

MAN PLUS

Jeff Vintar
based on the novel by Frederik Pohl

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EXT--THE SURFACE OF MARS--DAY

The stark landscapes of Mars stretch to the horizon where orange dunes and red plateaus meet pink sky. BREATHING. There is MECHANIZED BREATHING and now the barren vista is DISTORTED IN THE GENTLY-CURVED MIRROR OF A SPACE HELMET.

ROGER TORRAWAY ignores the sweat running down his face.

ROGER'S P.O.V. The red horizon seems even more distant through Roger's fogged helmet visor, heavy droplets of water winding their way down the inside of the protective glass momentarily clearing a path. His BREATHING ECHOES.

Roger's thick boots raise a CLOUD OF RED DUST as he steps toward a COLLECTION OF SILVER GLEAMING EQUIPMENT set into the Martian sand. Like a crazy scientist's tinker toys. Roger bends over the equipment. Reaches out with a thick gloved hand and touches a panel here. Then a flap there.

A DISTORTED ROGER IS REFLECTED IN THE SILVER. A spaceman in a red suit against a pink sky bent out of proportion. Behind Roger a JAGGED RED OUTCROPPING rises above him and is, too, distorted in the gleaming metal...and then there is something else. SOMETHING ON TOP OF THE JAGGED ROCK.

It moves fast. Too fast. Not like a man in a spacesuit.

Roger steps down the row of gleaming equipment. And just behind him THE DISTORTED REFLECTION FOLLOWS. Moving like an animal in leaps and bounds across the Martian terrain.

Roger's MECHANIZED BREATHING continues as he walks on, stirring up brief clouds of dust. A SHADOW DANCES ACROSS HIS BACK. A crazed shadow that is like a man but not like a man. Followed, a moment later, by a MUTED THUMP.

Roger STOPS BREATHING. Freezes. As if trying to decide whether or not he just heard something leap down behind him from the outcropping above. Roger slowly turns. And slowly, his curved visor comes into view reflecting the barren red horizon, and the jagged outcropping above, and then something else: Something with RED GLOWING EYES and ENORMOUS BAT EARS rising up on either side of its head.

ROGER'S P.O.V. Barely visible through his fogged helmet visor stands what must be a Martian. It raises ELONGATED LIMBS into the air and releases a SHRILL INHUMAN SHRIEK.

Roger's eyes open wide as the sweat rushes down his face.

Roger's curved helmet visor reflects the alien one moment longer before THE MARTIAN EXPLODES splattering FLUID across the face of Roger's helmet--blocking out the view.

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Roger's BREATHING RETURNS, but frantic now as he stumbles back clumsily inside his suit, like some medieval knight reeling from a joust, landing inside a cloud of red dust.

CUT TO:

AIR VENTS IN THE PINK MARTIAN SKY. Air vents that didn't seem to be there before. Releasing a DEAFENING HISSING.

MECHANICAL VOICE

Pressurizing Mars Tank.

CUT TO:

Roger struggles, slowly, clumsily, rising onto one knee.

MECHANICAL VOICE

Entry in three minutes.

Roger turns toward the distance. Nothing there but the barren red horizon stretching as far as the eye can see. Inside his helmet Roger appears to come to some decision:

ROGER

DON'T WAIT FOR ME!

The barren Martian horizon suddenly MOVES. An ENORMOUS AIRLOCK DOOR BLOWING OPEN AND STRIKING THE WALL WITH A RESOUNDING DOOOOOM as a DEAFENING RUSH OF AIR BLOWS ROGER OFF HIS FEET. Like a paper doll. Spinning end-over-end.

Roger hurls toward the distant horizon until he hits a barrier that doesn't seem to be there. Another WALL. His visor CRACKS. LOOSE NASA EQUIPMENT HURLS to the wall just missing him. Sticking there like metal on a magnet.

Roger crashes to the floor inside a cloud of artificial Martian soil. He lies still a moment. Then his gloved fingers grasp at the sand. He fights to raise his head:

ROGER'S P.O.V. Through a SPLINTERED VISOR: DOCTORS AND NURSES IN REGULAR EVERYDAY WHITE UNIFORMS running across Mars. An odd sight. Most Doctors stop at the REMAINS OF THE MARTIAN but some continue, FOOTSTEPS running closer.

The Doctors and Nurses reach Roger and remove his helmet. Roger just lies there, as if oblivious to them. Watches:

ROGER'S P.O.V. The Doctors are not moving as frantically as they were a few moments earlier. The Nurses stepping back and away to reveal a PRIEST kneeling in the red dust speaking words that make no sense. No. It's LATIN. The Priest makes the sign of the cross as what's left of the Martian receives the last sacrament of Extreme Unction...

INT--EXCESSIVELY DECORATED ELEVATOR--DAY

CREDITS ROLL. ROGER, wearing an expensive suit, rides an elevator and fiddles with his bow tie. Staring straight ahead. Not looking at the DARK-HAIRED WOMAN IN THE LONG GOWN on the other side of the cab. They are standing just far enough apart to suggest they are not acquainted.

Roger frowns. Looks up and to the center above the door. As if checking the elevator's progress. After a moment, the Dark-Haired Woman does the same. Then they both look down and to the side. The Woman gently pats at her hair. Slowly, Roger exhales. This is one long elevator ride.

At the DING, they both stiffen. And, without a glance or a word, they move next to one another. They clasp hands.

INT--EXCESSIVELY DECORATED HALLWAY--DAY

ROGER and his wife DORRIE step off the elevator holding hands. Start down a corridor lined on either side with SECRET SERVICE PERSONNEL. The men are stiff. As if part of the hall. Roger and Dorrie step past. Smiling wide.

TWO PORTABLE CURTAINS are set-up at the end of the hall. ONE MALE AND ONE FEMALE AGENT waiting patiently for them:

TWO AGENTS

(in unison)

Good day, Colonel. Mrs. Torraway.

Roger and Dorrie part. Each steps behind their intended curtain. These curtains are only shoulder-high, allowing either one to look over at the other. But neither does.

Roger is frisked by the Male Agent as a SECOND MALE AGENT appears holding a WAND. Moving it over Roger. The First Agent SNAPS on SURGICAL GLOVES, loosens Roger's belt, and deftly reaches into his pants. Roger jerks, staring up at the ceiling. Trying hard to keep a smile. He turns:

ROGER'S P.O.V. Behind her curtain Dorrie is visible from the neck up, looking irritated as a SECOND FEMALE AGENT pokes through her hair. The First Female Agent SNAPS on SURGICAL GLOVES and promptly ducks down out of view. Dorrie looks ill. Then she drops down out of view, too.

The Second Male Agent pulls Roger's handkerchief from his pocket. He shakes the handkerchief open and then refolds it, even neater than before. Roger jerks as his pants are pulled back into place, and his belt buckled for him.

The Second Female Agent lifts Dorrie's hands, and studies

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her PAINTED NAILS. She immediately dips Dorrie's fingers into a SOLUTION and after a FSSSH her hands are lifted up and out. Dorrie's fingernail polish has been dissolved.

The First Male and First Female Agent UNSNAP their gloves and step back, looking from Roger to Dorrie, in tandem:

TWO AGENTS

(in unison)

Thank you, Colonel. Mrs. Torraway.

TWO IDENTICAL DOORS at the end of the hall. One in front of Roger and one in front of Dorrie. For the first time, Roger and Dorrie glance at each other. Like a warning.

Roger opens his door to reveal a BLACK MALE PSYCHIATRIST. Dorrie opens hers to reveal a WHITE FEMALE PSYCHIATRIST. Both of their offices are identical, to the last detail. The Psychiatrists stand. Each offers a welcoming smile.

INT--TWO IDENTICAL PSYCHIATRY OFFICES--DAY

CREDITS END. ROGER steps in and closes the door behind him. The BLACK MALE PSYCHIATRIST gestures at the chair.

PSYCHIATRIST

Please have a seat.

Roger sits. He looks immediately calm. Almost too calm.

PSYCHIATRIST

Your wife is a very good-looking woman. Do you mind my saying that?

ROGER

Not at all.

PSYCHIATRIST

Some white people would not like to hear that from me. How do you feel about it?

ROGER

I know my wife is sexy. Other men are bound to be attracted to her from time to time.

PSYCHIATRIST

You're doing a fine job of appearing unmoved by my questions.

Pause. Roger does not respond. Just sits there looking calm, pleasant, perfectly at ease; as if he is practiced.

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PSYCHIATRIST

Would you mind if I took it a bit further, and asked how the screwing is?

CUT TO:

DORRIE KLIKS on a PORTABLE LIGHTER near the end of her CIGARETTE. Watches the WHITE FEMALE PSYCHIATRIST warily.

DORRIE

Thank you for the cigarette.

PSYCHIATRIST

You're welcome. I've got to tell you that I find these screenings to be rather pointless.

DORRIE

Oh...I'm so glad to hear you say that. I do, too.

Long pause. Dorrie seems calmer now, as if she has found a fellow conspirator. She looks warm and friendly until:

PSYCHIATRIST

So then. Are you fucking around on your husband?

CUT TO:

Roger casually crosses his leg. Nods a little. Thinks.

ROGER

Well. The "screwing." It's about like anybody else's, I guess, after being married a few years.

CUT TO:

Dorrie takes a drag on that cigarette. She glares icily at her Psychiatrist, who stares back at her, with a grin.

CUT TO:

Roger looks calm. Watches his Psychiatrist watching him.

PSYCHIATRIST

No problems at home, then? Still like a couple of honeymooners, eh?

ROGER

(with a pleasant chuckle)
Something like that.

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CUT TO:

Dorrie watches her Psychiatrist coldly. Blows out SMOKE.

DORRIE

Are you here to psychoanalyze, or
provoke me?

PSYCHIATRIST

Both. Isn't that obvious?

Long pause. Dorrie takes another drag on that cigarette.

DORRIE

(as if defiant)

Yes. I am fucking somebody else.

CUT TO:

Roger watches a PANEL OPEN in the desk as a LENS EMERGES.

PSYCHIATRIST

I'm going to show you a series of
images. After the series, I want
you to tell me the first thing that
comes into your mind. All right?

The room DARKENS. ROGER APPEARS ON THE WALL, an OFFICIAL
NASA PHOTO of astronaut Roger Torraway standing in front
of a phony outer space backdrop, his neck encircled by
the metal collar of his spacesuit. He looks fit. Young.

NASA FOOTAGE APPEARS. Roger inside the space shuttle,
floating in Zero-G, and giving an enthusiastic thumbs up.

The EARTH appears. A RUSSIAN CAPSULE floating above the
great blue ball. The image quickly replaced by the grim
face of a NEWS ANCHOR and the words "DISASTER IN SPACE!"

NEWS ANCHOR

The Russian craft has lost all
maneuvering capability, and the
cosmonauts could burn up in the
outer atmosphere if--

The room is bathed in STARS as more SPACE FOOTAGE plays.
Roger watches AN ASTRONAUT FLOAT TOWARD THE WOUNDED SHIP.

FUZZIER FOOTAGE now of the astronaut making contact with
the damaged craft, almost sliding past the surface before
grabbing hold with a large HOOK. Hanging on by one arm.
His legs floating out over the Earth spiraling far below.

NASA footage from the INTERIOR OF THE SPACE SHUTTLE takes

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its place. DELIRIOUSLY HAPPY COSMONAUTS slapping Roger on the back as they all float in front of the TV camera.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

...in the most daring space rescue in history, Roger Torraway has....

NEWS FOOTAGE of Roger waving to CROWDS. MORE FOOTAGE of Dorrie stepping out her front door to rushing REPORTERS.

The final image shows the NASA publicity photo of Roger seen earlier. But now ON THE COVER OF TIME. The image is on all four walls and the ceiling, and PROJECTED OVER TODAY'S ROGER sitting calmly in the Psychiatrist's chair.

The room immediately BRIGHTENS. The LENS RETRACTS. The Psychiatrist clasps his hands on top of the desk. Waits.

PSYCHIATRIST

The first word that pops to mind?

CUT TO:

Dorrie paces now in the confined space behind her chair.

DORRIE

You should have known Roger years ago. He used to drag me outside. Every night, like a kid. We'd go out and look up at the stars.

(short pause)

He'd try to tell me what they looked like when you were up there --with them--and not down here.

Dorrie stops pacing. Grinds her cigarette in an ASHTRAY.

DORRIE

Of course, that was before you all decided Roger was too big a hero to risk sending up on any more space missions. Now we never....

Dorrie trails off. As if she refuses to give any more. She crosses her arms in front of her chest. Just waits.

CUT TO:

For a moment Roger almost lets his expression slip. But it never quite does, and his personable smile takes over:

ROGER

Two words come to mind: "ancient history."

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PSYCHIATRIST

Colonel, you know just what I want you to say, don't you?

ROGER

What you want me to say? I'm sure I don't know what you mean.

PSYCHIATRIST

I see. Are you feeling violent or unstable this evening?

ROGER

Well I wasn't until I came in here.

Roger and the Psychiatrist immediately engage in a mutual FORCED CHUCKLE lasting so long it's almost uncomfortable. It stops ABRUPTLY. The Psychiatrist opens a manila FILE:

PSYCHIATRIST

Of course in your case, sir, this screening is a formality. You've had quarterly checks for the last twelve years, and profiled within a normal range every time. Let me ask: Do you feel excited about meeting the President?

CUT TO:

Dorrie frowns. Watching her smiling Psychiatrist stand.

PSYCHIATRIST

Thank you. You're clear to go on.

DORRIE

You knew I was cheating on Roger, didn't you? Am I being followed?

PSYCHIATRIST

Mrs. Torraway, I'm afraid if you begin to show signs of paranoia, I'll have to detain you here for a few more questions.

Dorrie hesitates. Then turns on her heels, and leaves.

CUT TO:

Roger finally stands and looks down at his Psychiatrist.

ROGER

Do I feel excited about meeting the President?

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Long pause. Roger seems to be considering the question.

ROGER

No. Not particularly.

INT--EXCESSIVELY DECORATED BALLROOM--DAY

A door opens. ROGER enters a ballroom filled with WELL-DRESSED GUESTS and, a moment later, a second door opens as DORRIE steps out. They move close and scan the room.

DORRIE

(sarcastically)

Well. I'm sure in the mood for a good time now.

A WAITER approaches with a TRAY OF DRINKS. Roger takes two glasses; and the Waiter walks off. Roger hands one to Dorrie. She takes a quick sip...immediately making a face with a muffled UGH. Looking for a place to put it.

ROGER

That waiter was secret service, hon. They put something in the drinks. To calm you down. If you don't drink it all, they'll place an armed guard behind you the entire evening.

Dorrie looks disgusted. Stares into her glass a moment. In unison, they down the drinks, frowning with the taste.

MALE VOICE

Ladies and gentlemen...

A reserved PRESIDENTIAL AIDE steps onto a small platform:

AIDE (cont'd)

...the President of the United States.

CUT TO:

PRESIDENT FITZ-JAMES DESHATINE smiles and nods his way around a large circle formed by the Well-Dressed Ballroom Guests. Shaking every single hand as if it is his last.

Roger and Dorrie wait within the circle, staring straight ahead, like they're waiting for a bus. After a moment, FATHER DONALD KAYMAN appears in the background, wearing a cassock in light of the occasion. He seems to be looking for someone. Spotting Roger and Dorrie, the Priest steps up with a quiet AHM. Roger and Dorrie turn. Make room.

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KAYMAN

(sounding like a priest)

Bless you, my children.

ROGER

(with good humor)

Oh give it a rest, huh?

DORRIE

Shhhhh. Here he comes.

The President stops in front of Kayman. Looks him in the eye. The Priest stiffens. The Presidential Aide offers:

AIDE

This is Father Donald Kayman, sir,
our specialist in the planet Mars.

President Deshatine looks at Kayman as if he's impressed.

DESHATINE

I'd like to say that I'm impressed
as all hell, Father, if you'll par-
don the reference.

KAYMAN

I'll clear it with the Almighty,
Mr. President.

DESHATINE

When you step on Mars, you'll be
bigger than the Pope. Are you
ready to spread The Holy Word to
the rest of the solar system?

KAYMAN

I am only one humble servant, sir.

DESHATINE

Hmmm. Well, that makes two of us.

They shake. The President moves on. Takes Roger's hand.

DESHATINE

Colonel. We've met before, after
your fine job with those Russians.
That must have been ten years ago,
when I was chairman of the Senate
committee. My word...has it been
that long since your last mission?

ROGER

(ignoring the question)

It's good to see you again, sir.

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The President releases his hand. Looks over at Dorrie.

DESHATINE

Mrs. Torraway, I hope they didn't make you soak your fingernails before you came in.

Dorrie's face animates as the President takes her hand.

DORRIE

They certainly did, Mr. President.

DESHATINE

Well, they just want to make sure you're not wearing a bio-chemical poison to scratch me with when we shake hands, my dear.

The President and Dorrie lean closer, and GIGGLE. As if that was funny. He smoothly segues into a "speech" mode:

DESHATINE

They tell me it's necessary. As long as there are wackos running around. And as long as the enemies of democracy are what they are--and we're the open trusting people we are.

Dorrie watches the President move on. A bit awestruck.

DORRIE

Wow. He's so...presidential!

Roger looks amused by her reaction. About to respond when a hand falls onto his shoulder, and DR. BRADLEY nods a Hello. He's a good-looking young scientist. Squeezing into line beside Dorrie. He nods a Hi at Father Kayman.

CAMERA'S P.O.V. All four in view. Father Kayman leaning close and whispering something to Roger. Roger nodding. Whispering something back. Dorrie just standing there staring straight ahead. Next to her, Bradley is doing the same thing. Just staring straight ahead. There is something here: Something in the way Dorrie and Bradley are determined not to acknowledge one another's presence.

CAMERA MOVES, pulls back. Bradley looking all around, casually. Everywhere but at Dorrie. And Dorrie looking all around. Casually. So casual, it's almost painful. Camera pulls back to reveal more and more of the Other Guests, MUTED WHISPERS ON TOP OF WHISPERS, a cacophony of excited mutterings. Dorrie and Dr. Bradley seem to be the only ones in line not whispering about the President.

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CUT TO:

The President steps to a podium. Takes a dramatic pause.

DESHATINE

I don't have to tell any of you what the "Man Plus" project means to the free world. There's Mars up there: The only piece of real estate around worth having, apart from the one we're all living on right now. By the end of the decade, Mars is going to belong to someone--and I want that someone to be us. You folks are the ones who are going to make it happen, because you're going to give us the man who will live on Mars. I want to thank you, in the name of every free citizen of our great land, for making a dream possible.

Pause. Deshatine looks down a bit. As if self-effacing.

DESHATINE

I am no John F. Kennedy. No sir. But I know that Mars represents a dream. A dream for the future of America, and for all humankind.

The President looks up to meet the eyes of his audience:

DESHATINE

Humanity will seek its destiny in outer space. Our next generation will find their spirits stirred not by war--but by a new frontier. This Mars mission does not signal the end of life on Earth, but the beginning of a future where every man, woman, and child are limited only by what they can dream!

The speech is delivered well. There is no sound in the ballroom as the ECHO of his voice fades. Everyone stares up at the podium, as if witness to a great moment. After a satisfactory pause the President looks off to the side.

DESHATINE

Dr. Bradley? If you would....

Everyone turns as Dr. Bradley steps onto a much smaller elevation in front of a SCREEN. He takes a REMOTE and nods respectfully at the President. Looking a bit stiff.

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BRADLEY

A man on Mars would die from lack of air, but his death would not be from strangulation. He wouldn't live long enough to strangle. In the ten-milli-bar pressure of the surface of Mars, his blood would boil, and he would die in agony of something similar to "the bends."

His delivery improves as he gets immersed in his topic:

BRADLEY (cont'd)

If he survived that, he would die from a lack of air to breathe. If he survived that, from exposure to solar radiation. If he survived that, from the extremes of Martian temperature. And, if he survived that, he would die a slow death from thirst and from hunger.

Bradley KLIKS the remote and, behind him, a series of SCHEMATICS AND DIAGRAMS appear. Of METALLIC LIMBS. What would seem to be ARTIFICIAL ORGANS. Plastics and pumps.

BRADLEY

If there is no air on Mars, then we simply need to take the lungs out of human beings, and replace them with new micro-miniaturized oxygen-regeneration cat-cracking systems. If human blood would boil, then we eliminate the blood.

Father Kayman listens. With a slightly disturbed look.

BRADLEY (O.S.)

Build arms and legs serviced by motors instead of muscles...

Next to Kayman is Roger. His face betrays no expression.

BRADLEY (O.S.)

...and reserve a supply of blood only for the brain. If all human musculature is replaced...

Dorrie is staring at Bradley, most intently; but from her expression she doesn't seem to be listening to the words.

BRADLEY (O.S.)

...then food requirements drop, and water is no longer necessary.

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Bradley KLIKS a new set of sketches for ARTIFICIAL SKIN and detailed schematics for strange ARTIFICIAL EYEBALLS.

BRADLEY

We clothe the body in artificial skin to protect it from the solar radiation. And replace the eyes with impervious mechanical structures.

Bradley hits the remote, and the images FADE. He stares out over the assembly. Looking moved by his recitation:

BRADLEY

If one does all of these things to a human being, what's left is not precisely a human being. It is a man plus large elements of hardware.

President Deshatine scans the crowd. Subdued. Serious.

DESHATINE

We lost a good man last week. A brave man. William G. Hartnett. Major Hartnett to some. "Willy" to others. A friend to all who give their lives to the conquest of space. His courage will take this program to Mars and beyond.

The President seems to stand tall suddenly. To perk up.

DESHATINE

But we're not here for eulogies.

CAMERA MOVES, pans the Well-Dressed Guests. Astronauts. Technicians. Scientists. Bureaucrats. Male and female.

DESHATINE (O.S.)

We're here to announce the next candidate for the Man Plus Project. He's already risked his life for his country. And, God love him, wants to do it again.

Some heads are turning, asking muted questions, receiving only SHRUGS and SHAKING HEADS in response. In the middle of the crowd stands Roger, Dorrie, and Father Kayman. Kayman and Dorrie look as much in the dark as everyone else does. Roger stares ahead. Without much expression.

DESHATINE

I'm proud to simply say his name.

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Roger displays no expression. Dorrie's face moves from attentive to blank to confused to stunned in seconds, as:

DESHATINE (O.S.)

COLONEL ROGER TORRAWAY.

The Well-Dressed Guests in the ballroom all turn to look at Roger. Father Kayman's mouth is hanging open. Dorrie turns just a bit--and so does Bradley--and for a moment they catch each other's eye. The President smiles wide.

Roger and Dorrie turn to face one another. They step into each other's arms. The crowd shuffles back and away to give them room. Roger and Dorrie move in for a kiss:

DORRIE

(thru a strained smile)

You might have told your wife.

Roger looks into her eyes. Really deeply into her eyes.

ROGER

Are you really that surprised?

Dorrie looks up at him...and simply shakes her head. No.

Roger and Dorrie kiss clumsily, and then embrace. Dorrie burying most of her face into his shoulder. Roger holds her tight as he looks out over the assembly. He smiles.

The President of the United States starts CLAPPING with fury. The Presidential Aide CLAPS, looking around, as if giving a silent command to clap. The grim Waiters who are really Secret Service begin CLAPPING, with gusto, though their expressions remain grim. And, slowly, the Well-Dressed Guests begin to CLAP. They look generally dazed. As if they are not sure what exact expression to wear. Father Kayman begins to CLAP, his face giving away his conflicting emotions. But soon everyone is CLAPPING.

Roger stares past Dorrie's head resting on his shoulder. He loses his smile for a moment, until it comes back even wider. The ballroom drowning in the sound of CLAPPING.

INT--THE MARS-NORMAL TANK--DAY

ROGER stands in street clothes on the red surface of Mars staring at the distant horizon depicted on the wall. As if lost in thought. That familiar red jagged outcropping rises above him. Roger is startled as he hears a THUNK.

He turns to see a MAINTENANCE MAN in a jumpsuit drop his EQUIPMENT into the fake red dust. Backing out toward the

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open airlock revealing the HALLWAY beyond. The Man looks like he's seen a ghost, almost stumbling as he backs out:

MAINTENANCE MAN

E-excuse me. I'm sorry.

Roger opens his mouth and begins to gesture, as if to say to him that he doesn't have to go...but he never says it. Just watches the nervous Man back clumsily from the room.

INT--SMALL SCREENING ROOM--DAY

ROGER sits in a makeshift theater. It is DARK. The room bathed in a GLOW. There is no sound, but whatever Roger is watching is THROWING CRAZED SHADOWS ACROSS THE WALLS.

The door opens a crack. FATHER KAYMAN sees Roger and steps inside, quietly moving to take a seat a bit behind him. Roger doesn't turn to see who's there. Kayman watches for just a moment, but doesn't seem interested with the images on the screen. Staring mostly at Roger.

KAYMAN

(with forced casualness)

What are you watching?

Roger doesn't turn. Just frowns a bit. Doesn't respond.

KAYMAN

Looks like tapes of Willy working out in the Mars tank.

Long pause. Roger and Kayman stare straight ahead at the screen. FURIOUS SHADOWS DANCE ACROSS THEM AND THE WALLS.

KAYMAN

You're the perfect candidate, you know that, don't you? You, Roger, are just what they're looking for.

No response. Kayman stares at the back of Roger's head.

KAYMAN

Angry. Desperate. Reckless. I daresay, it's the perfect resume. Well. You always said you'd do anything to get back into space--

ROGER

(interrupting)

"Roger, don't do it." It's four simple words, if that's what you came here to say, Don.

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Kayman starts to speak but stops himself. Looking almost guilty. He turns to the screen. There is a long pause.

ROGER

You don't know what it's like to be up there, with the stars, and then come back down here.

KAYMAN

No, I don't know what it's like. Maybe when I do I'll understand why the rest of your life seems to hold such little joy for you.

Long pause. They watch. FRENZIED SHADOWS ON THE WALLS.

KAYMAN

This morning the Asians launched their Mars lander into orbit. I hear it's performing beyond even their expectations.

ROGER

I know.

KAYMAN

Word is our timetable is moving up. If true, you'll be hitting the operating table seven weeks sooner than expected.

ROGER

I know.

Short pause. For the first time, Roger turns toward him.

ROGER

That what you wanted to tell me?

KAYMAN

I can't find Bradley. He hasn't heard the news--and no one seems to know where he is.

ROGER

I'll find him for you. There's no reason for me to stay around here doing nothing. Besides...

Roger stands up. But he doesn't take his eyes from those images on the screen. THE SHADOWS PLAY ACROSS HIS FACE.

ROGER (cont'd)

I think I make people nervous.

INT--STERILE COMPLEX CORRIDOR--DAY

ROGER steps to a door marked "ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS." He KNOCKS. Moments pass. Nothing happens. Roger KNOCKS louder. The door doesn't move but a SPY-HOLE slides open wide enough for one EYEBALL to peek out and all around.

ROGER

It's Colonel Torraway. Open up.

The spy-hole slides shut. Roger waits. Nothing happens. He raises his fist again to knock when there is a KLIK. The door opens. The GRIM MAN who answers looks like FBI.

Beyond him is an OFFICE filled with ROLLTOP DESKS. At each desk sit MORE MEN AND WOMEN WHO LOOK LIKE FBI. All of the desks have their tops rolled down, concealing the contents. Everyone in the room just sitting there at closed desks staring blankly at the door. And at Roger.

The Grim Man who answered the door does not say a word.

ROGER

I need to locate Dr. Bradley.

The Grim Man does not respond. Doesn't even move. Just stands in the doorway. Roger waits a moment. Then takes one step closer so that their faces are only inches away.

ROGER

(calm and yet forceful)

Look. I know you people watch us. And I know that you know where Dr. Bradley is. So why not be a good whatever the hell you are and te--

A GRIM WOMAN appears in the door. She is matter-of-fact:

GRIM WOMAN

Colonel. You might try the Chero Strip Hotel. Dr. Bradley does entertain there, on occasion; often during the after lunch hour. You might ask for him under the name Beckwith. But I strongly suggest that you telephone. And it might be best if you allow us to--

ROGER

(interrupting)

No, thanks. I'll just go myself.

Roger starts to go. But hesitates as the Grim Man in the door drops his concrete facade, looking almost plaintive.

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GRIM MAN

Colonel. I strongly suggest that
you let us handle this ourselves.

Roger gives them a quizzical look. And goes on his way.

The Grim Man and Grim Woman stand in the doorway a moment longer. Watching Roger go. They share an ominous look. Stepping back finally and closing that nondescript door with the little sign reading "ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS."

EXT--AUTOMOTIVE PARKING LOT--DAY

ROGER opens the door of his SPORTS CAR. Slips behind the wheel. The car looks normal, except for the DASHBOARD.

ROGER

Manual.

The ENGINE ROARS. Roger takes the wheel. SCREECHES off.

EXT--DRIVING DOWN THE STRIP--DAY

ROGER drives down the motel row of TONKA, OKLAHOMA. Very astronaut-friendly. Signs tell tourists: "HOME OF THE MARS ASTRONAUTS!" Restaurant logos incorporate ROCKETS.

INT--THE CHERO STRIP HOTEL--DAY

ROGER walks through the lobby of an economy hotel. Up to the desk. The CLERK looks up, but before he can speak:

ROGER

I'm looking for a Dr. Brad-- Um.
Beckwith.

The Clerk moves to the computer. Hits a few keys. Nods.

CLERK

Mr. and Mrs. Beckwith. Room 324.
(short pause)
I'm sorry, they just checked out.

EXT--THE HOTEL PARKING LOT--DAY

ROGER steps out and walks to his car. Gets in. He sits there, window open, his elbow resting on top of the door.

ROGER

Automatic.

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The ENGINE ROARS. Roger stares out the open driver's side window. He looks hesitant about something. Then:

ROGER

Home. Take me home.

The STEERING WHEEL TURNS BY ITSELF and the car pulls out of the lot. Roger stares at the passing street. Lost in thought. His elbow resting on the door. His other hand on his lap. A passenger behind his own steering wheel.

EXT--DRIVING PAST RESIDENCES--DAY

ROGER rides through a quiet Tonka neighborhood. Watches the houses pass. The BRAKE PEDAL DEPRESSES and the WHEEL TURNS as the car enters a driveway. The GARAGE OPENING.

INT--ROGER AND DORRIE'S HOME--DAY

ROGER enters a comfortable-looking home. Not furnished expensively, by any means, but with some style. He stops there in the kitchen. Listens. Doesn't hear anything.

ROGER

Dorrie? Hon, you home?

Nothing. Roger frowns. Then hears a MUFFLED CAR ENGINE. Roger steps through the kitchen to a hall with a window:

ROGER'S P.O.V. A CAR outside on the drive. Not quite as sporty as Roger's. The door opens. DORRIE getting out.

Roger steps quickly down the hall to the front door, like he's anxious to see her. He places his hand on the knob but then waits. As if to calm himself. Finally he opens the door: Dorrie is just on the other side holding out a KEY. Her eyebrows raised in surprise. Surprise? More like shock. She doesn't move an inch. Dorrie looks like a snapshot of herself frozen in the middle of the porch.

ROGER

I need to speak to you. I just came from the Chero Strip looking for Bradley.

Long pause. Dorrie doesn't move. As if frozen in place.

DORRIE

All right, Roger. Let me come in, and sit down.

Dorrie walks past Roger. Her expression still glassy and

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dazed. She stops to look at herself in a MIRROR on the wall. Dorrie rubs off a SMUDGE on her face. Fluffs her hair. She proceeds stiffly into the living room. Sits.

Dorrie lifts a CIGARETTE from the table, bringing it to her mouth. The cigarette stops before it gets there as Roger enters the room. Dorrie doesn't look over at him.

DORRIE

Please, go ahead.

Dorrie inserts the cigarette between her lips. Lifts a BUTANE FLAME toward the tip. The FLAME QUIVERS. Roger watches her try to light the cigarette, her hand shaking. Dorrie frowns. As if defeated. Pulls the cigarette from her mouth. She looks like she's preparing to enter hell.

ROGER

Our timetable has been moved up.

Dorrie stares at him. Not so much concerned, as puzzled.

ROGER

The Asians are further along than anyone thought. They have a working Mars lander in orbit, completing its first initial test run.

Long pause. The look on Dorrie's face is apprehensive. As if she was prepared for something much worse and still thinks it's coming. Roger waits for this all to sink in.

ROGER

Don't you understand, hon?

DORRIE

Yes. I mean, it's a little hard to take in--but didn't you start out by saying something about Brad, and the Chero Strip?

ROGER

No one can find him. You know Bradley. He's probably shackled up with one of the nurses.

Roger stops. Looks down at his watch. He considers it.

ROGER

I should be getting back myself. But I wanted to break this news to you. In person.

Dorrie watches him. Nods, slowly. As if still confused.

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DORRIE

Thank you, honey.

(short pause)

Wouldn't it have been easier to
phone?

ROGER

Phone...who?

DORRIE

Brad. At the hotel.

ROGER

Oh. Sure. I guess.

Roger's face slackens. As if something has just occurred to him but he's not quite sure if his perception is true.

ROGER (cont'd)

How did you know that Brad was
at the hotel?

Short pause. A glint of worry passes over Dorrie's face.

DORRIE

You told me you just came from
the Chero Strip. I assume you
meant the Chero Strip Hotel.

Roger digests this. It only takes a moment, and then he seems completely satisfied, nodding almost imperceptibly.

ROGER

(as if relieved)

I'm proud of you, hon. I tell
you our timetable has moved up
and you take it like a trooper.

Dorrie looks taken aback for a moment. As if she almost forgot. She steps closer and wraps her arms around him.

DORRIE

I've been an astronaut's wife a
long time, Roger. I'm prepared
for things like this.

ROGER

It'll be just like the old days.
The magazines calling for your
latest recipe.

DORRIE

And beauty tips. Don't forget
the beauty tips.

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ROGER

Oh of course. The reading public has to know how you keep yourself looking so good when your husband is on another planet.

Roger and Dorrie both LAUGH, and it appears to feel good.

ROGER

Hope I didn't scare you too much when you saw me at the door.

DORRIE

Don't be silly.

Dorrie looks a bit guilty at her response. Squeezes him.

DORRIE

I'll be so proud, Rog, when you land on Mars; and we'll have long happy lives when you come home.

Pause. Roger stares over her shoulder. Rather soberly.

ROGER

You know when I get back they'll have to re-build me. Give me a new body. I might not look the--

DORRIE

(interrupting)

You'll be the same man. Inside.

Dorrie pulls back. Squeezes his arm like a father might.

DORRIE

You better get going. Don't you worry about me. I'm all right.

Dorrie steps over to the table. Retrieves her cigarette. And this time she lights it. Takes a puff. Now that her back is turned toward Roger her expression becomes cold:

DORRIE

I don't want you racing around town looking for Brad. If he's up to something he shouldn't be then that's his own problem.

Dorrie turns around to face Roger. Her face warm again.

DORRIE (cont'd)

With everything that's coming up we have to start thinking of you!

INT--MAN PLUS SURGICAL CUBE--DAY

Floating. In some kind of fluid. ROGER suspended in the fluid. Unconscious. Limp hands floating on either side of his head. He looks intact. His head bobbing. Arms bobbing. Until his ARMS FLOAT JUST FAR ENOUGH AWAY--and at such an impossible angle--that it's clear they've been SEVERED. Another moment and ONE OF HIS LEGS FLOATS PAST.

INT--LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM--DAY

The CORONER stops reading. He looks down the long table:

CORONER

The truth is we're applying new pressures to the brain. Think of the human brain as a "radio." We're all attempting to stick TV signals into it. And the brain simply doesn't know what to do.

Short pause. The NASA AND MAN PLUS STAFF listen. Grim.

CORONER

The same thing that happened to William will, eventually, happen to Roger. Now, this is fact.

INT--MAN PLUS COMPLEX CHAPEL--DAY

A small dark chapel. Undeniably inviting if compared to the clinical corridor outside. FATHER KAYMAN steps in. Takes the second in a row of stubby pews. Kayman reaches into his pocket and removes his ROSARY. Begins to pray.

INT--THE WHITE HOUSE BEDROOM--DAY

PRESIDENT DESHATINE wakes up. Blinks. His AIDE offers:

AIDE

Time to get up, Mr. President.

DESHATINE

Before I fell asleep my approval rating was down 17%, with 61% of the public judging this administration poor to unsatisfactory.

AIDE

Yes, sir. I'm afraid it did not improve during your nap.

INT--MAN PLUS SURGICAL CUBE--DAY

ROGER floats just under the surface of his fluidized bed with CABLES stretching from his limbless body out of the water to ARTIFICIAL ARMS AND LEGS held by thick supports beside the bed. His SURGEONS resemble technicians now as they operate computer TERMINALS. The arms and legs are silver, like polished steel. Fingers and toes TWITCHING.

INT--BIOLOGICAL LABORATORY--DAY

Looking up from the P.O.V. of whatever is at the bottom of a SMALL CAGE: TWO BIO-RESEARCHERS in white lab coats and thick glasses staring down, as if they are entranced.

RESEARCHER 1

The initial shape is created with a polyester.

RESEARCHER 2

Then you inject human cartilage?

RESEARCHER 1

Yes. We surgically implant the ear or nose onto the mouse, which nourishes the new appendage the same way it nourishes the rest of its body. The cartilage grows to gradually replace the polyester.

RESEARCHER 2

Hmmm. So you end up with living tissue you can transplant onto a human subject. Intriguing.

RESEARCHER 1

We'll be able to construct a new nose, and a new set of ears, for Colonel Torraway when he returns from Mars, to his specifications.

Long pause. The Two Bio-Researchers stare into the cage.

RESEARCHER 2

(suddenly reflective)

How do you suppose people will react to this?

RESEARCHERS' P.O.V. Looking down into the cage: MICE running around the bottom. EACH WITH A HUMAN NOSE OR EAR ON THEIR BACKS. Perfect actual-size human noses and ears growing on the backs of furry mice scurrying around and over one another. Bizarre. Sickening. The mice scurry.

INT--CHERO STRIP HOTEL ROOM--DAY

DORRIE stares out the window. She smokes her cigarette.

BRADLEY (O.S.)

Hey. Come back to bed.

Dorrie makes a half-turn. Sees BRADLEY sitting up in the hotel bed. The blanket bunched around his waist reveals his chest. He pats the pillow beside him in invitation.

Dorrie turns back to the window. She stares out between the heavy drapes. Bright outside. Dorrie doesn't move.

INT--NEWS ANCHOR DESK--NEWSCAST

A NIGHTLY NEWS ANCHOR smiles for the public. Behind him a SCREEN displays the attentive FACE OF ROGER TORRAWAY.

ANCHOR

We are back with astronaut Roger Torraway. For those of you who may be joining us late, NASA has announced that Colonel Torraway will join the crew of the first manned flight to our neighboring red planet, Mars.

The Anchor swivels in his chair. On screen Roger smiles.

ANCHOR

It's been a while since you've been in space, Colonel. You must feel like a rookie again.

INT--NASA BROADCAST STUDIO--DAY

The room is LINED WITH SCREENS. TECHNICIANS work behind elaborate CONSOLES. A BALDING MIDDLE-AGED FAT MAN, who looks nothing like Roger, sits at the center of it all. His face is COVERED WITH SENSORS. Every movement of his face, from the broadest grin to the slightest raised eyebrow, mimicked by the ROGER FACE on the video screens.

FAT MAN

Let me tell you, Chet. You feel like a rookie every time you lift-off into space. There is nothing mundane about manned space flight.

CAMERA MOVES, down the row of screens. EACH PERFECTS THE MOVEMENT AND SOUND OF THE ROGER FACE until the last one

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down looks and sounds perfect: "LET ME TELL YOU, CHET."

INT--MAN PLUS SURGICAL CUBE--DAY

MASKED SURGEONS are gathered around the fluidized bed. One has his hands underneath the water. Coming up with an INTERNAL ORGAN. He drops it into the hands of another surgeon who, in turn, drops it into the hands of another. One of the surgeons holds out the ARTIFICIAL REPLACEMENT.

INT--BIOLOGICAL LABORATORY--DAY

RESEARCHERS' P.O.V. Looking into the cage: MICE running around and over one another. EACH WITH A HUMAN NOSE OR EAR ON THEIR BACKS. Perfect actual-size noses and ears.

The TWO BIO-RESEARCHERS in lab coats watch. One frowns.

RESEARCHER 1

Uh-oh.

RESEARCHER 2

What?

RESEARCHER 1

I had twelve mice this morning.

RESEARCHER 2

I count eleven.

RESEARCHER 1

Yes, I do, too.

RESEARCHER 2

Uh-oh.

INT--CORRIDOR NURSE STATION--DAY

An OVER-WORKED NURSE leans against a counter scribbling on a CLIPBOARD. She flips through the pages. Writes. FOOD CRUMBS on the countertop. The Nurse flips through the pages. Writes. Suddenly, a MOUSE WITH A HUMAN EAR ON ITS BACK scurries into view. Stop. Go. As if afraid of the giant nurse creature. It reaches the crumbs and begins to eat. Tiny hands and mouth working furiously. The Nurse frowns. As if she senses something. Looks up.

INT--BIOLOGICAL LABORATORY--DAY

The TWO BIO-RESEARCHERS stare down into the cage. At the

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sound of the HORRIFIED FEMALE SCREAM they both look up.

INT--A WHITE HOUSE CORRIDOR--DAY

PRESIDENT DESHATINE walks down a hallway wearing pajamas. He's holding his stomach. The PRESIDENTIAL AIDE follows.

DESHATINE

Uh. I don't feel good.

AIDE

Dr. Strassen did advise you not to eat any more cabbage.

DESHATINE

Shut-up. I don't want the cabbage lecture again.

The President stops, as if experiencing a wave of nausea.

AIDE

During your nap I'm afraid that Australia has declared war.

DESHATINE

What? With who?

AIDE

With itself, sir. The New New Australians have attacked the Old New Australians.

The nausea passes, and Deshatine continues down the hall.

DESHATINE

Our official position will be that this affair in Australia is a domestic matter, and not a national concern for the United States, blah blah blah.

AIDE

Very good, Mr. President.

DESHATINE

What's the latest from the NPA?

AIDE

"Anti-America" demonstrations are still going on in Shanghai, Saigon, Hiroshima, and a half-dozen other cities throughout the New People's Asia.

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DESHATINE

Anything else?

AIDE

An epidemic of small pox is out of control in Botswana. Welsh nationals have blown up Knights-bridge. With a plutonium bomb.

The President stops outside a door. He looks impatient.

AIDE (cont'd)

Would you like to hear about the Middle East, or Near East first?

DESHATINE

Neither. I'm going to the john.

Deshatine disappears through the door as his Aide waits.

AIDE

You may want to check the latest computer simulation.

INT--A WHITE HOUSE RESTROOM--DAY

PRESIDENT DESHATINE sits on the toilet in a small ornate restroom. Frowning. He reaches next to the toilet paper roll and PULLS OPEN THE COMPUTER SET INTO THE WALL. Deshatine searches the keyboard. Hits a key with a BLIP.

The SCREEN COMES ALIVE DISPLAYING A CHART with one BROAD BLACK LINE GROWING DIAGONALLY UPWARD toward a RED BAR that is ominously labeled: "OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES." From out in the corridor comes the Aide's MUFFLED VOICE:

AIDE (O.S.)

That's a composite of twenty-two trends and indices, ranging from the international credit balance to the frequency of harassment of American tourists abroad.

Deshatine looks nauseous. He just stares straight ahead.

AIDE (O.S.)

It is a statistical probability of world war. You might notice that we are rapidly approaching a "critical mass"; that is, if you put any faith in such things.

The President frowns as he pulls down on the toilet roll.

EXT--CHERO HOTEL PARKING LOT--DAY

BRADLEY walks from the hotel toward a SPORTS CAR. Opens the door and starts to slide in...when he sees something. On the hood of his car is a FROG. A tiny, everyday frog. Bradley stares at this frog. Like it's really something.

INT--MAN PLUS SURGICAL CUBE--DAY

MASKED SURGEONS huddle around Roger's fluidized bed. One holding a SCALPEL. A NURSE steps up and touches his arm:

NURSE

Word has come down from the Major. Colonel Torraway is to retain his face until just prior to lift-off.

The Surgeons exchange looks. One hands over the scalpel.

NURSE

The psych people think it'll help him to adjust.

CAMERA'S P.O.V. Looking down into the fluid: Floating just under the surface is ROGER. Hard to see through the thick swirling fluid. But METALLIC ARMS AND LEGS are visible; and an OPEN TORSO PACKED WITH ARTIFICIAL ORGANS. Though under the water, Roger is not wearing anything over his face. That breathing mask seen earlier is GONE.

INT--LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM--DAY

The long table of NASA OFFICIALS and MAN PLUS PERSONNEL. BRADLEY stands and CLEARS HIS THROAT. He hits a REMOTE: on the wall behind him, FOOTAGE OF A FROG begins to play.

BRADLEY

Ladies and gentlemen. Consider the frog.

It is an everyday frog. Not moving. Just sitting there.

BRADLEY

If an insect passes in front of a frog, the frog's eye will perceive that insect. Nerves will transmit the information to the frog's brain, and the brain will respond by ordering the frog to immediately consume the insect.

A FLY BUZZES into view, and the FROG IMMEDIATELY EATS IT.

INT--MAN PLUS SURGICAL CUBE--DAY

The fluidized bed drains out onto a flat surface. Murky fluid SLOSHING over the sides as ROGER emerges and slides across the platform coming to a stop. Below the neck his body is encased in what appear to be MINIATURE RED TILES.

CAMERA'S P.O.V. Looking up at the row of MASKED SURGEONS on either side staring down at Roger. Almost in unison, the Surgeons pull down their masks REVEALING THEIR FACES FOR THE FIRST TIME. Now, they look quite human. Like individuals. Each one lost in thought. Until suddenly:

SURGEON 1

(shaken by the notion)

Christ. If the public knew what we were doing to their hero....

The Surgeon trails off. As if the thought was too scary. The Others exchange a glance; and, almost in unison, the Surgeons pull their masks back up, covering their faces.

INT--LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM--DAY

BRADLEY gestures at the FROG. Just sitting there. Now a LEAF falls into view landing beside the motionless frog.

BRADLEY

But, if a leaf drops down beside the frog, we see that it doesn't eat the leaf. It's not that the frog decides not to eat the leaf. The frog simply never sees it.

The NASA AND MAN PLUS STAFF watch him. As if he's nuts.

BRADLEY

The signal from the frog's eye is dropped before it ever reaches the brain. The frog's brain never becomes aware of what the frog has just seen--because it doesn't need to be aware.

Bradley smiles. As if his point is delightfully obvious:

BRADLEY

It's simply irrelevant for a frog to know whether or not a leaf has dropped down in front of it.

Bradley hits the remote, and a SCHEMATIC FOR A BACKPACK COMPUTER replaces the frog. It looks as if this backpack

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would be integrated with Roger. A physical part of him.

BRADLEY

We cannot change the human brain. We're stuck with it. But we can influence what information reaches the brain. I propose that we use a computer to filter and regulate what Roger feels and sees.

FATHER KAYMAN is clearly disturbed by this. He sits up.

KAYMAN

You're suggesting that we route Roger's perceptions through this computer--before they reach his brain?

BRADLEY

Yes, that's what I'm suggesting.

Kayman seems offended. Looks around in search of someone who feels the same. Everyone else seems lost in thought.

KAYMAN

But would Roger still be Roger?
Would he even be human anymore?

Pause. Bradley looks almost dumbfounded by the question.

BRADLEY

What do you want me to say? I don't have the answers to those questions. I'm simply telling the panel what the next logical step is. This is our best hope of keeping Roger's brain from overloading while he's on Mars.

INT--CHERO STRIP HOTEL ROOM--DAY

DORRIE stands at the window. The heavy drapes are drawn. The room dark save for the thin band of sunlight sneaking between the curtains. Half of her face in the sun, half out. Dorrie takes a drag on her cigarette. She squeezes her eyes shut. And, when she opens them, TEARS run out.

INT--LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM--DAY

BRADLEY stands there. Waits. The NASA OFFICIALS and MAN PLUS PERSONNEL stare, solemnly, at the head of the table. The PROGRAM CO-ORDINATOR does not move for a long moment.

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CO-ORDINATOR

If we follow your proposal, Brad, what are the odds of Roger surviving his transformation?

BRADLEY

Odds? No worse than even money.

INT--MAN PLUS COMPLEX CHAPEL--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN steps in. Takes the second in the row of pews. He reaches into his pocket for his rosary. At the SOUND OF THE FALLING BEADS Kayman looks down. The rosary has snapped. Dozens of LOOSE BEADS scattering, coming to rest on the hard floor. ONE TINY GOLD CROSS among them.

INT--NEWS ANCHOR DESK--NEWSCAST

A strange FOREIGN FLAG appears as the NEWS ANCHOR begins:

ANCHOR

With the New People's Asia having formally announced their intention to land a manned crew on Mars, it would appear we are plunged into a space race, not dissimilar to last century's "race to the moon."

OLD BLACK-AND-WHITE footage from the "SPACE RACE" plays. Replaced by a photograph of MARS and a big QUESTION MARK.

ANCHOR (cont'd)

Some analysts are suggesting that it won't be much of a race, adding that neither the U.S. or the N.P.A. have much hope of lifting-off before their proposed fall deadline.

A window opens and a SIMULATION OF THE PLANETS EARTH AND MARS ROTATING AROUND THE SUN plays. As the two planets orbit--each at its own speed and distance from the sun--it is clear that at times Earth appears to approach Mars and the two seem "closer." A DOTTED LINE traces a path.

ANCHOR

The Earth and the planet Mars are properly aligned every 26 months. This alignment, utilizing the direction of the Earth's rotation to lessen the amount of fuel that is required for the lengthy journey, will end in September.

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Stock footage shows an ENORMOUS ROCKET UNDER PRODUCTION. Now the same rocket LIFTS-OFF. Not getting far before it EXPLODES IN A BALL OF FLAME. Replaced by the NASA LOGO.

ANCHOR (cont'd)

Tests on the Mars Ares rocket continue, with only varying degrees of success. Still, NASA officials insist they are ahead of schedule...

INT--MAN PLUS SURGICAL CUBE--DAY

ROGER is suspended above the floor inside a MAZE OF TUBES that seem to pass right through his body. The tubes lead to big TANKS that are filling with a kind of MILKY FLUID. Roger hangs limply inside the web of tubes. Unconscious.

ANCHOR (V.O.)

...and that all equipment will be functioning and ready in time for lift-off.

Suddenly Roger OPENS HIS EYES. Normal, human eyes. He stares ahead, blankly, as if not fully awake yet, when a SECOND INNER EYELID CLOSES. But it is not made of flesh. These eyelids are METALLIC and emerge from the sides of the eye. There is a WHIRRING as these new eyelids OPEN:

Roger looks out with LARGE TELESCOPIC LENSES where his human eyes used to be. The lids close again to WHIRRING. When they open, a THIRD SET OF EYES are visible. These eyes have an EERIE RED GLOW. The glow makes the tiles encasing his body illuminate with multiple shades of red.

BRADLEY stands with the NURSES. All looking up at Roger.

BRADLEY

Good morning, Roger. I want you to know you can plan on sleeping in a regular bed in a few days. The fluid draining from you is a temporary by-product of your new system. It will pass, I promise.

He pauses. Trying to determine whether Roger is alert.

BRADLEY

I don't want you to talk, not yet. But your speech center is hooked up to the speakers in the room so you should be able to communicate without actually moving your lips. Just "think" what you want to say.

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Long pause. Bradley and the Nurses wait. The SPEAKERS set into the corners of the room remain silent. Roger doesn't move an inch. But then a MECHANIZED VOICE says:

SPEAKER

Headache. In my chest.

Bradley and the Nurses wait. Listen for more. Finally:

SPEAKER

Inside of mouth itches.

BRADLEY

Your sensations won't make sense for a while; so don't be alarmed.

(short pause)

Any more "general" observations?
What are your emotions?

Nothing for a moment. Then Roger suddenly jerks. As if trying to get loose from the tubes. Bradley steps close.

BRADLEY

Easy there, Rog. Take it easy.

SPEAKER

Had bad dream.

Roger's expression is of a man waking from a dream. Not realizing yet that it was all just a dream; or, maybe, resolving himself to the fact that this dream was real:

SPEAKER

Not...a dream.

Roger pulls his arm out of place just enough to DISLODGE A CONNECTION as MILKY FLUID SPURTS from the crack. This seems to upset Roger even more. He jerks more of the tubes loose and MORE MILKY FLUID SPURTS ACROSS THE ROOM. One of the TANKS TUMBLES OVER SLOSHING FLUID ACROSS THE FLOOR, the Nurses scrambling out of the way of the tank.

Bradley slips on the wet floor and slides. Trying to get up and failing. Covered in milky fluid. He crawls to a COMPUTER TERMINAL and SLAMS his fist down onto the panel. Immediately the SQUIRTING FLUID SLOWS TO A WEAK TRICKLE.

Everyone watches. Roger struggles for a few more moments before going limp. Just hanging now from the cracked and damaged tubes. He opens his mouth, as if to speak, but MILKY FLUID SPILLS OVER HIS LIPS reducing it to a GURGLE.

CLOSE-UP OF ROGER. Those METALLIC EYELIDS CLOSE and with a WHIRRING Roger's HUMAN EYES RETURN. Warm, human eyes.

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Roger stares down at them groggily. And, when he finally speaks, his voice is fragile, and most definitely human:

ROGER

Dorrie?

INT--DORRIE'S CERAMICS SHOP--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN enters a cluttered little shop packed with ceramics and clay. He waits a moment. Then crosses to a curtain and peeks through to the WORKSHOP. DORRIE is in the process of closing the lid to an enormous oven. She looks up. Sees the Priest. Dorrie removes her HAND MITS and lifts the VISOR from her face. With a slight frown.

DORRIE

Let me guess, Father. You want me to visit my husband.

Kayman seems thrown off by her directness, and doesn't know what to say. Dorrie takes a seat at a small table; and, without an express invitation, Kayman does the same.

KAYMAN

Why don't you, Dorrie?

DORRIE

Don, what's the use? Roger is out cold. He wouldn't know if I was there or not.

KAYMAN

He's conscious now--for longer periods of time. And you know he has asked for you.

DORRIE

He's leaking some kind of fluid. Brad told me. And you know why I haven't seen him: because he asked me to stay away.

KAYMAN

Roger has no lungs. No heart. His skin has been peeled away, inch-by-inch. Men have been christened saints after being flayed alive. Roger at least deserves a visit from his wife.

DORRIE

Have you considered minding your own business?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dorrie reaches for a PACK OF CIGARETTES but Kayman places his hand over the box. Preventing her from getting one.

KAYMAN

I am aware of what Roger may have said to you before his operations began. And I know you didn't ask for any of this. But I also know that you're made of sterner stuff. Will you be able to handle seeing him? I think so.

DORRIE

Do you know what it's like, being married to a man like Roger?

KAYMAN

Pretty fine, I would guess. He's a good man.

DORRIE

He is. Sometimes, when we're in bed together, and I'm trying to sleep, I can hear Roger next to me. Not moving. Not getting up to go to the bathroom. Being so fucking considerate--

Dorrie stops herself before she loses control. Kayman looks surprised. He takes his hand from the cigarettes.

DORRIE

Did you know that Roger shaves the minute he gets up, so I won't see his stubble? Did you know he uses deodorant, three times a day? My husband treats me like I'm the Holy Virgin Mother herself, and has for the last twelve years.

(escalating in emotion)

Now you come in here and tell me I ought to go see him--when they're turning him into something ghastly and ludicrous? I know I'm making Roger miserable by not coming to see him. My god. Don't you think I know that?

Dorrie lights up a cigarette. Smokes. She calms down.

DORRIE

What you don't seem to understand is that my going to see him would make him feel even worse.

INT--SPACESUIT FITTING ROOM--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN wriggles into the upper-half of a SPACESUIT with the name "Kayman" stitched onto the front. It looks difficult. ASSISTANTS immediately drop the HELMET down over his head, SNAPPING the latches as they scurry about.

MISSION COMMANDER GODDARD is in his own suit next to the Priest. "Goddard" stitched on the front. He looks over:

GODDARD

Don't worry, Father. You just get in that suit, and I'll fly you all the way to Mars. Deal?

Kayman grimaces as he forces his hand into a GLOVE. He is about to respond when TWO MILITARY POLICEMEN step up.

MILITARY POLICE 1

Sir. You'll have to come with us.

Kayman looks confused. Then as angry as we've ever seen:

KAYMAN

I just got into this thing!

The Two Military Police stare at him. Their faces stone cold. Kayman seems to deflate as the Assistants scurry around him, unsnapping latches to a FSSSSSSSSSHHHHHHHHHH.

INT--LUXURIOUS PRIVATE JET--DAY

The TWO MILITARY POLICEMEN lead FATHER KAYMAN onto a jet and immediately exit back down the steps. Kayman looks around. This is one nice airplane. The CURTAIN spreads as the PRESIDENTIAL AIDE steps into the rear compartment.

AIDE

Please do make yourself at home, Father. The President will see you once we're airborne.

CUT TO:

Father Kayman sits in a comfortable-looking seat managing to look not at all comfortable. He keeps leaning forward and staring out the window, as if to see what he's flying over. Suddenly, the CURTAINS SLIDE OPEN BY THEMSELVES.

Kayman hesitates as if waiting for some word. None comes so he gets up. Steps into the next compartment. TABLES AS WELL AS CHAIRS here. At one of them sits PRESIDENT FITZ-JAMES DESHATINE staring blankly out his tiny window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DESHATINE

Thanks for letting me kidnap you,
Father. Sit down. Pour yourself
some coffee, if you like.

Kayman sits down, a bit stiff. Doesn't touch the coffee.

KAYMAN

We're just circling the air base,
aren't we, Mr. President?

DESHATINE

Yes. Just wanted to give us some
privacy while we chatted.

Long pause. The President still staring out the window.
Not moving. Kayman looks uncomfortable. Finally reaches
for the COFFEE on the table as the President turns with:

DESHATINE

That trampy little wife of his is
going to give our boy a hard time.

Kayman never does pour his coffee. He stiffens. Thinks.

KAYMAN

Sir?

DESHATINE

Dorrie Torraway is sleeping with
Dr. Bradley. I suppose that you
weren't aware of this.

KAYMAN

(surprised)
Uh...no. I--

DESHATINE

(interrupting)
Can you straighten her out, Don?

KAYMAN

I don't-- Dorrie has...problems.

DESHATINE

No, Dorrie has one problem: She
is screwing up our Mars project.

The President looks disappointed. Turns to the window.
Kayman watches him stare morosely at the clouds. Pause.

DESHATINE

Let me tell you, Father, what I've
been thinking lately.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The President turns toward the Priest. Looking as if the fate of the world is weighing down on his two shoulders.

DESHATINE

I've been thinking that Roger will be happier mourning over the death of his wife in a car accident than worrying about what she's doing, and who she's doing it with, while he's on a distant planet.

It takes Kayman a few moments to understand what it is exactly he's just heard. A look of horror on his face:

KAYMAN

Sir. Why would you tell me this?

DESHATINE

Because I want you as my partner in this particular matter.

KAYMAN

But what can I do? Pray?

DESHATINE

If prayer is all you can offer, then I want you to pray. Pray that Mrs. Torraway pulls herself together long enough to help her husband. Pray that Roger never finds out about her infidelity. And if that doesn't work...then you'd better start praying real hard, Father, for the two of us.

INT--A CLINICAL HOSPITAL ROOM--DAY

ROGER rests on a hospital bed. Under crisp new sheets. He watches the ceiling. There is a RIIIIING. Roger turns toward the bedside table and stares at the TELEPHONE, as if surprised. It RIIIIIIINGS again. Roger picks it up:

ROGER

Hel-lo?

INT--ROGER AND DORRIE'S HOME--DAY

DORRIE holds a phone at her ear. Looks off to the side.

DORRIE

Oh, sweetie. It's so nice to hear your voice again. You sound great.

INT--A CLINICAL HOSPITAL ROOM--DAY

ROGER holds the phone at his ear. Looking a bit shaken.

DORRIE (V.O.)

Roger. I'm painting your den. I was going to paint it in reds and oranges, but then I figured you'd probably be sick of Mars colors.

Roger smiles a little. The door to his room swings open and a GRIM-LOOKING NURSE marches in. Roger watches her.

ROGER

That's great, honey. Just great.

The Grim Nurse unceremoniously pulls back the bed sheet. Roger has a hospital gown on, but his legs are exposed. Encased in those red tiles. Roger's eyes widen as the Nurse pulls out a tiny HAMMER AND CHISEL from her pocket. Roger watches her move the tip of the chisel to his thigh and begin to hammer away with a TONK TONK TONK TONK TONK.

DORRIE (V.O.)

I want to see you, Roger. I'm not afraid. That's why I called. Not to tell you about the den. I want to come see you, okay?

The Grim Nurse finally CHIPS OFF A TILE. Drops it into a BAG. Roger watches her like he's watching a horror film.

DORRIE (V.O.)

Roger? When can I come?

Roger looks...uncertain. Suddenly he hangs up the phone.

INT--ROGER AND DORRIE'S HOME--DAY

DORRIE looks about to cry. Hangs up the receiver. She stares down at it for a moment. Then her eyes move over:

DORRIE

He hung up. Are you satisfied?

FATHER KAYMAN looks just as unhappy against the far wall. Doesn't say anything. A few uncomfortable moments pass.

DORRIE

I had a telephone call from the President of the United States last night telling me how proud he is I was holding up so well.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAYMAN

Oh. That was considerate of him.

DORRIE

Yes. Then he told me not to fuck anyone until my husband lifts-off into space. This house is bugged. And I'm being followed, aren't I?

Kayman does not respond. And Dorrie just gets angrier:

DORRIE

I'm being followed. Aren't I?

KAYMAN

I don't know. Probably. Yes.

Again Dorrie looks about to cry. Turning away from him.

DORRIE

Can I just be left alone now?

Father Kayman watches her, with great sympathy. He nods.

KAYMAN

I hope so.

INT--A CLINICAL HOSPITAL ROOM--DAY

ROGER lies there. His arm outstretched. His hand still resting on the telephone after hanging it up. He stares at the ceiling. There is a quick KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK and the door immediately flies open. SULIE CARPENTER charges in wearing a nurse's uniform that fits her rather well. She is striking: Dark hair and green eyes. HAIR AND EYES JUST LIKE DORRIE'S. Sulie stops beside the bed, and places a hand on Roger's forehead. He looks surprised.

SULIE

You'd think I'd know better than feeling for a fever in your case, sir. I guess I'm an old-fashioned girl. Name's Sulie Carpenter.

Sulie talks in a charming Texas twang. Placing her hand on her hip, and flashing Roger with her blinding smile:

SULIE

It's Susan Lee, really, but Sulie is what they call me. Can I bring you anything, Colonel? You've got the whole world at your command, sir. Including me!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Is Roger listening? Hard to say. He's searching every inch of her face, clearly seeing the resemblance. Sulie checks the CHART at the foot of the bed, looking over the top of the chart at Roger, like a teenager. She GIGGLES.

SULIE

I'm embarrassed to say I used to have your picture on my wall back when you rescued those Russians.

(as if humiliated)

Oh...I can't believe I said that.

ROGER

It's okay. Don't be embarrassed.

Sulie covers her face but can't help peeking over at him.

SULIE

You would not believe the active role you've played in some of my fantasies, Colonel Torraway, sir!

Roger looks a little shell-shocked. But then he LAUGHS. And a relieved Sulie does too. She lowers her voice now:

SULIE

Colonel. Can I sneak a camera in here later and take your picture? Something to show my future grandchildren when they ask about you?

ROGER

(a bit delighted)

Well, sure, but you know if they catch you you'll be in hot water.

The door swings open--and SECRET SERVICE PERSONNEL march in holding ELECTRONIC SCANNING DEVICES. Immediately they circle the room, scanning the walls and furniture. Roger looks at Sulie, who shrugs like she doesn't know a thing.

SULIE

(almost a whisper)

Guess I'll see you later.

Sulie turns, and exits. Roger watches the Secret Service Personnel moving around the hospital room. Faces stone. They reach the bed. Scanning both it and Roger's body.

ROGER

Something tells me I'm getting a visit from the President.

The Secret Service Personnel stop, and stare at Roger for

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

a moment, as if only now realizing Roger is there on the bed. Without a word, they turn and continue their work.

EXT--ROGER AND DORRIE'S HOME--DAY

BRADLEY crouches in BUSHES ACROSS THE STREET. Watching FATHER KAYMAN get into his car. After a moment, Kayman drives away. Bradley watches the car round the corner, finally out of sight. The street is free of parked cars. There are no pedestrians. Nothing in either direction. Bradley waits. Looks both ways. Finally he emerges from the bushes and starts across the street. Not running but not wanting to linger, either. He turns at the SCREECH:

A DARK SEDAN rounds the corner and, a moment later, a DARK VAN rounds the other. Both vehicles racing down the street, their DARKENED WINDOWS quite ominous, stopping in front of Roger and Dorrie's home, trapping the helpless Bradley between them, stuck in the middle of the street. The van door immediately slides open and TWO LARGE GRIM MEN IN SUITS emerge. They take Bradley by the arms and pull him inside. Bradley goes limp, like a big rag doll.

The vehicles immediately drive off in opposite directions and, in just a moment, the street is deserted once again.

INT--A CLINICAL HOSPITAL ROOM--DAY

ROGER watches the SECRET SERVICE PERSONNEL complete their rounds, and immediately exit. Roger watches the door for a moment; but when nothing happens he lets his head fall back onto his pillow. And that's when he hears the KLIK:

PRESIDENT DESHATINE is standing outside in the hall, with his heading sticking through the door. Smiling at Roger.

DESHATINE

Mind if I come in, son?

Before Roger can answer the President steps right inside, holding up the PACKAGE in his hand so that Roger can see:

DESHATINE

Talked to Dorrie the other day. I told her I was planning to pay you a visit, and she asked me to bring this to you. Sweet, sweet woman.

Deshatine lays it on the table. Pulls up a chair. Sits.

DESHATINE

How are you feeling, Rog?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROGER

Uh. Fine, sir. Okay.

The President scoots his chair even closer. Leans over:

DESHATINE

I can be honest with you, Colonel. The Asians are close; but I think we still have the edge on them if we can make that September launch date. If not, we'll have to wait another 26 months and by then the Asians will be ready too and Mars will be up for grabs. We have to get you on Mars now, and you have to function when you get there.

The President gently lays a hand on Roger's arm. Roger looks at the hand a moment. Then back at the President.

DESHATINE

Do you understand me, in your gut, son? Do you really feel that you are that one man in a generation --maybe two--who finds himself in a position so vital to the future of the human race that nothing in his life comes close to measuring up in importance?

The President grabs a PITCHER OF WATER. Pours a glass. He brings it toward his lips; but the glass stops on its way there as Deshatine instead starts gesturing with it:

DESHATINE

Do you know what history will say about me? "Fitz-James Deshatine, 54th President--during his tenure the human race founded its first colony on another world." That's all I'll get, if that much. That is what posterity will remember. Not the petty daily bullshit, not the interchangeable little wars I can't even keep straight myself.

(short pause)

Human destiny, my boy. That's my interest here, not keeping things running along the same old status quo. Mars will change the course of history. The universe is just waiting for us. And you, Roger, are the one who can give me this. You can give humanity its future.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The President never does take a drink of water. Stares at the glass in his hand like he forgot it was there, and lays it back on the table. He looks at Roger and frowns.

DESHATINE

I know what you're thinking, Rog. Here's the old man, politician to the end, he'd say anything to get what he wants. He'll tell me I'm the next Jesus Christ. Right?

ROGER

Well. Maybe a little. Yes, sir.

Deshatine squeezes Roger's arm one last time. Stands up.

DESHATINE

I'll tell you what, Colonel. Go ahead and subtract 99% of what I just said as crap. The one percent that's left still makes you the most important person in the world right now.

The President moves to the door. Opens it. Hesitates.

DESHATINE

If you need anything, you call me, night or day--I'll make sure they put you through. So long.

The President exits. Roger watches the door swing shut.

INT--STERILE COMPLEX CORRIDOR--DAY

STUNNED NURSES AND DOCTORS stare with open mouths as the PRESIDENT marches down the corridor surrounded by SECRET SERVICE AGENTS. The PRESIDENTIAL AIDE hands him a PHONE:

AIDE

I dialed for you, Mr. President.

Deshatine looks irritated. Brings the phone to his ear.

INT--INSIDE THE BACK OF A VAN--DAY

BRADLEY sits between TWO LARGE GRIM MEN. TWO MORE GRIM MEN across from him. RING. One man picks up the PHONE. He doesn't answer hello. Just offers it to Bradley with:

GRIM MAN 1

It's for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bradley brings the receiver to his ear, like he's holding a gun to his head. It takes him a moment to finally ask:

BRADLEY

H-hello?

INT--A CLINICAL HOSPITAL ROOM--DAY

The door opens again, and SULIE steps back inside, with a PICTURE FRAME in her hand. She holds it out so ROGER can see the AUTOGRAPHED PHOTO OF THE PRESIDENT. Sulie reads:

SULIE

"For Rog, from his pal, President
Fitz-James Deshatine."

(short pause)

Do you want this, Colonel?

ROGER

Why not. Can you hang it up?

Sulie turns it over revealing a METALLIC GADGET on back.

SULIE

All presidential photos come with
this self-hanging gizmo. See?

Sulie presses the frame to an empty spot on the wall, and it sticks. Then she steps back to the door and opens it. Looks up and down the hall, checking to see if the coast is clear. Sulie turns. Pulls a CAMERA from her pocket.

She hurriedly sets the camera on a tabletop at the foot of the bed. Fumbling with the timer. Nervous. Like a little girl might get nervous. GIGGLING. The TICKING OF THE TIMER seems to surprise her, and her expression turns suddenly frantic. Sulie runs around the side of the bed:

SULIE

Hurry up and smile, Colonel!

Sulie plants a kiss on a surprised Roger's cheek in time for the bright FLASH. She quickly retrieves the camera and sticks it back into her uniform. Looking relieved.

ROGER

Sulie. You can call me "Roger."

Sulie stares at Roger. As if she is genuinely touched.

SULIE

I better go now...Roger. But I'll
check on you in the morning, okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sulie opens the door. Looks back one last time, almost shyly, and exits. Roger just sits there for a moment. Then turns to that package the President brought him. He takes the box and lifts the lid. Inside is a CERAMIC CUP decorated with a cornucopia of fruits. Roger appears to like it, opening the card: "I LOVE YOU," signed, *Danie*.

Roger lets his head fall onto his pillow. And he smiles.

INT--THRU STERILE CORRIDORS--MONTAGE

ROGER steps from his hospital room. His expression is so tentative this must be his first time, holding on to his METAL WALKER like a life preserver. TWO MALE NURSES walk behind him with SULIE at his side mouthing encouragement.

Roger leaves his room again and again. A little surer each time. And now, with a CANE in place of the walker. Then holding on only to Sulie for support. Finally Roger walks down the hall UNAIDED as the NURSES CLAP AND CHEER.

INT--PHYSICAL TRAINING FACILITY--DAY

ROGER is led by a DOCTOR into a gym. Inside is a FORMER PARAPLEGIC wearing gym shorts that reveal his ARTIFICIAL LEGS. He offers Roger a friendly smile and a handshake.

DOCTOR

Roger, meet Charlie. Charlie is a former paraplegic whose artificial legs are precursors of your own.

Roger takes his hand. They look over each other's legs.

INT--THE TRAINING FACILITY--MONTAGE

ROGER and the FORMER PARAPLEGIC work out on TREADMILLS. Then run TRACK. The Former Paraplegic obviously faster and more co-ordinated. Egging the frustrated Roger on. They JUMP ROPE. Perform BALLETT MOVES as SULIE watches with a grin. Slowly, Roger gets FASTER ON THE JUMP ROPE. Finally he races past the Former Paraplegic, who seems to be almost standing still in comparison...and who ends up stopping and just watching Roger speed around the track.

INT--OPTICAL EXAMINATION ROOM--DAY

ROGER is led by a DOCTOR into an eye examination facility where a FORMER BLIND MAN immediately turns revealing his eye sockets, and his PAIR OF PRIMITIVE ARTIFICIAL LENSES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOCTOR

This is Frederick, Roger. Once upon a time he was blind.

Beneath his mechanical eyes, the Former Blind Man smiles.

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP of Roger's INNER METALLIC EYELIDS closing over his human eyes. There is a WHIRRING and, when they open, Roger is looking out with his set of RED GLOWING LENSES.

SULIE walks in. She sees Roger and the Former Blind Man on the far side of the room. She stops. About to speak.

ROGER'S P.O.V. Sulie standing there looking good in her white nurse's uniform. Suddenly the UNIFORM FADES and Sulie is briefly seen NAKED before her skin fades too revealing the RED MUSCLE AND VEINS underneath. A moment later she is just a HUMAN SKELETON standing in front of an UNFINISHED SECTION OF WALL exposing the world OUTSIDE.

Roger jerks. Shocked. Like he hadn't expected that. He closes his eyes and, when he opens them, they are HUMAN again. The Former Blind Man GUFFAWS wildly in amusement.

Sulie frowns like she doesn't get it. Hands on her hips:

SULIE

What?

INT--MARS NORMAL TANK--DAY

ROGER appears to be running across the barren surface of Mars. Dressed only in an astronaut's JUMPSUIT. Leaping gracefully over the FAKE MARTIAN BOULDERS. He runs past a WINDOW. SULIE and FATHER KAYMAN are visible, watching.

INT--OBSERVATION BOOTH--DAY

SULIE and FATHER KAYMAN watch from the other side of the thick glass. ROGER climbs a ladder to a FAKE MARS LANDER with four spider-like legs planted into the red soil. Suddenly, Sulie leans forward. Like she sees something. Sulie bolts from the booth, and a curious Kayman follows.

INT--MARS TANK AIRLOCK--DAY

SULIE rushes down the hall to the Mars tank airlock. TWO TECHNICIANS IN ENVIRONMENTAL SUITS are about to close the thick round OUTER DOOR. The Technicians look surprised

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

as Sulie rushes up with FATHER KAYMAN right behind her.

SULIE

(authoritatively)

Gentlemen, I think you two going in there wearing those suits will only remind the Colonel that he no longer requires air to breathe.

(and now, softer)

And we don't need that, do we?

The Two Technicians stare at Sulie through their visors. They share a brief glance, and move out of the airlock. Sulie steps back. Looking relieved. Father Kayman seems a little surprised by Sulie. But very pleased. He nods.

KAYMAN

Good thinking, nurse.

INT--A CLINICAL HOSPITAL ROOM--MONTAGE

SULIE enters Roger's hospital room. Again and again and again. Always greeting ROGER with her bubbly enthusiasm. Very endearing. She brings FLOWERS to brighten up the room. Replaces the blinds with COLORFUL DRAPERY. They watch TELEVISION. She opens his MAIL, unfolding a KID'S DRAWING OF AN ASTRONAUT IN A SPACESUIT. They both laugh.

INT--CYBORG-ROBOTICS LABORATORY--DAY

A lab stuffed with robotic parts. ROGER and SULIE watch a ROBOTICS SPECIALIST work a CONTROL PANEL. What looks like a tangled TV antenna suddenly opens up forming a SKELETAL PAIR OF WINGS. It looks like the sub-structure of what will eventually be an enormous pair of bat wings. Roger and Sulie look surprised as the metal framework stretches all the way across the lab. From wall to wall.

SPECIALIST

(matter-of-factly)

We plan on attaching these wings to your shoulders. They'll act like a pair of solar panels, and power your internal batteries--

The Specialist stops when he sees the pained expression forming on Roger's face. Like that is going to be on me?

The Robotics Specialist is at a loss. He seems to search for the right words to say...but is saved by Sulie, who places a gentle hand on Roger's shoulder and leans close.

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CONTINUED:

SULIE

(sounding genuine)

Oh, Roger. You're going to be so beautiful. Like a bird!

Roger looks at her. Not quite convinced. But after a few moments of staring at Sulie, Roger returns her smile.

INT--OBSERVATION BOOTH--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN stands in front of the thick glass watching ROGER inside the Mars normal tank. Roger is BALANCING ON ONE FINGER. Legs in the air. Not swaying an inch. Just perfectly balanced on one finger. The door opens, and SULIE walks in. She steps beside Kayman. Watches Roger.

SULIE

Morning, Father. How's he doing?

KAYMAN

Look at him. I'd say he's doing just great--and this is due in no small part to you, Sulie. You've been terrific for him. I mean it.

Sulie smiles gratefully. But it passes rather quickly as she stares through the glass. She looks a bit worn out.

SULIE

I really envy you. The reason I joined the space program to begin with was to be the first woman to set foot on another world.

Father Kayman looks at Sulie, with the proper sympathy. But then he notices something about her face. Like he can't tell what it is. When Sulie turns, he looks away.

SULIE

Women pilot the shuttle, and walk on the moon; but when it comes to Mars--when it comes to the heavy, exploratory missions--it is still the men who get the glory.

KAYMAN

I suspect the public needs time to get used to the idea of sending a woman 250-million miles away.

SULIE

Well. At least I can do my part to help Roger. That's important.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAYMAN

You don't sound too convin--

Kayman stops. As if realizing what's been bothering him:

KAYMAN

Your eyes. They're brown today.

ROGER'S VOICE

(over the speaker)

Balance the locks--I'm coming out.

Sulie and Kayman turn. In the Mars tank, Roger rights himself. Heads toward the airlock. Sulie looks frantic.

SULIE

Shit, I don't have my contacts in!

Sulie bolts from the room, as if this is tantamount to an emergency. Father Kayman stares after her, with a frown.

INT--MARS PROJECT PRESS HALL--NIGHT

The CREW OF THE FIRST MARS MISSION stands in front of a backdrop featuring the PLANET MARS and MISSION INSIGNIA. ROGER, FATHER KAYMAN, DR. BRADLEY, COMMANDER GODDARD, and the FIFTH MEMBER of the crew pose for the cameras, and look as comfortable as they can inside their spacesuits.

FLASHBULBS are in a frenzy as the PHOTOGRAPHERS wrestle for position. REPORTERS attempt to ask their questions, and the quickest one gets most of his sentence out first:

REPORTER 1

Aren't any of you worried about the effects of long-term weightlessness during a sixth-month space flight?

Goddard gestures to the MOTORIZED MODEL OF THE MARS SPACE CRAFT. It looks like two Apollo modules connected by a tether line. The two capsules ROTATE around one another.

GODDARD

As you can see from the model, the command module and final booster rocket remain connected by a mile-long metal tether. The rotation of the craft creates an artificial gravity on either end to alleviate the weightlessness of space.

Goddard leans forward in his suit and turns toward Father Kayman. The Priest immediately taking up the discussion.

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CONTINUED:

KAYMAN

The artificial gravity inside the ship will be equivalent to around forty-percent of Earth's gravity, which just happens to approximate the strength of Mars' own gravity. So, we should be quite acclimated to conditions on Mars by the time we arrive on the surface.

GODDARD

And with four hours of exercise a day, the trip should offer us no ill effects. Next question?

The Mars crew smiles earnestly. One voice rises higher:

REPORTER 2

Colonel Torraway, have you decided what you'll say as you descend to the surface, the first human being to set foot on Mars?

ROGER

Yes, sir. I certainly have.

Roger grins. Clearly not intending to respond further. The Reporters and the rest of the Crew LAUGH pleasantly.

INT--CREW WIVES' PRESS HALL--NIGHT

The WIVES OF THE MARS CREW sit behind a long table in a hall that is quite a bit smaller. The group of REPORTERS interviewing them is smaller too, but just as attentive as their counterparts. DORRIE seems uneasy, but does her best to look earnest as Another Wife finishes a response:

OTHER WIFE

(almost by rote)

...and I know I speak for all of us here when I say that we wives are so pleased and proud to be a part of history in the making.

Dorrie fights to keep her smile as the FLASHBULBS go off.

INT--NARROW ACCESS CORRIDOR--NIGHT

The MARS CREW marches from the press hall into a narrow access corridor. They look tired but relieved, trudging along one after another, the corridor just wide enough to accommodate their spacesuits. ROGER brings up the rear.

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CONTINUED:

He lays a gloved hand on FATHER KAYMAN to make him stop.

ROGER

(whispering)

Do you think Dorrie's still here?

Kayman waits a moment to allow the others to walk ahead.

KAYMAN

You want to see her?

ROGER

I think I'm ready, Don. I think
I can handle it now.

Kayman stares at Roger a brief moment. Then smiles wide:

KAYMAN

I think so, too--and that's why
I already set up a meeting, Rog.

Up ahead in the line, BRADLEY turns a little. Notices that Roger and Kayman have stopped. He looks interested.

Roger squeezes Kayman's shoulder, warmly. They walk on.

INT--COLD METALLIC ELEVATOR--NIGHT

DORRIE rides an elevator. Nervously. Taking a CIGARETTE from her purse, but then hesitating, and dropping it back inside. Putting on a determined face. At the sound of the DING, Dorrie instinctively moves over to make room.

SULIE steps on, offering Dorrie a perfunctory nod--until she realizes who this woman actually is. Sulie steps quickly to the side. Turning away. Hitting the button.

They ride in silence...with essentially the same hair and the same color eyes. They really do look alike. Sulie trying to stare off to the side, without being too obvious about it. Dorrie trying to get a good look at her, without seeming like she's doing it. Moments pass. Dorrie leaning forward. Sulie turning more to the side.

There is another DING. Sulie squeezes through the doors as soon as they open wide enough, and rushes down the hall. Dorrie watches her go as the elevator slides shut.

INT--PRIVATE DRESSING ROOM--NIGHT

ROGER pulls up the zipper to his jumpsuit. Underneath he's wearing a turtleneck that stops just under his chin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Roger pulls his sleeves down so they hide the RED TILES on his wrists. With only his face and hands exposed, Roger can easily pass as "normal." He checks the mirror.

INT--NONDESCRIPT CORRIDOR--NIGHT

FATHER KAYMAN waits. At the end of the hall, an elevator opens and DORRIE steps out. The Priest walks to meet her but neither greets the other. They start down the hall.

KAYMAN

You'll be so proud of Roger when you see him, Dorrie.

DORRIE

I've always been proud, Don.

Kayman gives up trying to talk. They stop. Open a door.

INT--SMALL CONFERENCE ROOM--NIGHT

DORRIE steps inside, and looks around. Just an average meeting room with a table and chairs. Dorrie puts her purse down on the table. FATHER KAYMAN hovers inside the doorway. As if he doesn't quite know what to do or say.

He starts to go. But before the door closes all the way:

DORRIE

Thank you, Father.

Kayman looks at Dorrie a moment. Then leaves her alone.

INT--NONDESCRIPT CORRIDOR--NIGHT

ROGER walks down a corridor, and stops at the elevator. He presses the button. Waits. Looks nervous. He checks his jumpsuit, shifting the position of the zipper a bit. He runs his hand through his hair. Roger seems to think about his hair. Then he steps down the hall to a door.

INT--NONDESCRIPT RESTROOM--NIGHT

ROGER steps in front of the mirror. His hair is in place but he takes out a COMB, and runs it through a few times, anyway. Seems satisfied. A bit surprised at the FLUSH.

One of the bathroom stalls opens, and a REPORTER emerges. The Reporter freezes, sees Roger, and immediately becomes animated. He rushes forward as Roger heads for the door.

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CONTINUED:

REPORTER 3

Colonel! Maybe you remember me from the press conference. Fred Thomas, Associated News. Can I ask you a couple more questions?

ROGER

I'm sorry. I think we answered ever conceivable ques--

Roger almost reaches the exit. But the Reporter quickly squeezes between him and the door with dogged enthusiasm.

INT--NONDESCRIPT CORRIDOR--NIGHT

FATHER KAYMAN rounds the corner, as if looking for Roger. He passes the elevator Roger summoned moments ago. There is a DING as the doors slide open. Kayman stops, staring at the empty elevator. Behind him, SULIE crosses the corridor. She sees Kayman, and hesitates. Stepping up. Clicking on that sweet-natured, Texas school-girl charm:

SULIE

Father. I hear you really wowed 'em tonight!

KAYMAN

Oh, hello, Sulie. I don't know. But thank you, anyway.

Sulie smiles. But seems to give him the once-over, too.

SULIE

I think I just saw Roger's wife a minute ago.

KAYMAN

I've arranged a meeting between them. But shhhh. No one knows.

Sulie nods. But when Kayman turns away her face hardens:

SULIE

(not quite casual)

Oh.

INT--SMALL CONFERENCE ROOM--NIGHT

DORRIE paces. Like this waiting is getting to her. She pulls out a chair, and sits down. Just then BRIGHT LIGHT from the hall fills the room with the SHADOW OF A MAN sneaking quickly inside. Dorrie stands and turns around.

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CONTINUED:

DORRIE

Rog--

Dorrie stops. BRADLEY stands with his back flat against the door. Like he knows he's somewhere he shouldn't be.

INT--NONDESCRIPT RESTROOM--NIGHT

ROGER tries to get past the dogged REPORTER. But fails.

REPORTER 3

Just one question, Colonel. One.

Roger has little choice, unless he wants to physically remove the Reporter from the door. He resigns himself.

ROGER

All right. Just one.

The Reporter looks like a kid in a candy store...until his face loses all expression:

REPORTER 3

What's...that?

Roger frowns. Like he doesn't get the question. What he hasn't realized yet is that MILKY FLUID has begun to LEAK FROM HIS NOSE. His EARS. From the CORNERS OF HIS MOUTH. Roger instinctively brings his hands toward his face and sees the FLUID LEAKING FROM HIS FINGERTIPS. Roger looks stunned. Starts to back away when his body jerks with a violent spasm. MILKY FLUID SPURTS FROM HIS MOUTH AND SPLATTERS THE FACE of the terrified Reporter who SCREAMS.

INT--NONDESCRIPT CORRIDOR--NIGHT

FATHER KAYMAN and SULIE turn at the sound of the SCREAM.

INT--NONDESCRIPT RESTROOM--NIGHT

ROGER backs away from the REPORTER. FLUID RUSHING DOWN HIS FACE, as if spilling out from every pore on his body.

REPORTER 3

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU?!

INT--NONDESCRIPT CORRIDOR--NIGHT

FATHER KAYMAN and SULIE start moving down the corridor. Not knowing where to go, but moving faster. Running now.

INT--NONDESCRIPT RESTROOM--NIGHT

ROGER turns. Sees a tiny restroom WINDOW. Roger runs at the wall and LEAPS. He bursts through the window--much too small for him--and TAKES OUT MOST OF THE WALL. The stunned REPORTER stares at the ENORMOUS HOLE. Wide-eyed.

EXT--OVER 20 STORIES HIGH--NIGHT

ROGER bursts through the outside wall and keeps going after the RUBBLE around him has already arched toward the ground. It almost looks like Roger is floating. Until gravity takes over and his body plummets wildly toward the Earth, past the BLURRED BUILDING LIGHTS behind him.

INT--NONDESCRIPT RESTROOM--NIGHT

The door flies open and SULIE rushes in followed a moment later by FATHER KAYMAN. They see the jagged hole in the wall. The Priest can only stare at the gaping hole. But Sulie immediately turns toward the frightened REPORTER as the newsman attempts to run past them into the corridor.

REPORTER 3

LET ME OUTTA HERE!!!

Sulie grabs the Reporter and throws him across the room.

EXT--HITTING THE PAVEMENT--NIGHT

ROGER tumbles and spins and manages to right himself just before he strikes the pavement sending CHUNKS OF CONCRETE AND DIRT HIGH INTO THE AIR. There is a deafening DOOOOM.

INT--NONDESCRIPT RESTROOM--NIGHT

SULIE lands a martial arts blow to the REPORTER that leaves him dazed. She follows with a perfectly-executed spinning kick that sends the unconscious Reporter sliding limply across the floor as FATHER KAYMAN looks on in amazement. Sulie marches toward the hole in the wall, stepping over the body of the Reporter like it's nothing. Kayman rushes to his side. Kneels. Feels for a pulse.

KAYMAN

My god. What have you done?

Sulie places her hands on the jagged concrete and looks.

SULIE'S P.O.V. Looking down, over twenty stories: It is

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

dark. But the dim lights from the building offer enough illumination to see CRACKED PAVEMENT AND A DEEP HOLE IN THE GROUND. But that is all. There is no sign of Roger.

Sulie turns to consider Kayman standing over the body of the Reporter as MILITARY POLICEMEN rush through the door.

Sulie's demeanor is different here. We've never seen her like this before: Her face is heavy with responsibility. And her voice is MINUS THE TEXAS ACCENT. Authoritative.

SULIE

Take the one lying on the floor
into custody.

MILITARY POLICE 1

Yes, Major.

The Military Policemen bend to retrieve the body. Kayman frowns. He stares acidly at Sulie. She holds his gaze.

KAYMAN

(as if condemning her)

Nice to meet you, Major.

INT--SMALL CONFERENCE ROOM--NIGHT

BRADLEY tries to approach DORRIE but she backs around the long table. Gesturing for Bradley to keep his distance:

DORRIE

Get out of here, Brad. Roger will
be here any minute.

BRADLEY

It's been terrible not being able
to see you, Dorrie.

DORRIE

We don't have a choice. Now, go.

BRADLEY

Just tell me that you miss me too.

DORRIE

(just because she has to)

I miss you. I miss you. NOW GO!

EXT--OUTSIDE THE COMPLEX--NIGHT

SULIE steps up. Looks down into the HOLE IN THE PAVEMENT as MORE MILITARY POLICEMEN climb on out, covered in dirt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULIE

Tell me he's not buried in there.

MILITARY POLICE 2

Not as far as we can tell.

SULIE

(not at all happy)

Get some shovels...and make sure.

INT--SMALL CONFERENCE ROOM--NIGHT

BRADLEY backs DORRIE into the corner, trying to hold her. She slaps first one hand away, then the other, before she simply weakens. Bradley takes her, and pulls her close.

The DOOR SWINGS OPEN. They both turn...and look relieved as FATHER KAYMAN enters. The Priest sees Bradley there, clearly not approving, but does not address him directly:

KAYMAN

(to Dorrie)

Roger was found out by a reporter.
I'm afraid he's fled.

DORRIE

What? Fled to where?

KAYMAN

I was hoping he came here to see
you but thank God that he didn't.

(to Bradley now)

You're a damned fool.

DORRIE

What should I do, Don?

KAYMAN

If Roger has left the compound,
there's a good chance he'll go
home--and if he does you should
be there to meet him.

Dorrie thinks it over, and nods. Kayman opens the door:

KAYMAN

Don't take too long.

Kayman exits. Dorrie offers Bradley a sidelong glance, moving past him, toward the table, to retrieve her purse.

BRADLEY

Dorrie--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DORRIE

(interrupting)

Look, we had fun, Brad. And we're lucky we can end it now before any real damage was done--before Roger found out. Now let's say good-bye.

Dorrie turns to face Bradley. Extends both of her hands:

DORRIE

Just say it. Good-bye.

Bradley stares into her eyes. Finally, takes her hands.

CUT TO:

DORRIE AND BRADLEY ARE SKELETONS. Human skeletons that are somehow upright. Holding hands and talking inside an UNFINISHED BUILDING next to wall supports and conduits.

EXT--OUTSIDE OF THE COMPLEX--NIGHT

ROGER watches them with GLOWING LENSES where his human eyes should be. One side of his face is ripped and the SKIN HANGS DOWN but there is no blood. What's underneath looks like PLASTIC. DRIED MILKY FLUID on his face and on his jumpsuit. He doesn't move. Crouches in the bushes. The lenses of his artificial eyes GLOW RED in the dark.

EXT--THE COMPOUND PERIMETER--NIGHT

A TALL IMPOSING FENCE surrounds the buildings of the Man Plus facility in the distance. FOOTSTEPS. ROGER HURDLES THE FENCE. Just a blur. Hitting the ground and running.

EXT--A CROWDED SUPER-HIGHWAY--NIGHT

Rows of cars. ROGER HURDLES THE HIGHWAY. Just a blur.

EXT--ROGER AND DORRIE'S HOME--NIGHT

The SOUND OF CRACKING TIMBER. Getting louder. Louder. ROGER bursts through the trees and lands in the backyard.

INT--ROGER AND DORRIE'S HOME--NIGHT

Looking out through a GLASS DOOR onto their yard: ROGER walks closer. His eyes RED GLOWING LENSES. FACE TORN. His RIPPED JUMPSUIT revealing the TILES he uses for skin.

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CONTINUED:

Roger steps up to the sliding glass door...and casually WALKS THROUGH IT. Like he doesn't even notice it. The door SHATTERS, a shower of broken glass falling like snow at his feet. Roger steps into the room, and takes a seat in a cushioned chair. His TWO LENSES GLOW in the dark.

EXT--ROGER AND DORRIE'S HOME--NIGHT

A MILITARY CAR pulls up, and DORRIE gets out. She looks up and down the block. BLACK SEDANS litter the street. Rather ominous. Dorrie turns and walks toward the house.

INT--ROGER AND DORRIE'S HOME--NIGHT

DORRIE enters the kitchen. Turns on a set of lights that illuminate the counter. She sets her purse down, resting there a moment. Then she lifts a TEA KETTLE. Fills it with water. Turns on the burner. Dorrie walks into the family room--and stops as she sees the broken glass door.

Dorrie spins. Sees ROGER in that chair and she SCREAMS. Dorrie stumbles back against the wall. Grabbing for a handhold. Her eyes squeezed shut. When she opens them:

DORRIE'S P.O.V. Roger stands up. His SKIN HANGING FROM HIS RIPPED FACE. Jumpsuit torn REVEALING HIS BODY. His EYES GLOWING. It is frightening. Roger closes his eyes with a WHIRRING and, when he opens them, they're normal.

ROGER

Sorry. Forgot about my eyes.

The TELEPHONE RINGS. They both turn. Look at the phone.

ROGER

That will be them, I'd think.

Roger steps casually to the telephone. He doesn't appear angry, or upset. But in place of lifting the receiver Roger instead CRUSHES THE TELEPHONE. Dorrie jumps as Roger grinds part of the phone to POWDER. Then he turns:

ROGER

Have a seat, dear. I'd like to speak with you about something.

INT--STERILE COMPLEX CORRIDOR--NIGHT

SULIE moves quickly down a clinical corridor looking like the nurse she always seemed to be. Flashing a big Texas smile at some DOCTORS she passes. Sulie stops at a door.

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CONTINUED:

It is marked: "ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS." She KNOCKS. The SPY-HOLE slides open. An EYE peeks out. Immediately the spy-hole slides shut and after a KLAk the door opens.

INT--ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS--NIGHT

SULIE steps in, and her demeanor changes. From girlish and pleasant to downright irritated. She carries herself with authority, nodding curtly at the MEN AND WOMEN WHO LOOK LIKE FBI seated at their rolltop desks. Their desks are open now revealing VIDEO AND SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT.

An inner door SLIDES OPEN and Sulie steps inside a small ANTECHAMBER. Waits. After a moment, a SECOND DOOR OPENS and Sulie enters what looks like a THINK TANK: the walls on all sides are ENORMOUS VIDEO SCREENS DISPLAYING ROGER AND DORRIE in their home. Roger crushing the phone with:

ROGER

(coming over speakers)

Have a seat, dear. I'd like to speak with you about something.

Sulie steps up in front of an IMPOSING TABLE, and snaps to attention. A GRIM PANEL OF MEN AND WOMEN stare at her with less-than-pleased expressions. The CENTER MAN says:

CENTER MAN

Major. Take one moment to collect your thoughts; then please recount for us the events of the last few hours, adding your recommendations for getting us out of this mess--a mess, we might add, that you were brought in to ensure we avoid....

Sulie stands at attention. Her face hardens even more.

INT--ROGER AND DORRIE'S HOME--NIGHT

DORRIE lowers herself stiffly into a high-backed chair. ROGER maneuvers himself so that he is behind it, out of her line of sight. For a moment Dorrie tries to see him.

ROGER

Don't...look at me.

Dorrie stops trying to see him. Sits back in her chair.

DORRIE

I'm sorry I screamed like that. It was just that you surprised me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Long pause. Roger just stares at the back of her chair.

DORRIE

The President says you're carrying the fate of the human race on your back. Half of everything that man says is a lie. But I don't think that is. You're a significant man, Rog. You were always a famous one, and maybe that's why I married you. It was like being with a rock star. But you could always walk away, if you wanted to. This I don't think you're going to walk away from.

The WHISTLE OF A BOILING KETTLE invades the room. Roger doesn't move. Just stares at the high back of her chair.

ROGER

(so subdued it's spooky)
Why don't you go and get your tea.

INT--ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS--NIGHT

SULIE stands in front of that PANEL OF GRIM MEN AND WOMEN as the screens covering the walls display DORRIE GETTING UP AND WALKING INTO THE KITCHEN. Nervously MAKING TEA. These shots are unusual, as if taken from hidden cameras.

SULIE

Father Kayman is a friend of his. I suggest we send him in to bring Colonel Torraway back.

A DISAGREEING MAN at the end of the table leans forward:

DISAGREEING MAN

We have over two dozen agents on the street--why not send them in?

SULIE

That would not be a particularly good idea.

CENTER MAN

You are not too popular with this panel right now, Major.

SULIE

Be that as it may, the Colonel is still relatively stable. Ordering in agents will only aggravate the situation. Send the Priest. Now.

EXT--OUTSIDE OF THE COMPLEX--NIGHT

FATHER KAYMAN rushes outside toward a CONSERVATIVE CAR. Not sporty. Like a priest might drive. He gets inside:

KAYMAN

Manual.

Kayman puts his hands on the wheel...but nothing happens. There is no roar from the engine. Kayman looks confused. Suddenly a MECHANICAL VOICE emanates from the car itself:

MECHANICAL VOICE

Your voice registers a high degree of stress, Father Kayman.

The Priest sits there for a moment. Trying to calm down:

KAYMAN

I'm...fine. I would like to drive manually, please.

Long pause. The Priest sits there, as if afraid to move. Face straining with the effort of not appearing strained. Finally, a BREATHALYZER UNIT DROPS DOWN FROM THE CEILING.

MECHANICAL VOICE

Please breathe into this unit--to verify that you are not under the influence of alcohol.

Kayman grabs the device, and furiously breathes into it. The ENGINE ROARS. The Priest grabs the wheel, floors the gas pedal, and the car SCREECHES through the parking lot.

INT--ROGER AND DORRIE'S HOME--NIGHT

ROGER watches DORRIE as she re-enters the room holding a delicate TEA CUP AND SAUCER. She does not look at Roger. Immediately moving back to her chair. Sitting, stiffly.

DORRIE

So what do you want to talk about?

ROGER

Bradley.

The cup in Dorrie's hand begins to CLATTER on the saucer. She quickly lifts the cup from the saucer to stop it, her eyes making it clear that Dorrie is thinking furiously:

DORRIE

What about Bradley?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROGER

You slept with him.

Dorrie seems to deflate. She sets the cup back onto the saucer, oblivious to the fact that it's CLATTERING again. She stares straight ahead. Looking absolutely wretched:

DORRIE

I don't know how to deal with you. Are you angry with me? You don't sound upset. But then again, you never do. I don't think you have raised your voice in the last ten years. A wife should be grateful for having a husband like that... but the truth is, after you saved those stupid Russians, and became a hero, and were told you'd never fly on another mission, something went and died inside of you. And it's stayed dead ever since.

Short pause. Roger stares at the high back of her chair.

ROGER

That is what I don't understand. Why would you do this to us now? When everything's finally going our way again?

DORRIE

Going our way? Is that what you call letting them take you apart and put you back together again?

ROGER

Why do you think I'm doing this?

Dorrie LAUGHS. Peculiarly. As if faced with insanity:

DORRIE

Are you going to tell me now that you're somehow doing this for me? I know why you're doing it, Roger. And I hope that you find whatever it is you're looking for up there. And I hope it will make you happy.

Long pause. Roger looks so human, even with a torn face.

ROGER

I wonder. When I return from Mars ...will you still be here, in this house, waiting for me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dorrie holds her tea cup. It looks like she's thinking.

EXT--CALM RESIDENTIAL STREET--NIGHT

FATHER KAYMAN turns. His car SCREECHES around a corner.

EXT--ROGER AND DORRIE'S HOME--NIGHT

FATHER KAYMAN drives wildly up onto the front lawn. He gets out and runs toward the front door. Stops to think. Then he immediately hurries around the side of the house.

INT--ROGER AND DORRIE'S HOME--NIGHT

Looking through the shattered glass door: FATHER KAYMAN steps into the backyard. Trying to see into the house. He moves closer. Steps through the door looking stunned. It is DARK inside but clearly the HOUSE HAS BEEN TRASHED.

BROKEN FURNITURE litters the floor. The PICTURES HANGING CROOKED. JAGGED HOLES IN THE WALLS. It looks like a wrecking crew was here. ONE CHAIR is still oddly upright in the center of the room. Kayman tries to see further:

KAYMAN

Dorrie? Roger?

The Priest nearly trips. Trying to see in the dark. He walks past that upright chair without realizing DORRIE is sitting in it. Just as she was before. Holding that TEA CUP AND SAUCER. Father Kayman turns and finally sees her sitting there. She brings the cup to her lips. Takes a SIP. Dried tears have left RIVERS OF MASCARA running down her face. Dorrie returns the cup to the saucer and:

DORRIE

Roger asked me a question. And I couldn't bear lying to him again.

EXT--PLOWED FIELD OF CORN--NIGHT

ROGER ambles through a plowed field. It is PITCH BLACK. Hard to traverse the swelling rows. Roger stumbles along aimlessly. His face slack. Like he doesn't care. Then HEADLIGHTS suddenly appear on the horizon. Roger stares at them a moment. A SPOTLIGHT begins sweeping the field and Roger is pulled from his trance. He hits the ground.

Roger ducks low as the light sweeps over him. And then it is DARK AGAIN. Headlights RECEDING INTO THE DISTANCE.

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CONTINUED:

Roger watches the horizon a moment. Then he rolls over. Lying on his back in the middle of a plowed field. Like a little boy might. Staring blankly at the night sky. After a while, he looks thoughtful. As if he's focusing on something in the sky. Roger lifts his head a little:

ROGER'S P.O.V. A panoramic NIGHT SKY FILLED WITH STARS.

Roger's INNER METALLIC EYELIDS slide shut to a WHIRRING. When they open, he stares up with his TELESCOPIC LENSES:

ROGER'S P.O.V. Roger looks at that twinkling night sky. Further. Further. Through the stars we could see with the naked eye and BEYOND to DENSE CONSTELLATIONS and to CLOUDS OF BRILLIANT STELLAR MATTER. To WONDROUS ASTRAL BODIES not usually seen without a high-powered telescope.

Roger stares up with cold inhuman lenses where his human eyeballs should be. The LENSES CHANGE THEIR FOCAL POINT with a series of MUTED WHIRS. Roger searches the stars. Below his cold eyes, his mouth opens in a look of wonder:

ROGER'S P.O.V. Roger scans the universe. Scrolling past brilliant arrays of stars; and now, coming to rest, ON A TINY RED BALL. The PLANET MARS. The way it would look through large orbiting telescopes. A PERFECT RED GLOBE.

Roger lies in the dirt. A look of euphoria on his face.

EXT--DESOLATE COUNTRY ROAD--NIGHT

FATHER KAYMAN drives. Looking left, right. Peering into the blackness. There is movement in the sky and suddenly the headlights illuminate ROGER dropping down into the middle of the road. Kayman SLAMS ON THE BRAKES. But far too late. He is thrown forward at the SOUND OF A CRASH.

THE FRONT OF THE CAR IS DENTED IN. Roger casually walks around to the passenger side, and gets in. Kayman looks at him. Roger stares straight ahead out the windshield. He doesn't speak a word. Kayman frowns, and drives off.

INT--STERILE HOSPITAL ROOM--NIGHT

SULIE CARPENTER paces. Wearing her nurse's uniform. She stops when the door opens: FATHER KAYMAN steps in and moves aside for ROGER. Roger doesn't make it too far into the room before Sulie rushes up in her Texas school-girl mode. Giving Roger an enormous hug. He returns it.

SULIE

Oh thank heaven you're all right!

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CONTINUED:

Sulie looks over Roger's shoulder and exchanges a terse look with Kayman. But her voice is all warmth and joy:

SULIE (cont'd)

I was so worried about you!

INT--ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS--NIGHT

The enormous screens making up the walls are displaying ROGER being looked over by DOCTORS. One is repairing his face. SULIE comes to attention before the PANEL OF GRIM MEN AND WOMEN. She notices that someone else is here in this room, off to the side, and she can't help but look. It is mission COMMANDER GODDARD staring back at her most intently. Sulie seems momentarily surprised that he is there...but she immediately stiffens again as she hears:

CENTER MAN

Your report, Major?

SULIE

Colonel Torraway's fluid expulsion is a somewhat dramatic side-effect of what I'm told is a minor glitch in his system parameters. It will be corrected within the next eight hours. The "witness" to the event is currently receiving a series of injections which will sufficiently cloud recollections of the evening.

Long pause. The Panel stares back at her. Very creepy.

CENTER MAN

And your psychological evaluation of Colonel Torraway regarding his relationship with his wife?

SULIE

I can bolster Roger up as long as he's here. However, when he's on Mars, there's a good chance he'll miss her more than he can handle, eventually suffering an emotional collapse as he constructs various scenarios in his mind involving her probable marital infidelities.

Long pause. The Panel stares back at her. Very creepy.

CENTER MAN

Then, may we take it that you are suggesting extreme measures?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sulie frowns. Thinking. As if trying to understand him.

SULIE

Six? I don't understa--

CENTER MAN

(interrupting)

Thank you, Major. You may go now.

Sulie hesitates. Then she turns on her heels and leaves.

INT--THE STERILE CORRIDOR--NIGHT

The door marked "ADMINISTRATIVE STATISTICS" opens. SULIE steps out into the hall. Leaning back against the door. As if she's glad to be out of there. But disturbed, too. She frowns. Then shrugs a bit, and starts down the hall.

EXT--ROGER AND DORRIE'S HOME--DAY

DORRIE steps out of the front door, and walks to her CAR. Gets inside. She fumbles with a large PURSE, rummaging through to remove MAKE-UP. As if talking to her purse:

DORRIE

Ceramics shop.

The ENGINE ROARS as her car begins to back out the drive.

EXT--DRIVING DOWN THE STRIP--DAY

DORRIE slides over to the passenger seat. She pulls down her visor to peer into the MIRROR. Looks herself over. Dorrie brings her COMPACT to her face, and then LIPSTICK.

The BRAKE PEDAL DEPRESSES. The car stops at a RED LIGHT. Dorrie doesn't even look away from the mirror. After a beat, the STEERING WHEEL TURNS, the GAS PEDAL DEPRESSES, and the car makes a successful turn onto a busier street.

Dorrie seems fairly satisfied by her face. Then makes a decision. Reaching down and coming up with her EYELINER.

A SEMI-TRAILER approaches, driving down the strip in the opposing lane. Dorrie applies her make-up. She does not notice her STEERING WHEEL SLOWLY TURNING. Inching into the oncoming traffic. Turning more. A little bit more. The truck BLOWS ITS HORN. Dorrie frowns and peeks around the visor. That's when the GAS PEDAL DROPS TO THE FLOOR.

Dorrie SPEEDS INTO A HEAD-ON COLLISION WITH THE TRUCK and

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

her car is SHREDDED as it disappears under the bumper....

EXT--CEMETERY BURIAL PLOT--DAY

A PRIEST READS FROM THE BIBLE over the CASKET. Gathered around the burial plot is an assemblage of ASTRONAUTS AND THEIR SPOUSES, the MAN PLUS PERSONNEL, and grim SECRET SERVICE AGENTS standing behind PRESIDENT DESHATINE. It looks like rain. ROGER stares down at the casket of his wife. He looks terrible. SULIE stands right beside him.

FATHER KAYMAN looks up. Stares across the casket at the President of the United States. Deshatine looks grieved, in a controlled presidential way. He lifts his head and meets the Priest's gaze. Just for a moment. And with no visible reaction. Kayman looks back down at the casket.

BRADLEY is standing back from the plot with ONE SECRET SERVICE MAN ON EITHER SIDE OF HIM. He looks like hell. After a moment, the Secret Service Men take him by the elbows and lead him toward a ROW OF CARS. Bradley stares back over his shoulder, but follows. REPORTERS AND T.V. CREWS line the perimeter. MORE AGENTS keeping them back.

The Priest reads from the Bible. And it BEGINS TO RAIN.

Roger stands there. Like a statue. UMBRELLAS start to come out. Sulie opens her umbrella, moving a step closer to Roger, and raising it to shield them both. But then:

ROGER

No. Please don't.

Sulie hesitates. Takes the umbrella away. Looking up at Roger with concern. Roger tilts his head back. Just a little. Letting the RAIN STRIKE HIS FACE. The droplets burst and run down his cheeks. Like tears. Roger looks back down at the casket. His grief almost overwhelming.

ROGER

My eyes can do just about everything. But they can't cry.

This is almost too much for Sulie. She looks like she's about to lose it. Watching him with true feeling. She lets the umbrella fall, standing with Roger in the rain.

DISSOLVE TO:

President Deshatine is led toward his car underneath a roof of umbrellas held up by his Secret Service Agents. Father Kayman approaches the group. He is immediately motioned back by an Agent until Deshatine sees him there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DESHATINE

Father. You're getting drenched.

The Agents allow Kayman under the umbrellas. They walk.

KAYMAN

Did you think telling me you were planning on killing her was going to absolve you of your sin? You were greatly mistaken, sir.

DESHATINE

Dorrie Torraway died in an auto accident. Let's not lose sight of that fact, shall we?

The President seems to get angry then. He stops walking.

DESHATINE

I'm not the least bit interested in your absolution. And I don't have the time to grieve over the death of one silly woman. I've got the entire civilized world to look after--and a man to land on the planet Mars.

Kayman listens. Face grim. Standing partly in the rain.

DESHATINE (cont'd)

Did you try talking Roger out of volunteering for this duty? You are his friend--how hard did you try and stop him? Did you tell Dorrie, "Excuse me, but the President is going to get rid of you, if you don't play nice?" Do you really think I'd want absolution from you? You are in this up to your stiff white collar, Father.

Pause. Deshatine seems all talked out. Until he adds:

DESHATINE

Donald, I do sympathize. You've worked your entire adult life to be a part of this Mars mission. Tell me, what's really bothering you: Your role in the death of that poor woman we buried today? Or the fact that, if you had the chance to do it all over again... you know you'd still end up here in the cemetery, talking with me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

President Deshatine walks off, and the mass of umbrellas follow him toward a ROW OF DARK SEDANS out on the street.

Kayman doesn't move. Just standing there. In the rain.

EXT--STERILE HOSPITAL ROOM--NIGHT

There is a KNOCK on the door. But no response. After a moment the door opens, and SULIE peeks in. Surprised to find the lights off. She strains to see in the dark. ROGER is at the window BALANCED IMPOSSIBLY ON THE TOP EDGE OF A CHAIR. Gazing out the window. Sulie steps in:

SULIE

Roger? You all right?

Sulie steps closer. Roger does not respond. His back to Sulie. When she gets close enough, Sulie can see that Roger is staring out the window at the NIGHT SKY with his TELESCOPIC LENSES. He slowly turns. Looking down at her from his unlikely perch, the STARS REFLECTED IN HIS EYES.

ROGER

There's nothing left for me here.

INT--LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM--DAY

MAN PLUS PERSONNEL line the long table. FATHER KAYMAN. BRADLEY. Mission COMMANDER GODDARD. NASA AND TECHNICAL STAFF recognizable from earlier scenes. SULIE stands up.

SULIE

Roger is ready. He will never be readier. The longer he remains on Earth, the greater the risk he will lose his current balance and begin a lengthy grieving process.

At the head of the table, the CO-ORDINATOR seems pleased:

CO-ORDINATOR

Well that's fine news--our prime launch date is seven weeks away.

SULIE

I apologize for not making myself clear. Seven weeks is too long. Seven days is too long. If I had six more months with him I'd take it. But seven weeks? There is greater risk than benefit. Roger is prepared to go to Mars. Today.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pause. Everybody stares at Sulie like they don't get it.

CO-ORDINATOR

What is it you propose, Major?

SULIE

Dr. Bradley's intentions are to route the Colonel's perceptions through a computer to guarantee he doesn't suffer the same type of brain hemorrhage that killed Major Hartnett. It should be a simple matter then to eliminate Roger's sense of time, allowing the seven weeks until launch to pass, from Roger's perspective, in the span of an instant.

BRADLEY

Whoa. Wait a minute. I need the next seven weeks to fine-tune the balance between the computer, and Roger's organic brain. I can't--

CO-ORDINATOR

(interrupting)

Brad. Couldn't those adjustments be made while en route to Mars?

Bradley stops, and looks around. As if a bit confused.

BRADLEY

Excuse me, sir. To be honest, I assumed that you were just about to inform me that I am no longer a member of the crew.

Everyone stares at the head of the table. Most looking a little embarrassed. Like they know what this is about. The Co-ordinator motions for Sulie to sit, and she does.

CO-ORDINATOR

The feeling among the higher-ups is that since Dr. Bradley is the central driving force behind the Man Plus perceptual system specs, it is most imperative that he be retained as a member of the crew.

SULIE

No offense intended, sir. But it is clear that Roger has been made aware of Bradley's...relationship with his wife. I wouldn't advi--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CO-ORDINATOR

(interrupting)

Major, Roger is going to spend the entire voyage to and from Mars suspended inside a cocoon. And while the rest of the crew is limited to a five-mile circle around the Mars camp, the Man Plus will be free to roam the surface with an unlimited radius; and without need for water, food, or supplies. That is why we built him. If Roger is operating to capacity, the rest of the crew should have only sporadic physical contact with him, at best. Brad?

BRADLEY

As Major Carpenter has reminded us, Roger's perceptions will be routed through his computer. So, when he sees me, any animosity he may feel will be removed before the signals can register on his brain.

KAYMAN

I don't understand. Why is that?

BRADLEY

Because feeling animosity toward another member of the crew would run counter to mission objectives.

SULIE

Look. I'm worried about Roger's mental state if certain types of natural emotions are prevented from even crossing his mind.

(seeing an opportunity)

You're going to require a trained psychiatrist on board. Best case scenario, someone with whom Roger has already forged a bond.

The Co-ordinator nods a little. He holds up a DOCUMENT.

CO-ORDINATOR

Apparently someone agrees. This is it--the final crew roster for the Mars flight: Roger Torraway; mission commander, Steve Goddard; Mars areologist, Father Donald Kayman; cyborg system specialist, Dr. Alexander Bradley; and Major Sulie Carpenter. Any questions?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Co-ordinator waits only briefly. Gets up. The NASA Technical Staff rises, hurriedly collecting their papers.

CO-ORDINATOR

Thank you, and congratulations to one and all. It looks like we're really going to Mars.

Everyone shuffles out of the room. Everyone except the members of the Mars crew, sitting there to the sound of FOOTSTEPS. And finally, a KLUNK as the door swings shut.

CAMERA MOVES, pans the crew for the first manned mission to Mars: Father Kayman sits staring straight ahead into space. He looks like he did in the cemetery. His bright collar underlining a tortured face. Next in line, Sulie stares up at the ceiling, with a glassy smile. Like she can't believe she's really going. But, after a moment, some other thought must pass through her mind, because her smile fades. Bradley is next. Staring down at the documents open on the table in front of him. He pushes the papers away, looking down and off to the side. The camera moves, to the end of the table. Commander Goddard is staring across at the others. As if evaluating them.

Moments pass. The Mars crew sits there. Without a word.

GODDARD

Well. Just one big, happy crew.

INT--MAN PLUS SURGICAL CUBE--DAY

ROGER sits at the center of an electronic storm: PANELS BLINKING and COMPUTERS WHIRRING and WIRES STRETCHING FROM HIS BACK to a PORTABLE COMPUTER suspended above the floor by thick supports. A HALF-DOZEN TECHNICIANS hit switches and check the STATS CASCADING UP THE SCREENS. Roger sits on a CHAIR COVERED WITH ELECTRONICS like a cyborg throne.

SULIE watches the Technicians work. She smiles at Roger:

SULIE

The next time we speak, Roger,
we'll be in orbit around Mars!

At the center of the electronics, Roger puts on a brave face. An astronaut face. He gives Sulie a "thumbs-up." Sulie's smile becomes less calculated, more genuine...but then her smile fades all together. As if disappointed.

Roger's THUMB IS IN THE AIR. MOUTH STRETCHED IN A SMILE. After a few moments, it becomes clear that he's not going to move from that position. He is FROZEN, like a statue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULIE

Jesus. You're not gonna leave him like that, are you?

One of the Technicians turns. Looks at Sulie. He frowns and moves over to a different console. TURNING A LEVER:

CLOSE-UP of ROGER'S THUMB. High in the air, giving a big thumbs-up. Roger's hand turns sideways with a tiny WHIR. Slowly. Like a machine. Then his thumb slowly takes its place beside the other fingers. After a moment, his fist uncurls and finally, with a WHIR, his arm slowly lowers.

The Technician seems satisfied. Turns ANOTHER KNOB now:

CLOSE-UP of ROGER'S SMILE as his mouth slowly turns down. In stages. Like a machine. Very soon the smile is gone.

EXT--LAUNCH PAD AT THE CAPE--DAY

The MARS ROCKET rolls toward the LAUNCH PAD on a platform with enormous TANK TREADS. The rocket inches forward, literally at a snail's pace, accompanied by a RUUUUMBLE.

EXT--ON THE CHERO STRIP--MONTAGE

The restaurants, hotels, and businesses lining the Chero Strip display home-made SIGNS reading: "GOOD LUCK, MARS ASTRONAUTS!" and "MARS, OR BUST!" and "MARTIANS BEWARE!" TOUR BUSES up and down the strip. TOURISTS spilling out.

INT--INSIDE MISSION CONTROL--DAY

The LONG ROWS OF TERMINALS that make-up mission control are swarming with CONTROLLERS in white shirts and ties furiously working to bring their consoles to readiness.

INT--MARS COCKPIT SIMULATOR--DAY

COMMANDER GODDARD, FATHER KAYMAN, and SULIE sit three across inside a command module simulator. Their faces as focused as if this were real. Sulie keeps checking a control panel, and reading off the numbers. Goddard has his eyes focused on Kayman working the thruster controls. They all look disappointed as a PIERCING KLAXON SOUNDS.

INT--MAN PLUS SURGICAL CUBE--DAY

ROGER sits absolutely still on his thick chair surrounded

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

by blinking and buzzing electronics. At a TERMINAL off to the side, BRADLEY types away TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP TAP. He stops working. Looking beat. Rubbing his tired face.

Bradley stands. Stretching for a moment. Then he slowly walks from the room, leaving the motionless Roger alone.

INT--NEWS ANCHOR DESK--NEWSCAST

A NIGHTLY NEWS ANCHOR sits in front of a map of the world as the FLAG OF THE NEW PEOPLE'S ASIA appears with FOOTAGE of a SPACECRAFT DESCENDING FROM THE SKY UNDER PARACHUTES.

ANCHOR

What was intended to be the final orbital test flight of their Mars MAU-V rocket appears to have ended in a set-back for the New People's Asia. Details are slow in coming, but it has been confirmed the crew was forced to abort the flight before successfully achieving orbit.

The NASA AND MARS MISSION LOGO appear beside a CALENDAR.

ANCHOR

So it would seem that America will again win the space race...if NASA can pull off a successful launch before the closing of the Earth-Mars alignment window in September.

EXT--LAUNCH PAD AT THE CAPE--DAY

The MARS ROCKET rolls toward the LAUNCH PAD on a platform with enormous TANK TREADS. Closer. But not a hell of a lot closer. Inching forward with a deep RUUUUUUUUUUMBLE.

EXT--ON THE CHERO STRIP--MONTAGE

TOURISTS herd up and down the Chero Strip. They pose for photographs next to CARDBOARD CUT-OUTS OF THE MARS CREW. The CHILDREN run around with LITTLE GREEN MARTIAN MASKS. A FAMILY sitting in a BOOTH holding MENUS looks up as the WAITRESS appears wearing a SILLY-LOOKING "SPACE" UNIFORM.

INT--INSIDE MISSION CONTROL--DAY

The rows of terminals that make-up mission control are on-line as CONTROLLERS watch SCREENS SCROLLING WITH DATA.

INT--MARS COCKPIT SIMULATOR--DAY

COMMANDER GODDARD, FATHER KAYMAN, and SULIE sit three across in the command module simulator. As focused as if this were real. They must do something right, because the LIGHTS BRIGHTEN, and then they all sit back and grin.

INT--MAN PLUS SURGICAL CUBE--DAY

ROGER sits motionless on his electronic chair. The room empty except for Roger, the GLOW FROM THE BLINKING PANELS all around making him look artificial. The DOOR SLIDES OPEN, and SULIE steps in. Standing back in the shadows. When she emerges it is clear that HER HAIR IS NOW BLONDE.

Sulie watches Roger a moment. Pulls up a chair. Sits.

SULIE

I don't know if you can hear me, Roger. The technicians tell me what you're experiencing is the cyborg equivalent of sleep. If they knew I was here they would probably laugh at me.

Sulie smiles a little. Of course, Roger does not move.

SULIE

Well. If you could see me, you would be wondering about my hair. This is my real color; and these are my eyes, without the tinted contacts. Don't think I'm naive. If I was fifteen pounds heavier, or a couple inches shorter, well, let's say it was my resemblance to your wife that landed me this job. I guess if I wasn't a size seven I wouldn't be on my way to Mars right now, huh?

Sulie stands up. Almost tentative. She reaches into the pocket of her jumpsuit and takes out a FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH.

SULIE

I had that photograph developed.

Sulie looks down at it. Grins. Steps over to Roger, and places the frame down on a tiny surface beside his chair:

CLOSE-UP of the PHOTO. Sulie is leaning over Roger's hospital bed KISSING HIM ON THE CHEEK. Roger looks more than a little stunned. Wearing a GOOFY LOOK ON HIS FACE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SULIE

It wasn't all a lie. Everything I told you that day. You really are the bravest man I know. And I did have your picture on my wall.

CAMERA'S P.O.V. Sulie leans over and gently kisses Roger on the cheek. The PHOTOGRAPH is in view, too. And the images are almost the same: Sulie leaning over. Kissing Roger on that same cheek. The difference is that the Roger in the photograph wears a stunned, embarrassed, and very human face. But the Roger that Sulie is kissing now stares straight ahead. Without the tiniest sign of life.

INT--STERILE COMPLEX CORRIDOR--DAY

ROGER is being rolled down a corridor. He must be naked under the SHEET because the RED TILES below his neck are visible. Roger stares at the ceiling. Does not blink.

ROGER'S P.O.V. The ceiling of the corridor rolls past. Turning now. PASSING THROUGH A SWINGING DOOR and rolling under BRIGHT SURGICAL LIGHTS. After a moment, the MASKED SURGEONS who built Roger lean over. Staring down at him. One Surgeon holds out his hand...and receives a SCALPEL.

SURGEON 1

All right. Let's make a Martian.

EXT--ROCKET TOWER AND GANTRY--DAY

An elevator opens and the MARS CREW steps off. WEARING SPACESUITS and lugging OXYGEN UNITS. Goddard first, then Father Kayman. Sulie and Bradley bringing up the rear. Marching slowly toward the OPEN COCKPIT atop the rocket.

COUNTDOWN (V.O.)

TEN.

EXT--LAUNCH SPECTATOR STAND--DAY

SPECTATORS holding BINOCULARS fill the stands. Far in the distance, the MARS ROCKET points toward the heavens.

COUNTDOWN (V.O.)

NINE...EIGHT.

INT--NORMAL LIVING ROOMS--MONTAGE

ENTIRE FAMILIES are clustered around the television sets.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

COUNTDOWN (V.O.)

SEVEN...SIX.

INT--COMMAND MODULE COCKPIT--DAY

The MARS CREW reclines inside their cockpit. Staring out clear helmet visors. Nervous. The cockpit RUUUUUUMBLES.

COUNTDOWN (V.O.)

FIVE...FOUR.

INT--MAN PLUS FLIGHT COCOON--DAY

A SMALL VIEWING SLOT on the face of an ELECTRONIC COCOON. Visible through the narrow opening is a RED HAND. Almost like a human hand, but with longer fingers. LIKE A CLAW.

COUNTDOWN (V.O.)

THREE...TWO.

INT--MISSION CONTROL FACILITY--DAY

The CONTROLLERS sit absolutely still watching the screen.

COUNTDOWN (V.O.)

ONE. WE HAVE IGNITION. LIFT-OFF.

EXT--MARS ROCKET LAUNCH PAD--DAY

The Mars rocket rises atop a CLOUD OF EXPANDING FLAMES.

EXT--LAUNCH SPECTATOR STAND--DAY

The SPECTATORS lift their heads in wonder as the ROCKET BLASTS toward the sky riding a BLINDING PILLAR OF FIRE.

INT--WHITE HOUSE OVAL OFFICE--DAY

PRESIDENT DESHATINE sits behind his desk watching the LAUNCH ON TV. His PRESIDENTIAL AIDE standing beside him. Deshatine is enraptured. The face of a child on the man.

EXT--ORBIT AROUND THE EARTH--DAY

The MARS SHIP achieves orbit, the smooth surface of the craft reflecting the bright blue of the Earth below. The BOOSTER FIRES AND EJECTS, and the craft HURLS INTO SPACE.

INT--WHITE HOUSE OVAL OFFICE--DAY

A REPORTER WITH THE EMPTY LAUNCH PAD in the background KLIKS OFF as the TV GOES BLANK. PRESIDENT DESHATINE lays down his REMOTE. Looks pleased. The PRESIDENTIAL AIDE begins placing DOCUMENTS in front of Deshatine, reciting:

AIDE

The garbage strike in New York is in its third week. The famine in eastern Europe is getting worse. The N.P.A. nuclear submarine, The East is Red, is two miles outside the coast of Melbourne, Australia, and refuses to answer their hails. Forty-one countries--so far--have declared that if our Mars launch damages the ozone layer they will consider it a "hostile act."

The Aide reaches for a DESKTOP COMPUTER and strikes one key. Immediately that CHART seen earlier appears, with the BROAD BLACK LINE GROWING UPWARD TOWARD THAT RED BAR.

AIDE

And, the new trendline forecasts predict a third world war by the end of this decade.

Deshatine watches the Aide step around the table. Sit.

DESHATINE

You think I've been playing with my spacemen too much?

The Aide does not respond. The President watches him. He gets up. Wanders over to the window, and stares out.

DESHATINE

For the sake of discussion, let's assume that we are rushing toward World War III. Let us also agree that human history has been--and will continue to be--the record of mankind's never-ending struggle to annihilate his fellow man, and lay waste to this beautiful world. In thirty years, we could have a Mars colony, with hundreds of occupants. And if we succeed in blowing each other to smithereens down here, I want that Mars colony up there, don't you? Maybe, on Mars, we'll finally get it right.

EXT--MARS CRAFT IN SPACE--DAY

The FINAL BOOSTER FIRES a blinding BURST OF WHITE FLAME. The burn quickly stops. But the booster does not eject:

The BOOSTER MODULE and COMMAND MODULE begin to DETACH, splitting into two distinct pieces, a METAL TETHER LINE stretching between the modules. The two halves continue to separate. Floating away from one another. Further. And further. Soon each one is just a GLINT OF REFLECTED METAL one mile away from the other, the tether stretching between them, as if it simply DISAPPEARS IN THE DISTANCE.

THRUSTERS FIRE. The SHIP BEGINS TO ROTATE in a mile-wide arc. The STARS BECOMING A BLUR. From the command module or the booster the whole UNIVERSE APPEARS TO BE SPINNING.

INT--COMMAND MODULE TOUR--DAY

SULIE stands in the COCKPIT. The seats and control panel appear to "face down"--where the floor should be--and Sulie has to step carefully along the ledge so as to not tumble into the nose of the craft. She reaches a SET OF RUNGS, and climbs. Emerging onto LEVEL ONE [the living quarters] and continuing on past FATHER KAYMAN at a table eating COLORED PASTE. GODDARD riding an EXERCISE BIKE.

Sulie emerges onto LEVEL TWO [the science level] which holds a COSMIC RAY SHELTER that resembles a bank vault, and the Man Plus ELECTRONIC COCOON. BRADLEY types at a TERMINAL set in the side of the cocoon. Sulie climbs on past, and reaches an AIRLOCK DOOR. She touches a pad and the door opens with a WHOOOSH. Sulie enters the AIRLOCK:

The airlock is lined with SPACESUITS. The TETHER LINE actually extends into the ship here, like a thick pillar in the center of the room. At the base of this "pillar" rests a futuristic-looking TETHER-RIDER. Like a sort of two-seated space motorcycle. But in place of wheels, the rider features a cylindrical base that hugs the tether. Sulie steps onto the floor. Looks around. And then up:

SULIE'S P.O.V. The ceiling of the airlock is actually the OUTER AIRLOCK DOOR, the TETHER LINE visible through the porthole STRETCHING INTO THE DISTANCE...and finally disappearing into a dizzying universe of SPIRALING STARS.

INT--COMMAND MODULE--MONTAGE

The MARS CREW sits at the compact kitchen table spooning COLORED PASTES and FREEZE-DRIED FOODS onto their plates. Eating this unappetizing meal with surprising enthusiasm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DISSOLVE TO:

The Mars crew enjoys an evening in their living quarters. FATHER KAYMAN and BRADLEY playing CHESS. Staring at the board. SULIE reading a BOOK. GODDARD with his feet up, listening to a HEADSET. Moments pass. No one moves an inch. Finally, something happens: Sulie turns a page.

DISSOLVE TO:

GODDARD steps up beside a CURTAIN IN THE WALL. He looks around once before KNOCKING on the frame. The CURTAIN SLIDES OPEN, and SULIE peeks out, wearing an undershirt, lying inside a SLEEPING CHAMBER set in the wall. Sulie blinks, as if woken from a deep sleep. Goddard inquires:

GODDARD

Would you like...uh...company?

Sulie looks confused for a moment. But then understands. She smiles, shakes her head, and slides the curtain shut.

DISSOLVE TO:

BRADLEY steps up beside that same square curtain set in the wall. Looks around. He KNOCKS. Waits. The curtain opens--and SULIE stares out. Looking tired and pissed. Her expression immediately giving Bradley his answer. He turns on his heels, and leaves. Sulie watches him go. Then she grabs the curtain, and roughly slides it shut.

DISSOLVE TO:

BRADLEY and GODDARD run side-by-side on TREADMILLS with great passion and gusto. Both men sweating up a storm.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP of a CONTROL PANEL. Quiet. Suddenly, the PANEL COMES ALIVE. A KLAXON SOUNDS and the SCREEN FLASHES RED with the words: "INCOMING RADIATION." A TIMER appears and immediately begins TICKING DOWN FROM FIFTEEN MINUTES.

FATHER KAYMAN and SULIE are holding FOOD TRAYS. Frozen in their tracks. They frown. Share a disappointed look.

KAYMAN

(calling to the others)

We got an incoming solar flare in fifteen--everybody in the shelter.

DISSOLVE TO:

The MARS CREW climbs the rungs to the COSMIC RAY SHELTER.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They march in. The last in line swinging the door shut.

DISSOLVE TO:

INSIDE THE SHELTER. KAYMAN, SULIE, BRADLEY, and GODDARD look like too many people crammed into a tiny elevator. They stare at the ceiling. SIGH. Bradley shifts his position, and bumps into Goddard, who bumps into Kayman, who bumps into Sulie. They all shoot him a dirty look.

DISSOLVE TO:

BRADLEY stands at the terminal set into the outside of the MAN PLUS COCOON. DATA SCROLLS UP THE SCREEN. After a moment, Bradley stops. He steps to the SMALL VIEWING SLOT on the face of the cocoon. Leaning over to see in.

CAMERA'S P.O.V. Looking FROM THE INSIDE OF THE COCOON OUT. The interior appears to be BATHED IN A RED GLOW. The inside walls more BLINKING ELECTRONICS. The only relief is Bradley's face in the window. Staring inside.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP of a RED HAND inside the cocoon. Almost a CLAW.

DISSOLVE TO:

SULIE walks up to the cocoon. Looking around a bit, as if making sure she's alone. Sulie leans toward the slot.

CAMERA'S P.O.V. Looking FROM THE INSIDE OF THE COCOON OUT. Sulie peeks in. Takes a moment to focus her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP of what could be PART OF A WING in the cocoon.

DISSOLVE TO:

FATHER KAYMAN steps to the cocoon. Hesitates. He looks.

CAMERA'S P.O.V. Looking FROM THE INSIDE OF THE COCOON OUT. Father Kayman staring in. Searching the interior. Focusing on something. And making the sign of the cross.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP of a RED GLOWING EYE. Not human. Not blinking.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE-UP of a WIDE CAMERA LENS set in a COMPUTER CONSOLE. A RED LIGHT on the side of the camera indicates it is ON.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GODDARD is crouched down in front of the camera. FATHER KAYMAN and SULIE beside him. BRADLEY is in the rear, but off to one side, as if keeping space open for someone who is not there yet. They are TAKING OFF THEIR WRISTWATCHES and replacing them with NEW WRISTWATCHES. And doing this rather ceremoniously. Each raising their arms to display these new watches for the camera. Holding this position.

INT--NASA BROADCAST STUDIO--DAY

The room is LINED WITH SCREENS DISPLAYING THE IMAGE FROM OUTER SPACE. The TECHNICIANS working at their consoles:

CAMERA MOVES, down a row of screens. One screen seems to ISOLATE THAT EMPTY SPACE NEXT TO BRADLEY. The next one in line ADDS THE DARK OUTLINE OF A HUMAN SHAPE there. The next screen begins to FILL IN THE SHAPE with color.

INT--NEWS ANCHOR DESK--NEWSCAST

A NIGHTLY NEWS ANCHOR pauses as a window opens over his shoulder showing THE MARS CREW EXCHANGING WRISTWATCHES. Goddard crouched down in front. Father Kayman and Sulie beside him. Bradley is in the rear--NEXT TO AN IMAGE OF ROGER TORRAWAY looking as human as the rest of the crew.

ANCHOR

Aboard the command module Mariner this morning, the Mars crew celebrated reaching the halfway point in their journey--by switching to watches that are designed for the Martian day. A day on Mars is 37 minutes longer than here on Earth.

The image is replaced by FUZZY JERKY FOOTAGE that shows something DESCENDING WILDLY DOWN TO THE SURFACE OF MARS.

ANCHOR

Although their arrival on Mars is still months away, the first wave of robotic landers--sent ahead of the crew--has already begun their descent to the surface of the red planet. Among the equipment is a land rover and a fuel synthesizer to generate oxygen and methane as required to power their base camp.

A SIMULATION takes the place of the live footage, showing a ROBOTIC LANDER OPENING UP releasing a CABLE THAT BEGINS TO EXTEND TOWARD THE SKY, like some mechanical beanstalk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANCHOR

One device is designed to deploy a single cable from the surface through the atmosphere--and into orbit above the planet.

ANOTHER SIMULATION shows the GENTLE CURVE OF MARS broken suddenly by the CABLE as it RISES ALL THE WAY INTO SPACE.

ANCHOR (cont'd)

The so-called "elevator to space" is only possible due to the weak Martian gravity; and is intended for the transfer of supplies and equipment between the orbiting command module and the Mars camp.

INT--COMMAND MODULE--MONTAGE

The MARS CREW gathers together. They have never seemed quite so familiar. Kayman carefully positions a CAMERA.

MARS CREW'S P.O.V. A SMALL ROUND PORTHOLE reveals STARS. Spinning. The UNIVERSE IS SPINNING. And then, there is something else: a TINY RED BALL moves into view. About the SIZE OF A SMALL BUTTON. The bright red planet MARS.

DISSOLVE TO:

The planet Mars moves into view. The SIZE OF A GOLFBALL.

DISSOLVE TO:

The planet Mars moves into view. The SIZE OF A BASEBALL.

DISSOLVE TO:

The planet Mars moves into view. The SIZE OF A SOFTBALL.

DISSOLVE TO:

The planet Mars moves into view. For the very first time it is BIGGER THAN THE PORTHOLE. For a moment it BLOCKS OUT THE STARS. As if the entire universe outside is RED.

The MARS CREW is huddled together by the porthole, amazed by the view. Staring in silence. Father Kayman with his eye at his camera CLICKING frame after frame after frame.

INT--THE MAN PLUS COCOON--DAY

ROGER is suspended inside his cocoon. That RED HAND more

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

like a CLAW. His RED GLOWING EYE staring straight ahead. The TIP OF A WING. Suddenly, his FINGER TWITCHES. The EYE MOVES. For the first time his entire body can be seen but it is HIDDEN IN SHADOW. Just the suggestion of a shape that is human, but not human. PULLING AGAINST THE STRAPS KEEPING HIM IN PLACE. Then again. Violently.

INT--THE LIVING QUARTERS--DAY

The MARS CREW is huddled in front of their tiny porthole. Staring out. After a moment, there is a MUTED THUD. The Mars Crew frowns. Looking confused. Then, another THUD.

INT--OUTSIDE THE COCOON--DAY

The Man Plus ELECTRONIC COCOON IS ALIVE with activity: The surface BLINKING. WHIRRING. SCREENS SCROLLING with data. FATHER KAYMAN, SULIE, BRADLEY, and GODDARD stare. All just standing there, like they don't know what to do.

Without warning the COCOON GOES DEAD. The lights flicker off. The noise stops. The screens go gray. Suddenly, they could hear a pin drop. What they hear is THE LATCH SLOWLY TURNING. There is a tiny KLAKE as the door opens.

The door slowly swings away until it hits the side of the cocoon with a KUNK. But nothing happens. The interior is dead. PITCH BLACK. Then a RED HAND grabs for a hold. More like a CLAW. TWO RED GLOWING EYES appear, points of angry light from somewhere in the dark. ROGER emerges.

He is unclothed. His body COVERED IN RED TILES, without human skin. Roger's face is there, clearly recognizable, but his FACE IS RED--and there is nothing to off-set the effect of his GLOWING RED LENSES. Roger says nothing. Not looking at the crew. Sulie is about to speak, when:

Roger's BAT WINGS UNFURL on either side of him. Red and translucent. The wings unfolding. Further. And still further. Taking the width of the capsule and, when they run out of room, curving around the perimeter. The wings move, expanding and contracting, like the wings of a bat.

Roger slowly turns his head toward the rest of the crew. His face lacking any emotion. Roger looks like a DEMON.

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

Nothing but STARS. A GLINT OF METAL APPEARS. It is the COMMAND MODULE rotating at the end of its TETHER LINE. The module sweeps past, disappearing back into the stars.

INT--THE LIVING QUARTERS--DAY

The Mars crew sits around the table: ROGER at one end, perched impossibly on the top edge of a chair, his great wings gathered around and above him, like some housebound gargoyle. KAYMAN, SULIE, and BRADLEY line the table with COMMANDER GODDARD at the far end. They can't take their eyes off Roger, although they seem as if they'd like to.

SULIE

We're all happy you can finally join us, Roger. Even though it was a bit of a surprise.

Everyone waits for Roger to respond, but he says nothing. Roger is absolutely still. Only his wings RUSTLE gently.

GODDARD

Bradley? Feel free to comment.

BRADLEY

Either he doesn't want to talk or he can't. It's as simple as that.

GODDARD

Let's assume for the moment that he can't. Why would that be?

SULIE

Can something be wrong with the interface between his brain and his computer?

BRADLEY

I wouldn't say that anything is "wrong." That's overstating it.

KAYMAN

(a bit too loudly)
You don't think there's something a little wrong here?!

Short pause. Everyone gives Kayman a look. They notice that the Priest seems rather deeply unsettled by Roger.

BRADLEY

Look. I realize this isn't what we expected, but just because he isn't engaging in small talk--

SULIE

(interrupting)
Roger. Do you know why the computer woke you up early?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pause. Roger does not respond. His wings RUSTLE gently.

SULIE

Commander, you ask him. He may respond to an inquiry from you.

GODDARD

Rog. Do we have a problem?

The answer is immediate. Almost before Goddard finishes:

ROGER

(an inhuman voice)
YESSSSSSSSSSSSSS.

Pause. The quality of Roger's voice seems to stun them.

GODDARD

What kind of problem?

Roger touches a spot on the tabletop. A KEYBOARD rises, and he begins TAPPING furiously, not even looking at the keys. The TABLE TURNS INTO A SCREEN and everyone watches the table scroll with SHIP BLUEPRINTS AND DIAGRAMS. The graphics work their way down the course of the tether line to the BOOSTER MODULE, highlighting an INSIDE PANEL.

Everyone shifts in their seats to see a graphic of what looks like a SIMPLE COMPUTER CIRCUIT. The screen BLINKS.

GODDARD

When we disengage the tether, this circuit will blow.

KAYMAN

I don't understand. How can Roger even know about this?

BRADLEY

With Roger in stasis, his computer wouldn't have a lot to do. So, it was designed to act as a watch-dog to detect problems that the ship's own navigating system would be too busy to detect. Looks like it did.

SULIE

Yes, it did. Two hours from orbit. Can we fix this in time?

GODDARD

That's a good question. How about it, Rog? Do you think you can re-route this entire panel?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROGER

YESSSSSSSSSSSSSS.

GODDARD

And can you complete the procedure
before the orbital burn?

ROGER

YESSSSSSSSSSSSSS.

GODDARD

All right then. Let's go to work.

They all start to go. But Father Kayman stops them with:

KAYMAN

Isn't anybody worried about Roger?

Pause. Everybody turns. Looks at Roger atop the chair.

GODDARD

He seems fine, for the time being.

Kayman is about to protest. But Goddard sees it coming:

GODDARD (cont'd)

If something goes wrong with that
burn, we could bounce off Mars on
our way out of the solar system--
or burn up in the atmosphere. Do
either of these sound appealing?
Our first priority is this ship.

SULIE

Look. Maybe I can have some time
with Roger. A few minutes, alone.

Goddard looks into Sulie's eyes, and decides not to put
up an argument. He nods his approval. Turning to Roger:

GODDARD

Rog. Major Carpenter is going to
speak with you. Maybe, ask you a
question or two. You understand?

Roger is balanced on the chair. His wings RUSTLE gently.

ROGER

YESSSSSSSSSSSSSS.

CUT TO:

ROGER is still perched impossibly on the top edge of that
chair. His great wings gathered around and above him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Like a gargoyle. SULIE sits directly across from him in the opposing chair. Posture casual. Her expression not:

SULIE

How are you feeling?

Long pause. Roger does not respond. But, for the first time, his WINGS CLEARLY STOP THEIR RUSTLING. Absolutely still. The silence is acute without that gentle rustle.

SULIE

Well. Maybe we can come back to that one, later, huh?

Roger does not respond. But HIS WINGS RUSTLE once more.

INT--INSIDE THE AIRLOCK--DAY

BRADLEY wiggles inside the TOP HALF OF HIS SPACESUIT held in place on the wall. Once inside, he lifts the suit off the supports, with a grimace. FATHER KAYMAN immediately goes to work SNAPPING LATCHES and connecting TUBES and hitting SWITCHES to a FSSSSSSSSH. Kayman is working like a man possessed. Hitting a CLASP here. Pulling VELCRO taut there. Faster. And faster. And rougher. Bradley looks irritated. Kayman SLAMS A LATCH DOWN on the chest plate and, just as Bradley is about to complain, Kayman grabs the spacesuit and shoves Bradley against the wall:

KAYMAN

(bordering on a threat)

What the hell is wrong with Roger?

Bradley frowns. Latches the mechanism at the base of his HELMET with a KLAk, staring at Kayman through the visor.

BRADLEY

I calibrated Roger's systems using figures transmitted to me directly from the super-computer in Houston, double-checked by a second located at Los Alamos, New Mexico. I know you may not think much of me, on a personal level. But I know my job.

(short pause)

Can you let me go, please, Father?

Kayman realizes he is still holding him pinned. Lets go.

KAYMAN

(controlled, but angry)

How can the figures they've been sending you be so wrong?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRADLEY

I don't suppose they can be wrong.

KAYMAN

But his personality is completely submerged. You saw Roger.

BRADLEY

Don. I don't want to lie to you. We did what we believed we had to do to keep Roger alive. Truth is, no one knew if his human identity would ever survive the procedure.

(short pause)

Now we know, don't we?

INT--THE LIVING QUARTERS--DAY

ROGER is perched impossibly on the top edge of his chair. SULIE sits across from him. Roger's wings RUSTLE gently.

SULIE

Is this mission important to you?

ROGER

YESSSSSSSSSSSSSS.

SULIE

Can you tell me why?

ROGER

NNNNNNNNNNNNNO.

SULIE

Being the first man on Mars was a dream of yours, wasn't it, Roger? The happiest moments of your life were those spent hanging in orbit above the Earth, and on the moon.

Pause. Roger does not respond. His wings RUSTLE gently.

SULIE

Could those be some reasons why the mission is important to you?

ROGER

YESSSSSSSSSSSSSS.

SULIE

How are you feeling?

Roger's WINGS STOP THEIR RUSTLING. And again the silence

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

seems acute. Sulie's demeanor begins to visibly crack. Like this is breaking her up. A difficult pause before:

SULIE

I'm honored to be here with you, Colonel, to witness the culmination of all your dreams.

Roger is perched on the chair like a gargoyle. His face emotionless. Great wings gathered around and above him.

ROGER

THHHHHHHHHHHHANK YYYYYYYYYYYYYOU.

INT--INSIDE THE COCKPIT--DAY

GODDARD wears a HEADSET. He speaks into the mouthpiece:

GODDARD

...Colonel Torraway will traverse the tether and re-route the panel. Dr. Bradley is the logical choice to accompany him in the case that Roger experiences some difficulty. Houston, this message will take 20 minutes to reach Earth. Figuring ten minutes for you folks to come up with a response, and 20-minutes for your reply to arrive, I expect we'll have this problem licked by then. It's times like these when we realize how far away we really are. This is Mariner. Out.

INT--ON THE SCIENCE LEVEL--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN positions a HEADSET into place. Looks up.

KAYMAN

Bradley? Can you hear me?

BRADLEY'S VOICE

Yes. I can hear you.

SULIE steps up. Wearing her HEADSET. She looks up, too.

INT--INSIDE THE AIRLOCK--DAY

ROGER sits in the first position on the TETHER-RIDER with the SPACESUITED BRADLEY in the second seat. Both mounted on a motorcycle that POINTS UP LIKE A ROCKET. Beneath

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them, set into the floor, rests the INNER AIRLOCK DOOR. Through the porthole FATHER KAYMAN and SULIE are visible staring up inside the airlock, with worried expressions.

There is a DEEP RUMBLE. A BRIGHT SLIVER OF LIGHT strikes Roger and Bradley. Growing wider. Wider. Bradley looks awed for a brief moment before his VISOR DARKENS and his face is replaced by the REFLECTION OF THE STARS OUTSIDE.

ROGER AND BRADLEY'S P.O.V. The OUTER DOOR OPENS to the void of space. The TETHER LINE stretches off toward the stars, disappearing into the distance, as if endless. Outside the ship the whole UNIVERSE SEEMS TO BE SPINNING.

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

The TETHER-RIDER EMERGES from the airlock and starts out across the enormous cable. ROGER AND BRADLEY are bathed in the bright harsh light of space. Roger's WINGS EXPAND TO THEIR FULL LENGTH. Shimmering in the light. The SHIP ABRUPTLY RECEDES behind them as they sail down the cable.

INSIDE BRADLEY'S HELMET. Bradley makes a SUCKING SOUND.

INT--ON THE SCIENCE LEVEL--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN and SULIE share a look. GODDARD steps up.

KAYMAN

Everything okay, Brad?

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

Looking down at the tether from above: ROGER AND BRADLEY sail across the cable as, below them, the UNIVERSE SPINS.

BRADLEY

Yeah. This is just...one hell of a ride. That's all.

Bradley turns stiffly. The command module is just barely visible. A GLINT OF REFLECTED LIGHT. Then gone. Right now, they seem to be riding a cable stretching from one side of the universe to the other. There is some STATIC:

KAYMAN'S VOICE

How's Roger doing?

BRADLEY'S P.O.V. Looking out through his FOGGING HELMET VISOR: Panning across spiraling stars. Turning toward Roger now. His wings seem to grow right out of his back.

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CONTINUED:

BRADLEY

Fine.

KAYMAN'S VOICE

You're nearing the mid-point. Can you see that on your tracker?

Bradley twists his body. Tilting down, and to the side:

CLOSE-UP of a SCREEN on the tether-rider's console. The DIAGRAM OF THE SHIP there has a DOT marking the mid-point of the cable. A BLINKING DOT is quickly approaching it. Bradley's GLOVED HAND wipes away a layer of SPACE DUST.

BRADLEY

Yes. It's working. I can see it.

Bradley leans over the console. The DISTORTED REFLECTION IN THE CORNER OF HIS HELMET VISOR shows Roger sitting in the front seat. Suddenly, the REFLECTION MOVES. Roger RETRACTS HIS WINGS, and TURNS AROUND. Bradley's visor reflects a DISTORTED IMAGE OF ROGER PERCHED MENACINGLY ON THE CYCLE. Like a gargoyle. Bradley turns back around:

BRADLEY

Rog?

A DISTORTED IMAGE in his visor of a FIST RUSHING CLOSER.

BRADLEY

AAA--

Roger's FIST BURSTS BRADLEY'S HELMET and JAGGED SHARDS OF SHINY VISOR SPIRAL AWAY beside PERFECT SPHERES OF BLOOD.

INT--ON THE SCIENCE LEVEL--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN, SULIE, and GODDARD stiffen. Step closer.

KAYMAN

Brad, what is it? What's wrong?

Nothing but STATIC. The Priest touches his mouthpiece:

KAYMAN

(weaker)

Brad?

INT--INSIDE THE AIRLOCK--DAY

DARK. Then a PANEL SLIDES OPEN. SULIE and GODDARD are looking down through the visors of their SPACESUITS. For

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a moment there is nothing but ECHOED BREATHING from their suits. Then a HUM as something rises. Goddard and Sulie step back as a SECOND TETHER-RIDER emerges from storage. They exchange a look across the top of the rider. Grim.

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

The AIRLOCK OPENS revealing SULIE AND GODDARD atop the TETHER-RIDER. Goddard in the first position and Sulie in the second. Their faces are visible for a moment before their VISORS DARKEN leaving only the REFLECTION OF THE ENORMOUS TETHER disappearing into a SPIRALING UNIVERSE.

They ride out into the void on a cable across the stars.

INT--ON THE SCIENCE LEVEL--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN paces back-and-forth. Finally, can't wait:

KAYMAN

Major? You see anything?

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

SULIE AND GODDARD ride the tether. Goddard lifts a thick glove and points. Sulie slowly leans to look around him:

SULIE AND GODDARD'S P.O.V. The tether stretches on into the distance. But there is something above it. Whatever it is FLASHES LIKE A LIGHTHOUSE. As if it is rotating.

SULIE

Yes. Something up ahead now.

The object in the distance takes shape, no longer a glint of light without clear boundaries. It has ARMS AND LEGS. Becoming a SPACESUIT floating above the cable. Rotating.

SULIE

Oh, god. It's Brad.

Goddard manipulates the controls and they pull to a stop underneath the spacesuit. As what's left of the suit rotates around, they can see that the VISOR IS SHATTERED, and there is NOTHING IN THE HELMET BUT BLOOD SPLATTERED ON THE INTERIOR. As if Bradley's head exploded in there.

Sulie's BREATHING suddenly comes faster. Still faster.

SULIE

Shit. I'm gonna be sick in here.

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CONTINUED:

Sulie and Goddard lean back, a DISTORTED REFLECTION OF THE SPINNING SPACESUIT ON THEIR HELMET VISORS as Brad's dead body rotates around again, the burst faceplate like some sick, twisted caricature of a wild laughing mouth.

Sulie's BREATHING begins to slow. They stare up at what remains of Bradley. In contrast to the cold artificial look of their spacesuits, and the universe around them reflected in their visors, their voices sound very human:

GODDARD

Major. You all right?

SULIE

I think so. Why is he spinning around like that?

GODDARD

He isn't. We are.

SULIE

Oh...yeah. Right.

Sulie leans over. Looks at the console seen earlier: a DIAGRAM OF THE SHIP shows they are at the exact center of the tether. The BLINKING DOT marking the location is the only point on the ship that appears to remain stationary.

SULIE

We're exactly half-way across the tether. The ship rotates around this central point.

INT--ON THE SCIENCE LEVEL--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN is listening. His eyes moving. Confused.

KAYMAN

So, what are you saying?

SULIE'S VOICE

I'm saying that Roger killed Brad at the only point along the cable where we could retrieve his body.

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

SULIE and GODDARD watch the dead body rotate above them.

SULIE (cont'd)

Could be a coincidence, or maybe Roger wanted us to find him.

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CONTINUED:

KAYMAN'S VOICE

What are we going to do?

There is no response. Sulie shifts her position a bit.

SULIE

Commander?

INSIDE GODDARD'S HELMET. Goddard stares out through his helmet visor. Looking grim. SWEAT runs down his face. It takes him a moment to realize he has been addressed.

GODDARD

Let's bring Bradley's body down.

Sulie reaches to the waist of her suit. PULLS OUT A HOOK AND LINE from the belt. Attaches the hook to the rider.

Sulie stands up, and PUSHES OFF. FLOATING UP TOWARD THE BODY spinning above her. Like a skin diver rising to the surface of the water. Her BREATHING coming a bit faster.

Goddard watches. Sulie above him REFLECTED IN HIS VISOR.

CLOSE-UP of SULIE'S GLOVED HAND approaching a HOOK set in the chest plate of Brad's suit. No sound but BREATHING. Sulie floats closer. The thick tips of her fingers about to make contact...when suddenly HER HAND IS PULLED AWAY.

SULIE IS SPUN AROUND. Goddard is manipulating the rider controls. Hurling down the tether PULLING SULIE BEHIND HIM. She begins to spin at the end of her safety line. Helpless. Arms and legs outstretched. BREATHING rapid.

SULIE

Commander?

There is no response. Goddard's face hidden behind a visor REFLECTING THE STARS. He reaches a gloved hand to the console FLIPPING A SERIES OF TOGGLES to great STATIC.

INT--ON THE SCIENCE LEVEL--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN jerks as STATIC rips through his headset.

KAYMAN

Major? What's the matter? Sulie?

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

SULIE spins helplessly at the end of the safety line, her BREATHING coming in furious waves. Below her, GODDARD is

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CONTINUED:

pressing the tether-rider forward, his face hidden behind his visor. Pulling Sulie along like a water skier in the sky. Goddard leans over stiffly. Looks at the console:

CLOSE-UP of that SCREEN. The DIAGRAM OF THE SHIP shows their current location with a BLINKING DOT. Far now from the center, the dot is clearly rotating in a wide circle.

Goddard stops the rider...but SULIE KEEPS GOING, floating over him to the front of the cycle, until the safety wire goes TAUT and she stops. Spinning wildly now. BREATHING frantically. REFLECTED IN THE VISOR of Goddard's helmet.

INSIDE GODDARD'S HELMET. Goddard watches Sulie floating above him. He is drenched with sweat. Looking like he'd rather be someplace else but knowing that's not possible:

GODDARD

I'm truly sorry, Major.

Goddard's thick gloved hand takes hold of the SAFETY LINE anchoring Sulie to the tether-rider. Then he UNHOOKS IT.

INSIDE SULIE'S HELMET. Sulie watches Goddard wide-eyed.

SULIE'S P.O.V. Sulie's BREATHING IS DEAFENING inside the helmet. Through her FOGGED VISOR Goddard and the tether line BEGIN TO MOVE AWAY. Rotating on its mile-wide arc.

Sulie releases a TORTURED SCREAM as the UNIVERSE SUDDENLY STOPS SPINNING around her. The TETHER LINE RECEDING INTO THE DISTANCE. Goddard and the tether-rider already too small to make out. Sulie hangs alone in the empty void of space. Spinning slowly. Finally her SCREAMING STOPS.

And then there is only the lonely sound of her BREATHING.

INT--ON THE SCIENCE LEVEL--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN stands helpless. Tapping his microphone:

KAYMAN

Major? Commander? Come in.

The Priest stands there looking worried. His expression deepens as a familiar KLAXON sounds. Kayman turns to see a COMPUTER PANEL COMING ALIVE. The SCREEN FLASHES RED with the words: "INCOMING RADIATION." A TIMER appears and immediately begins TICKING DOWN from THIRTY MINUTES.

KAYMAN

Oh, Lord. Is anybody receiving me? Please respond. Hello?

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CAMERA'S P.O.V. LOOKING IN FROM THE OUTSIDE: The open airlock reveals the INNER AIRLOCK DOOR and, through the PORTHOLE set in the door, Kayman is visible staring up and out into space. Looking helpless. And quite alone.

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

GODDARD sails across the tether toward a GLINT OF LIGHT that becomes the BOOSTER MODULE. Soon it dwarfs him. Goddard rides the tether inside and disappears from view.

INT--THE BOOSTER MODULE--DAY

An INNER AIRLOCK DOOR OPENS and GODDARD climbs down into a module that's all PIPES AND TANKS. Goddard reaches the bottom. Looks around. As if searching for someone. He opens the mechanism at his neck and removes his helmet. Not easy. He looks exhausted. Hair matted to his head.

Goddard steps down a ROW OF TANKS giving off STEAM that hangs in the air like a thick wet fog. He sees a PANEL WITH A TANGLE OF JURY-RIGGED WIRES protruding. He stops.

Goddard looks over the work. Behind him, the DENSE STEAM SUDDENLY CLEARS...and ROGER is visible standing between two large tanks. His RED EYES GLOWING. The steam around him seems to catch the red. His face cold. No emotion.

GODDARD

Good work, Rog. We'll be able to disengage the tether, and perform the orbital burn, without blowing the booster.

Pause. Roger seems to want to speak. But it looks like it's a struggle. Finally, he manages to open his mouth:

ROGER

THIS SSSSSSHIP IZZZZZZ WRRRRRONG.

Goddard turns. Looks Roger over, as if surprised. Nods.

GODDARD

That's correct, Colonel. Your work here is a band-aid. Four days prior to launch, our boys at the cape found a design flaw. This ship will lose 60% of its power twenty-seven hours after achieving orbit around Mars. I'm afraid this mission was doomed to fail...before it ever began.

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CONTINUED:

Roger takes one step from the steam. Goddard moves back.

GODDARD

It's a goddamn shame. But we did have to go before the launch window closed--if we wanted to get a two-year head start on the Asians.

Roger takes a second step forward. Goddard moves back.

GODDARD (cont'd)

Unfortunately, the ship won't have enough power to support four human crew members during the five month trip back to Earth.

Roger moves forward, his wings conforming to the space between the tanks. Goddard backs away. Looking nervous.

GODDARD

I assume some part of you realizes you've been programmed to dispose of the rest of the crew. In case you're wondering, my orders are to get you down to Mars. At any cost.

Roger reaches Goddard. Lifts him off the floor, and pins him against a tank. Hard. Goddard grimaces with pain:

GODDARD

The one thing I'm not sure of yet is whether you've been programmed to kill me too...

Roger raises his fist into the air as if about to strike. Goddard flinches before the blow. But he keeps talking:

GODDARD (cont'd)

...or if you're just supposed to frighten me into obeying orders.

Goddard closes his eyes. But nothing happens. He opens them. Roger has unclenched his fist. After a moment, he lowers him to the floor. Goddard falls back against the tank. Bent over a little at the waist. BREATHING hard.

GODDARD

Yeah. Of course. Keep the pilot.

CLOSE-UP of ROGER. For the first time there is a hint of expression there. Pain. He fights to get out the words:

ROGER

HHHHHHHHHHHHHHHELP MEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Goddard stares up at Roger. As if they are both damned.

GODDARD

I'm sorry, Colonel. But there's nothing I can do for you. We've got a burn coming up. You need to take care of the priest. Now.

Roger stands there for a moment. His wings RUSTLING. Then he abruptly turns...and DISAPPEARS INTO THE STEAM.

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

An OPENING appears on the BOOSTER MODULE spewing BRIGHT LIGHT into space. ROGER climbs out. Just a DEMON SHADOW in the middle of the light. Perched on the side of the booster with his wings gathered around him. Roger leaps.

Roger floats in space and HIS WINGS UNFURL to their full length. Like an enormous space bat. Immediately the STARS STOP SPINNING and behind him the BOOSTER RECEDES INTO THE DISTANCE. Roger hangs in space. His EYES GLOW.

Nothing. And then, a GLINT OF METAL appears. Becoming the COMMAND MODULE making its sweep through space. Roger floating directly in its path. Suddenly, he looks tiny.

The command module sweeps past TAKING ROGER WITH IT. On the outside of the ship, Roger slides across the surface clawing for a grip--the METAL CRUMPLING as he grabs hold. The ship continues on. A winged passenger on its back.

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

SULIE floats alone in space. No sound but her BREATHING. Spinning a little. She stares out her visor. With the vacant stare of the dead. Then, her eyes seem to focus.

In the distance SOMETHING IS BLOCKING OUT THE STARS. It gets larger. Larger. The TETHER LINE. Moving through space without an apparent beginning or end. The cable grows thicker. Barreling toward the defenseless Sulie.

The TETHER PASSES UNDER HER disappearing in the distance as quickly as it appeared. Sulie hangs in space. Alone. But it is clear from her expression that she is thinking.

INT--ON THE SCIENCE LEVEL--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN paces back-and-forth looking helpless. He turns as he notices a GREEN LIGHT FLASHING. Kayman steps

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over to the console and hits a switch. Immediately the SCREEN comes alive: a NASA TECHNICIAN obviously sitting inside MISSION CONTROL. He is pleasant and professional.

TECHNICIAN

Mariner, Houston here. Received your transmission and we confirm your EVA to the booster--glad to see Colonel Torraway is working out. Best of luck. Houston out.

And the IMAGE BLIPS OFF. Kayman stares at the screen, like he doesn't know whether to laugh or cry. Behind him the PORTHOLE IS VISIBLE. Nothing but SPIRALING STARS on the other side. Then ROGER APPEARS. Crawling across the outside of the ship. Roger stops and stares through the porthole at Kayman. RED EYES GLOWING. After a moment he crawls away. Kayman turns toward the porthole just as Roger disappears from view. The Priest never sees him.

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

SULIE is snapping into place a flimsy-looking device that seems to assemble from her belt. Arms, handgrips, and what appear to be tiny jets: an EMERGENCY THRUSTER PACK. Sulie locks the grips into position...and looks surprised as she hears a RIDICULOUSLY-PLEASANT FEMALE VOICE begin:

FEMALE VOICE

Hello! You have assembled your emergency thruster pack. You now have 15 seconds of maneuvering thrusters available!

Sulie hesitates, as if nervous. Then her thumb depresses one of the grips and a FLASH OF WHITE HEAT from the jets sends her into a VICIOUS SPIN. Her BREATHING gets faster and faster as she spins. Her other thumb depresses its grip, and an OPPOSING BURST slows her. Stops the spin.

FEMALE VOICE

Hello! You now have 8 seconds of maneuvering thrusters available!

Sulie looks terrified. BREATHING. She steadies herself. Hits one grip, and then the other. Managing to turn herself completely around and to steady herself in place.

FEMALE VOICE

Hello! You now have 4 seconds of maneuvering thrusters available!

Sulie looks close to passing out. SWEAT pouring down her

(CONTINUED)

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face. She shakes her head. Straining her eyes to see:

SULIE'S P.O.V. Her visor is FOGGED. BREATHING deafening inside her helmet. Something is coming now: THE TETHER.

Sulie HITS THE THRUSTERS and DROPS DOWN INTO THE PATH of the cable hurling closer. For a moment it looks like she will reach it, but then it becomes clear that Sulie has timed her maneuver incorrectly and is FLOATING TOO LOW.

FEMALE VOICE

Hello! You are out of maneuvering thrusters. Sorry!

Inside her helmet, Sulie looks frantic. The tether about to pass above her. She reaches for a device strapped to her leg. It snaps free and immediately expands into the shape of a HOOK. Sulie stretches her arm. The HOOK CATCHES THE CABLE and the UNIVERSE STARTS SPINNING wildly around her as Sulie is dragged along behind the tether.

INT--THE COMMAND MODULE--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN frowns at the MANUALS open in front of him as he moves switches on a COMPUTER TERMINAL. Wiping the SWEAT from his face. He loses his place in one book, and furiously flips pages to find it. Hitting more switches.

THE SCREEN runs a DIAGRAM OF THE SHIP HIGHLIGHTING SPOTS along the tether. "TETHER DISCONNECT" flashing. Then a GRAPHIC OF AN ORBITAL APPROACH plays showing the COMMAND MODULE ENTERING ORBIT AROUND MARS with: "ORBITAL LOCK."

A PANEL SLIDES OPEN and a LARGE RED BUTTON emerges from the terminal covered by a PROTECTIVE SHIELD. The Priest reads the manual. Uses a KEY to unlock and pull it down. Kayman steps back. As if away from that big red button.

KAYMAN

(into his headset)

Hello? Is anybody reading me?

ROGER'S VOICE

YESSSSSSSSSSSSSS.

Kayman turns to see ROGER in the shadows. His RED EYES are visible. The tip of his WINGS extend into the light.

KAYMAN

Roger. What's going on?

ROGER

RRRRRRRRRRRRRRUN AWAYYYYYYYYYYYYY.

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CONTINUED:

Roger steps from the shadows. His FACE SHOWS EMOTION. A look of great pain and anguish beneath his glowing eyes.

ROGER

(more human than before)

Rrrrun away. Before I kill yyyyou.

Father Kayman looks too terrified to move. Then he takes one step to the side and DROPS THROUGH THE HOLE TO THE LEVEL BELOW. The Priest hits the floor hard and GRUNTS. Rolls. He rises to his feet as ROGER DROPS DOWN BEHIND HIM. His wings following him like a great predator bird. Kayman scrambles to a hole, and DROPS INTO THE COCKPIT.

He falls past the seats, landing brutally on top of the control panel directly between two PORTHOLES revealing the SPIRALING STARS. Kayman is at the tip of the ship, with nowhere else to go. He looks up. Nothing. Then ROGER APPEARS. Hanging over the cockpit opening like an animal. Getting ready to leap. Kayman looks terrified.

His fingers frantically search the console for a SWITCH. Finding it. Kayman SLAMS HIS FIST DOWN. Roger makes a move to swoop down but the BULKHEAD SLIDES CLOSED. Roger hits it with a DEAFENING DOOM. Kayman watches the METAL CRUMPLE as Roger punches from the other side. DOOOOOOOM.

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

SULIE rests on top of the TETHER LINE. Hanging onto the thick cable, like a child to an inner tube. No sound but her BREATHING. All around her THE UNIVERSE IS SPINNING.

Sulie begins to crawl. The tether seems endless, and her BREATHING is strained. Sulie stops at a HATCH set in the cable with an INSET KNOB. She wipes the THICK DUST away.

Sulie leans close to READ THE INSTRUCTIONS. She reaches a gloved hand into the recess and tries to turn the knob. No sound but her heavy BREATHING. The knob won't budge.

Sulie pauses to rest, and then her body seems to stiffen:

SULIE'S P.O.V. The visor is so badly fogged it is almost impenetrable. Her BREATHING DEAFENING. But, through the fog, there is movement: GODDARD riding the tether line.

Sulie reads the instructions again, her BREATHING getting frantic. Using both hands on the knob. It turns. The PANEL OPENS revealing the HOLLOW INTERIOR OF THE TETHER.

Sulie clumsily scrambles to maneuver her thick spacesuit through the small opening and down into the hollow cable.

INT--THRU THE TETHER LINE--DAY

SULIE finds herself inside a long, dark, METAL TUNNEL. No light except that coming from the open panel above her and the ILLUMINATION FROM HER SPACESUIT. Her VISOR TURNS CLEAR and, through the fogged glass, her face is visible.

Sulie's expression hardens. She begins to pull herself through the cable. Like a combination of crawling and floating. Not much room. It looks incredibly difficult. Her tortured BREATHING coming in between her movements.

Sulie pulls herself along. The DIM YELLOW LIGHTS on the spacesuit illuminating only a few feet in front of her.

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

GODDARD rides the tether. His gloved hands gripping the controls. He stops the rider, and leans over. REFLECTED IN HIS VISOR is the distorted image of the OPEN PANEL in the cable. His thick gloves squeeze the controls and the tether speeds over the opening. Further. Still further. Suddenly, Goddard stops the rider. Dismounts. Dropping to his knees onto the tether and bending over something: a SECOND ACCESS PANEL leading to the inside of the cable.

INT--THE COMMAND MODULE--DAY

DOOM. The BULKHEAD BENDS as Roger strikes it again from the other side. Won't last much longer. FATHER KAYMAN looks around, frantically. He spots an AIR VENT in what from his point-of-view is the ceiling. Big enough for a person? Kayman hurries to the grill, and pulls it loose.

INT--INSIDE AN AIR VENT--DAY

KAYMAN puts his foot on a chair, and hoists himself into the vent. Tight. Incredibly tight. The Priest grimaces as he hugs the walls of the shaft to pull himself inside. There is an incredible WRENCHING SOUND and ROGER appears. Staring up into the vent after Kayman with inhuman eyes.

Kayman pulls himself through. Passing a GRILLED OPENING:

KAYMAN'S P.O.V. Looking through the grill out onto the LIVING QUARTERS. Suddenly, Roger leaps through the hole in the floor up from the cockpit. Crouching for a moment like a predator. Then running for the vent and Kayman.

The Priest frantically pulls himself up the shaft just as Roger makes contact and the METAL BELOW HIM CRUMPLES.

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Part of ROGER'S ARM AND WING HAVE BROKEN THROUGH. They look stuck. Roger struggling to get free and releasing a DEAFENING INHUMAN SHRIEK. Kayman keeps crawling, faster.

INT--THE LIVING QUARTERS--DAY

ROGER is stuck. He claws at the metal...until suddenly his hand stops in mid-air, shaking, as if Roger's trying to stop his arm. Roger stumbles loose from the wall. Jerking wildly like he can't control his body. He stops himself in the center of the room. Standing there like a man with the shakes. Suddenly, he spins crazily and his WINGS EXPAND SLICING AND SCRAPING THE WALLS. Again Roger manages to stop himself. His face showing the struggle:

ROGER

SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSTOP.

Roger falls to his knees. His expression suddenly quite human. He looks frantic. Like he knows he doesn't have much time. Roger reaches over his shoulder and tries to get at the RECTANGULAR SHAPE IN HIS LOWER BACK. He can't reach it. Seems to get angry. Roger stands and hurls himself backwards CRASHING INTO THE BULKHEAD. Again and again and again. As if attempting to smash his computer.

CLOSE-UP of the COMPUTER ON HIS BACK. Being BENT a bit. Some of the RED TILES coming loose revealing SILVER METAL underneath. Another CRASH, and ELECTRONICS are visible.

INT--ON THE SCIENCE LEVEL--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN appears behind the grill on the wall. He grabs the grate, pushes, and tumbles out onto the floor.

INT--THE LIVING QUARTERS--DAY

At the sound of the MUTED THUD from above, ROGER freezes. Like an animal that's just detected prey. His expression becomes lifeless again as he immediately rushes forward.

INT--ON THE SCIENCE LEVEL--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN extends his hand toward the big RED BUTTON.

KAYMAN

(as if in prayer)

Forgive me....

Kayman presses the button. Immediately FIVE ROUND LIGHTS

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ACTIVATE beside the switch. The FIFTH LIGHT GOES DARK accompanied by a BEEEEP. Like a timer. Or, a countdown.

ROGER LEAPS UP THROUGH THE FLOOR. Father Kayman turns, looking terrified. Roger grabs him by his flight suit and THROWS HIM ACROSS THE ROOM like a rag doll. Kayman hits the bulkhead, and crumples lifelessly to the floor.

INT--THRU THE TETHER LINE--DAY

Exhausted BREATHING. SULIE crawls through the cable, the dim lights illuminating only a few feet in front of her.

INT--ON THE SCIENCE LEVEL--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN lies motionless. ROGER moving toward him.

CLOSE-UP of those FIVE LIGHTS. The fifth is out and now so is the fourth. The THIRD LIGHT GOES OUT to a BEEEEEEEP.

INT--THRU THE TETHER LINE--DAY

SULIE crawls. Her helmet lights illuminate nothing but the same endless metal walls. She crawls. BREATHING. Suddenly, the dim yellow light reveals GODDARD two feet in front of her. His grim face visible through his helmet bubble. Looking foreboding in the sickly light.

INT--ON THE SCIENCE LEVEL--DAY

ROGER crouches before FATHER KAYMAN. His wings stretched around and above him. Like a gargoyle. He moves ever so slightly. As if Roger is getting ready to jump. Kayman begins to stir, face grimacing in pain. He sees Roger. Kayman raises his arms up over his face as Roger leaps.

CLOSE-UP of the TERMINAL. Four lights dim. The LAST LIGHT BLINKS OUT with a BEEP and the ENTIRE SHIP RUMBLES.

The craft violently tilts and Father Kayman slides across the floor. Roger's jump is thrown off and he CRASHES INTO A CONTROL PANEL, smashing it, as ship ALARMS GO OFF.

INT--THRU THE TETHER LINE--DAY

GODDARD reaches for SULIE as the TETHER LINE CRACKS OPEN beneath him. The harsh light of outer space illuminates Goddard's terrified face before his VISOR DARKENS and REFLECTS THE STARS. The opening in the tether widens and

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Goddard almost tumbles out. He grabs for a hold. His legs stuck inside one half of the tether--and his arms holding on to the other half. Like a Saturday cartoon.

Sulie sees her opportunity and frantically CRAWLS ACROSS GODDARD'S BACK. Using his body as a bridge across open space. Sulie pulls herself inside the other half of the severed tether line as GODDARD SPIRALS OUT INTO THE VOID.

Sulie BREATHEs faster. Faster. Crawling away from the endless SPINNING UNIVERSE at the end of the gaping hole.

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

The MANEUVERING THRUSTERS on the COMMAND MODULE engage releasing SHORT BURSTS OF WHITE HEAT. The module rolls.

INT--THRU THE TETHER LINE--DAY

SULIE grabs for a handhold as the INTERIOR OF THE CABLE RUSHES FURIOUSLY PAST HER. Behind Sulie the OPEN END of the tether races closer. Closer. Just as she is about to be hurled into space Sulie raises that METAL HOOK, dragging the tip along the inside of the cable to SPARKS.

There doesn't seem to be anything for it to grab onto. OPEN SPACE RUSHES CLOSER. Suddenly the HOOK CATCHES ON A JOINT--and stops--but so quickly that Sulie cannot keep a grip. Her thick GLOVE SLIDES DOWN THE HANDLE. And off.

Sulie releases a TERRIFIED SCREAM as she TUMBLES OUT INTO SPACE. For a moment, all looks lost...until she suddenly JERKS TO A STOP. There is a THIN SAFETY WIRE connecting the handle of the hook to its compartment on Sulie's THIGH. She dangles helplessly, trailing behind the ship.

INT--THE COMMAND MODULE--DAY

The module is DARK. The LIGHTS FURIOUSLY BLINKING on the face of the computer creating the illusion of a WILD STROBE. ROGER is tangled inside the remains of the panel he collided with. He rips the metal like paper. FATHER KAYMAN is crumpled in the far corner. He begins to stir.

The computer SCREEN displays some GRAPHICS OF THE COMMAND MODULE. Separated from the booster module, and clearly trailing a section of the tether. The words "TETHER DISCONNECT COMPLETE" appear, and then "ORBITAL APPROACH."

Roger pulls a TWISTED CHUNK OF METAL FREE and tosses it aside. His GLOWING EYES scan the interior. Spot Kayman.

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CLOSE-UP of a SPEAKER set into the face of the computer:

ARTIFICIAL VOICE

Zero-gravity in three seconds.

Father Kayman opens his eyes. Sees Roger moving toward him. The STROBE EFFECT from the blinking computer bathes the entire capsule alternately in deep DARKNESS followed by a moment of harsh LIGHT. Roger is nothing but TWO RED EYES in the darkness. A DEMON come to life in the light. With each burst of the light Roger is closer, and closer.

Kayman lays there. Dazed. Then his expression changes:

KAYMAN'S P.O.V. The capsule goes DARK again. Roger is nothing but a set of EYES. When the LIGHTS come back, Kayman does not see Roger: In his delirium the Priest sees SATAN--the Devil himself--with EXAGGERATED FEATURES AND TWO RED HORNS. The Devil's hideous mouth opens in a grotesque grin. Gesturing. AS IF BECKONING THE PRIEST.

Kayman looks terrified. Eyes wide. Then his face twists in defiance. In anger and disgust. The Priest screams:

KAYMAN

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

CLOSE-UP of the SPEAKER set in the face of the computer:

ARTIFICIAL VOICE

Zero-gravity.

EVERY LOOSE ITEM in the capsule suddenly RISES INTO THE AIR. SPOONS and PAPERS. CHUNKS OF METAL Roger tore off.

ROGER IS LIFTED OFF OF THE FLOOR. His WINGS FLAP wildly sending FLOATING OBJECTS HURLING ACROSS THE CAPSULE. He flails in mid-air. Helpless. Kayman rises off the floor too, but manages to steady himself against the bulkhead behind him. The Priest is still wearing a crazed face as he suddenly PUSHES OFF FROM THE BULKHEAD floating through the debris and PLUCKING A SPIRALING FORK OUT OF THE AIR.

Kayman strikes Roger in the back and they both TUMBLE OFF THROUGH THE COMPARTMENT. End-over-end. Roger's WINGS LOOKING WILD. Like a bat's wings. The Priest holding on for dear life as he plunges the fork into Roger's back again and again SCREAMING like a madman. His blows land fruitlessly against Roger's hard red tiles. But every so often the Priest manages to hit the EXPOSED ELECTRONICS.

Roger and Kayman strike a wall TUMBLING OFF THE OTHER WAY through the debris, the Priest plunging the fork into the

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exposed computer to SPARKS, again and again and again and

ROGER

Thank you, Father.

Kayman stops. Holding onto Roger's shoulders, like a boy getting a piggy-back ride from his father. They tumble, gently, through the different levels of the ship. Those great wings under control. ROGER'S FACE HAS EXPRESSION:

ROGER (cont'd)

I think that will do, very nicely.

Roger EXTENDS HIS WINGS. Making contact with the walls to stop their tumbling. Father Kayman looks stunned, but relieved. The INNER METALLIC EYELIDS CLOSE over Roger's eyes to a WHIRRING. And when they open, the red glowing lenses have been replaced by Roger's REGULAR HUMAN EYES.

Suddenly the silence is broken--as a KLAXON SOUNDS. They both turn to look at the cosmic storm terminal. The words "INCOMING RADIATION" still flashing, as before, but now that TIMER reads: 00:00:30. Thirty seconds to go.

ROGER

Solar flare coming in--we better get you into the shelter, Father.

Roger begins to make a move...and that's when they hear it. Over the RADIO. It is so faint, and buried in the middle of so much STATIC, the sound can almost be missed:

SULIE'S VOICE

ZZZ...any...ZZZ...one...ZZZ...ere?

KAYMAN

Roger. She'll cook out there.

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

SULIE dangles at the end of her safety line. Inside her helmet, she is barely alert, sweat rushing down her face.

INT--THE COMMAND MODULE--DAY

ROGER floats up toward the airlock. Using the walls and the outcroppings to propel himself further. And faster.

INT--INSIDE THE AIRLOCK--DAY

ROGER grabs a bulkhead to steady himself. Making a fist.

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Roger CRUSHES A CONTROL PANEL revealing WIRES UNDERNEATH.

INT--ON THE SCIENCE LEVEL--DAY

KAYMAN floats into the SHELTER and swings the door shut.

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

SULIE hangs in open space. Helpless. Spinning a little.

INT--THE COMMAND MODULE--DAY

CLOSE-UP of the TIMER as the counter scrolls to 00:00:15.

INT--INSIDE THE AIRLOCK--DAY

ROGER grabs a handful of wires, turning toward the outer door. His INNER METALLIC EYELIDS close and, when they open, Roger is staring out with TELESCOPIC LENSES. He jerks the wires loose. The OUTER DOOR BLOWS OPEN with a DEAFENING RUSH OF AIR as Roger is BLOWN OUT INTO SPACE.

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

The COMMAND MODULE recedes into the distance behind ROGER as he is blown down the length of the tether. His WINGS EXPANDING to their full size. EYES REFLECTING THE STARS.

INSIDE SULIE'S HELMET. SULIE opens her eyes just barely:

SULIE'S P.O.V. Through her fogged helmet visor, Roger is visible. Like some great winged creature out of myth, emerging from the heavy mist. Flying closer and closer.

Roger reaches Sulie, and takes her into his arms. Pulls her close. Engulfing her. ENORMOUS WINGS FOLDING AROUND HER. Encasing Sulie. Wrapping around them both with a precision and a gentleness of touch not seen before now.

INT--THE COMMAND MODULE--DAY

CLOSE-UP of the TIMER as the counter scrolls to 00:00:00.

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

ROGER floats in space. Sulie safe in his wings. There's nothing there...but Roger seems to be watching something.

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ROGER'S P.O.V. The empty void is something else entirely to Roger. THE RADIATION ARRIVES IN A SWIRL OF SHAPES AND COLORS. A dazzling display no human being will ever see.

INT--INSIDE THE SHELTER--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN waits inside the cosmic ray shelter. Seems to pray as he does. Suddenly, the DOOR AUTOMATICALLY OPENS. The Priest looks relieved, and starts out, when the SHELTER PORTHOLE SLIDES OPEN. Kayman rushes to the porthole. He wipes the perspiration away, and peers out.

CAMERA'S P.O.V. LOOKING IN FROM OUTSIDE THE SPACESHIP: Through the small perspiring porthole, Father Kayman is visible, wiping the glass, and trying to see through. He squints. And then he sees them. The Priest stares into space, with an expression of surprise, and profound joy:

KAYMAN'S P.O.V. Through the sweating porthole the tiny figure of ROGER is visible. Looking like some beautiful, strange thing. His gossamer wings wrapped around Sulie.

INT--INSIDE OF HIS WINGS--DAY

Roger's wings look soft and comfortable when pressed up against the bubble of her helmet. SULIE looks around, as if only now realizing where exactly this is. She smiles.

SULIE

Hey. Did we make it...to Mars?

EXT--DEEP IN OUTER SPACE--DAY

TWO TINY PLANETS are REFLECTED IN ROGER'S LENSES. One MARS in each lens. Right where his human eyes should be.

DIFFERENT ANGLE reveals the ENORMOUS PLANET MARS. Roger and Sulie make for a TINY SHADOW in the foreground. The red mountains of Mars seem almost close enough to touch.

EXT--IN ORBIT ABOVE MARS--DAY

The COMMAND MODULE orbits Mars. The smooth surface of the craft reflecting the bright red of the planet below.

INT--INSIDE THE COCKPIT--DAY

ROGER is crouched on the command chair. His great wings gathered around and above him. Looking out the porthole

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at the CURVED HORIZON OF MARS. Behind him, FATHER KAYMAN and SULIE FLOAT INTO VIEW. They both look very relieved:

KAYMAN

Looks like we'll have enough power for the two of us, Rog. Of course you don't breathe...so that helps.

Roger does not respond. Just crouched on the chair, with his back toward them. Not moving. His WINGS RUSTLING. Kayman and Sulie share a nervous look. Waiting a moment.

SULIE

(as if afraid to know)
You are coming home with us, right?

Roger turns around and flashes them with a cocky smile. The face of a test pilot. Explorer. An astronaut face. Roger doesn't say a single word...but he doesn't need to.

INT--INSIDE THE AIRLOCK--DAY

The OUTER AIRLOCK DOOR OPENS above the SURFACE OF MARS far below. ROGER crouches at the edge of the airlock. REFLECTIVE LIGHT FROM THE SURFACE bathes the airlock and Roger seems to GLOW. His skin, eyes, and wings catch the red, looking truly luminescent. We have never seen him like this. Above the world the "Man Plus" was made for.

INT--INSIDE THE COCKPIT--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN and SULIE are strapped in the pilot seats. Through the cockpit portholes, a CABLE IS VISIBLE rising up from the planet, like an enormous pillar to the stars.

Sulie and Kayman share a glance. Sulie touches her mike:

SULIE

On my mark, Roger....GO!

EXT--IN ORBIT ABOVE MARS--DAY

ROGER leaps from the airlock and FLOATS OUT OVER THE PLANET like a skydiver from space, HIS WINGS UNFOLDING to their full length. Beneath Roger the barren landscape RUSHES PAST IN A FURIOUS RED BLUR. Roger has his arms outstretched and, suddenly, the CABLE APPEARS UNDER HIM.

Roger grabs the top of the cable, and the PLANET STOPS MOVING. Roger hangs in a stationary position above Mars, the EARTH SHIP RECEDING into the distance as it continues

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on its orbit. Roger is a red winged man hanging above a red world on a cable that stretches all the way down to the surface, disappearing from view long before it ever reaches the Martian soil it's planted in. Roger's tiled body SHIMMERS WITH RED. His EYES REFLECTING THE SURFACE.

Roger pulls himself up beside the cable. Rests his feet on a PLATFORM. Immediately, IT BEGINS TO DESCEND. Roger perched on the cable, his wings gathered around and above him. Like a gargoyle overlooking his own personal world. Descending to the barren surface a hundred miles below.

INT--INSIDE THE COCKPIT--DAY

FATHER KAYMAN and SULIE huddle by the porthole watching Roger descend as Kayman recites the ordinary of the mass:

KAYMAN

*Laudamas te, benedictimus te,
adoramus te, glorificamus te.*

EXT--THE DESCENT TO MARS--DAY

ROGER rides the cable through a PINK SKY down toward the surface. A beautiful stark planet stretching below him.

KAYMAN (V.O.)

*Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra
pax hominibus bonae voluntatis. Et
in Martis.*

INT--NEWS ANCHOR DESK--NEWSCAST

The NIGHTLY NEWS ANCHOR sits in front of a PHOTO OF MARS.

ANCHOR

In a few moments you'll be witness
to an historic moment: Humanity's
first step on another world!

INT--THE WORLD WATCHES--MONTAGE

BAR PATRONS watch the TV. OFFICE WORKERS gather inside of lunch rooms. FAMILIES huddle together in their homes.

EXT--CROWDED URBAN STREET--DAY

PEDESTRIANS walking the street stop to gather across from a LARGE ELECTRONIC SIGN scrolling: "ROGER TORRAWAY ABOUT

(CONTINUED)

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TO SET FOOT ON MARS!!!" And the crowd releases a CHEER.

EXT--MARS--BROADCAST FOOTAGE

MARS FOOTAGE PLAYS. A bit FUZZY. The barren landscape stretching off toward an alien horizon. In the middle of this picture is a SPACECRAFT. Like the old conventional Apollo lunar modules. The DOOR OPENS and an ASTRONAUT IN A SPACESUIT slowly emerges. Descending to the surface.

TWO COMMENTATORS begin to speak in hushed, excited tones:

COMMENTATOR 1 (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen, you are about to witness the first step taken on another planet. What do you think Col. Torraway is going to say, Bob?

COMMENTATOR 2 (V.O.)

I don't know, Chet. But there has been talk that he'll echo the words spoken by astronaut Neil Armstrong when he first stepped onto the moon.

The Commentators hush as the Astronaut descends down to the surface. The spacesuited figure that's supposed to be Roger landing on Mars reaches the bottom of the ladder and waits for what is supposed to be a dramatic moment. He sets one boot onto the Martian soil. Then the other.

EXT--THE SURFACE OF MARS--DAY

ROGER rides the enormous cable down toward the surface of Mars. Eyes red. Wings gathered around and above him. His skin luminescent. Roger looks joyous. Smiling wide.

TELEVISED ROGER (V.O.)

That's one small step for a man...

Roger nears the surface and LEAPS OFF the platform. He GLIDES THROUGH THE PINK MARTIAN AIR with his WINGS OUTSTRETCHED. Roger hits the ground, but raises only a TINY CLOUD OF RED DUST as he bounds off toward the horizon, moving steadily away with sudden ENORMOUS LEAPS.

TELEVISED ROGER (V.O.)

...one giant leap for mankind.

Roger continues on toward the horizon. If he looks like anything, it would be an indigenous Martian life-form. His wings balance him as he lands atop a misshapen red BOULDER before leaping off and dropping down out of view.

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CUT TO:

TELEVISIONS ON EARTH. T.V. screens in homes and offices and storefronts are all showing the FIRST FOOTPRINT EVER MADE IN THE RED MARTIAN SOIL. It is a simple BOOT PRINT, with thick horizontal ridges on the bottom of the sole. The same type of print the astronauts left on the moon.

CUT TO:

The barren Martian landscape stretches on toward a jagged red horizon. There is no movement now. Roger is gone.

CAMERA MOVES, down. To the actual FIRST FOOTPRINT ever made in the virgin red soil. It resembles nothing like the boot print the world is watching on television. Nothing like any boot print at all. THREE LARGE INHUMAN TOES--Roger's toes--protrude from the front of what looks like an alien foot, the HEEL DUG SO DEEP. Like a claw.

A Martian footprint in the red dust.

FADE OUT