma! Don't leave me!

He stretches his arms out to her and CRIES hysterically. She gazes at him with as much sadness as her distorted face can still express, then slowly turns and slithers into the water. He can only watch in despair as she submerges.

All around him, transformed people move toward the water. Jonah is the only one who's not affected. He SCREAMS and rushes with all his strength against the tide of bodies, and steps on some of the changelings in his panicked flight.

WIDER

The whole beach crawls with Saarg-people on their way to the water.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE BEACH - SAME TIME

Potts and Jonesy watch the transformation with horror. As they wend their way through the revolting mass of deformed bodies Potts continues to look for his son.

POTTS
Jonah! Jonah!

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH AT SANTA MONICA - LATER, DUSK

A glowing sunset tints the sand and cliffs red. The beach is littered with clothes and beach gear, apparently deserted except for a swarm of seagulls who pick at the abandoned picnic baskets.

Jonah Potts sits alone and forlorn on a driftwood log and cries softly.

Suddenly, there's a distant shout.

POTTS (O.S.)
Jonah!

Jonah snaps to attention.

Potts and Jonesy are a short distance down the beach. Jonah stands up and waves frantically.

JONAH
Daddy! Daddy!

He runs toward them full tilt. Potts spots him and runs to meet him.

POTTS
Jonah! Praise the Lord!

They meet and hug tightly.

JONAH
I knew you'd come! I knew it!

POTTS
I thought for sure I'd lost you son. Thank God you didn't eat any of that dang fish.

Jonesy, all smiles, watches the reunion. Jonah finally notices her.

JONAH
Who's she?

POTTS
 Oh, this here's Jone--- I mean
 Inspector Jones from the Mars
 Station. She's a friend of mine.

Jonesy offers Jonah her hand.

JONESY
 You can call me Sarah. I've heard a
 lot about you Jonah.

Jonah smiles back. Potts looks around at the desolation.

POTTS
 Let's get away from this accussed
 beach.

CUT TO:

EXT. IN ORBIT OVER THE EARTH - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

The Allied Ex space dock continues on its round of the
 planet. The space doors open and the Pequod II slowly
 emerges. Thrusters FIRE and it moves quickly away.

CUT TO:

INT. PEQUOD II FLIGHT DECK - MOMENTS LATER

Potts is at the controls and Jonesy has the co-pilot's seat
 with Jonah on her lap.

POTTS
 Course set--- Mars One.

He hits a couple of buttons.

CHERYL
 Course set. All systems normal
 except for one anomaly.

POTTS
 What's that?

CHERYL
 Co-Pilot Jones has gained an
 abnormal amount of weight during
 her layover.

Potts and Jonesy glance at each other.

POTTS

Yep. She sure has. You know that Earth food!

He sets another switch, YAWNS and stretches.

POTTS

Well I guess it's just about nap time Cheryl. Armadillo turd!

The lights on the dash turn off and the computer powers down with a WHIRR.

POTTS

Auto-pilot should do just fine for the trip. You too Jonah. Time to hit the sack.

JONAH

Right now! I thought I'd get to see the Moon up close!

POTTS

Maybe next time. This here crate doesn't have a whole lot of extra oxygen to waste, 'specially since I'll have to be out of hybernation the whole darn time.

He gets up and leads the boy to one of the pods.

JONAH

Oh okay. If I have to. You promise you'll take me to an Astros game when we get to New Austin?

POTTS

Yep. That's a promise.

Jonah strips down to his underwear and gets in.

JONAH

Dad?

POTTS

Yep?

JONAH

I miss Momma.

Jared lays a fatherly hand on his shoulder.

POTTS

You always will, son. I'm sorry.
There's just nothin' that anybody
could have done to save her and all
those other people. Alls we can do
is hope that maybe--- in a way---
they're all happy now.

JONAH

Maybe---

POTTS

We'll talk about it more when we
get home. Good night son.

JONAH

Good night Dad.

JONESY

Sweet dreams Jonah.

JONAH

You too Sarah.

He settles down into the pod. Jared touches the controls, the
lid closes and the equipment HUMS. He walks over to Jonesy.

POTTS

Well that's one down.

JONESY

Jared--- I was wondering---

She moves in close to him and smiles.

POTTS

'Bout what?

JONESY

Well, you know how stressful it can
be to stay out of hybernation for
two whole weeks, without even
Cheryl to keep you company---

POTTS

I'm not lookin' forward to it,
that's for sure. Don't rightly know
there's a better solution seein's
there's only one--- pod---

He notices her seductive look, takes her in his arms, and
they passionately kiss.

POTTS

Now that you mention it, there just
might be a better way at that.

She smiles and nods.

CUT TO:

INT. PEQUOD II CABIN - LATER

It's quiet except for the HUM of the engines and equipment.

THE HYBERNATION PODS

The covers of both units are down. Jonah is still asleep in one. In the other, Potts and Jonesy hibernate together, their naked bodies pressed closely together, legs intertwined.

CLOSE ON JONAH

The boy is asleep, but his eyelids twitch. He's dreaming.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. IN SPACE ABOVE THE EARTH - SAME TIME

The same view as before of the curve of the Earth and the Allied Ex space dock.

MOVING

Past the dock and quickly down toward the surface, through the atmosphere.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

A SERIES OF SHOTS reveals the emptiness of the capitol:

THE MALL, A BRIDGE OVER THE POTOMAC, THE PENTAGON.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PENTAGON WAR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The same war room as before. The computers and displays are still lit up, but the military personnel are gone, replaced by a score of dead Saarg-fish that are piled up on the floor. Flies BUZZ around the remains.

AN ELECTRONIC MAP

One of the electronic screens displays a map of North America in three-dimensional detail.

CLOSER

The outline of the west coast comes into view. At the location of Los Angeles, a bright light pulses.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SANTA MONICA - CONTINUOUS

FLYOVER

The abandoned streets of Santa Monica are below, the ocean ahead.

DOWN

Over the beach, the surf, the open water, then below the surface.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Schools of fish swim through the blue aqueous environment. Dark shapes loom ahead.

A POD OF SAARG

Hundreds of the alien fish hang motionless in the water. They look like buoys with their heads straight up and tails down.

It's dark and silent for a beat. Suddenly, a small but bright golden light appears on one of the Saarg.

CLOSER

The sides of the fish pulsate with movement and it's tail twitches from side to side.

The light emanates from a small aperture on it's belly. As the spasms of the Saarg speed up, the opening widens and the light increases. Something is trying to get out.

The fish's gut suddenly splits open, and brilliant light pours out of it's innards. A large, amorphous glowing form is expelled from the cavity that slowly unfolds to reveal AN ANGELIC BEING. It's like a huge bioluminescent jellyfish but human in form. Pulses of light course all over it's body.

CLOSER

The being has very large intelligent eyes, long glowing filaments instead of hair, and it's mouth is set in a slight smile. It bears an uncanny resemblance to Lila.

WIDER

All around, the other Saarg go through the same process and give birth to more of the same kind of beings. As soon as they unfold, the beings move toward one another, touch and communicate through their tendrils.

More Angelic Beings arrive from every direction, propelled gracefully through the water by wing-like flaps on their sides. They congregate into a huge throng, and the ocean is ablaze with their light.

The Lila-Being closes her eyes and a jewel-like mental projection forms from her forehead. She extends her arms and raises her hands, and the projection grows.

WIDER

The other beings follow suit and the burgeoning projections merge into one, an unfolding structure that continues to grow, and opens like a flower. A sonorous HUM reverberates through the water. Above the flower, an enormous cubic structure descends, an enclosure with openings like gates and structures visible through the glowing golden transparent walls. It hangs weightless and still, and emits powerful beacons of light from it's center.

The Angelic Beings head for their newly created "city" and stream into it's doors.

FADE OUT.

THE END

