

THE CREATION

FADE IN:

INT. MISSION CONTROL

In the quiet room, a dozen engineers wait impatiently at various substations.

ROBOT SYSTEMS ENGINEER STATION

NOAH HALIFAX, a rugged 36, taps his fingers nervously on a blank status display monitor.

A long beat of SILENCE...Then a burst of STATIC emits from the wall speakers, followed by

A FEMALE VOICE (VO)

This is Major Legia Halifax.

Noah Halifax sighs audibly.

LEGIA HALIFAX (VO)

Earth date twenty one, April, two thousand thirty-four. Venus Probe 36 in orbit at superior conjunction. Com delay: 14 point two four minutes.

(a beat)

Visual high gain link 4...3...2...Now.

Noah Halifax turns to a

LARGE BLANK SCREEN ON THE WALL

A quiet cheer goes up from the ground crew when on the screen appears

A BLIMP SHAPED MAPPING SATELLITE

It orbits above the roiling atmosphere of Venus.

Two Astronauts drift, tethered to its side. LEGIA HALIFAX identified by a name tag and a small daisy on the sleeve of her suit and COLONEL VICTOR PIOUS, identified by a name tag and the full bird colonel emblem.

Two micro-robots emerge from the interior of the satellite and crawl into Legia's collection bag.

LEGIA HALIFAX

Honey, not a hitch with your robots.
Sorry I can't say the same about our
toilet.

She blows a kiss and mouths 'I love you.'

Grinning broadly, Noah Halifax returns the gestures.

WALL SCREEN

Behind Legia - a spaceship looms into view. Lettered on its hull: VENUS PROBE - 36.

LEGIA

Okay, settle in, this is going to be
a long report. I'll start with --

A BLAST OF LIGHT

Legia's image rips apart. A SCREECH of STATIC rattles the wall speakers, then SILENCE.

Halifax leaps from his station.

HALIFAX

What the hell?! What happened to
telemetry? Where's high gain?
Get a backup relay. Now!

VENUS ORBIT - SATELLITE - SAME TIME

A burst of light. Legia and Pious turn toward a

HORSE SIZED - OBJECT

It pulsates with color for several beats then dims to a soft glow.

LEGIA

What the hell is it?

PIOUS

My promotion.

Pious releases his tether and jets toward the light.

 PIOUS
General Victor H. Pious. Has a nice ring.

 LEGIA
Private's more like it. You can't deviate
from our mission without authorization.

 PIOUS
We're out of contact.

Angrily, Legia unhooks her tether and follows.

HORSE SIZED OBJECT - MOMENTS LATER

Small beams of light escape from inside the compact mass.

Pious reaches out.

 LEGIA
 Don't touch it!
Pious fingers its exterior with his glove.

 PIOUS
Fabric?

With his touch the Object unfolds like a giant squid revealing a

SPACE SUITED ALIEN

No human this. A translucent helmet protects a triangular head.
Eight appendages dangle at impossible angles.

 LEGIA (VO)
It's a being! Incredible.

An odd array of belts and straps cling to the Alien's protective
garment.

 PIOUS (VO)
We're bringing it back.

 LEGIA (VO)
The hell we are. Not without a bio-
containment unit.

A variety of handled instruments protrude from the slits in the belts.

PIOUS (VO)

Don't give me orders, Major.

Pious touches one.

PIOUS

Tools?

He nudges the Alien. It rotates slowly.

At the end of its two longest limbs, talons clutch a LONG STAFF topped by a DISK pulsing with light.

Colors of the spectrum blink in a helix up and down the length of the Staff. Alien symbols glisten - oil-on-water - along its length.

LEGIA

It's not going anywhere. Let's get back to the ship.

Pious aims a probe light at its visor.

Multi-faceted, melon-sized eyes, set high, on a wasp-like face, stare blankly back through the shield.

PIOUS

Not before we date it.

Pious presses a small instrument against its visor.

CLOSE ON - INSTRUMENT

Numbers twirl to a stop at 2067.

PIOUS

This thing predates Christ.

LEGIA

Mission Control will go ballistic.

(she tugs his spacesuit)

Come on.

Pious shakes her off, reaches for the SHAFT and tries to pry open the Alien's talon. He can't.

LEGIA

You're violating the rules of
Encounter.

Pious goes for the DISK.

PIOUS

They only apply to living organisms.

He intensifies his efforts. His boot joins the struggle. It pushes against the pincher grip.

The DISK breaks loose. Pious clutches it, but his foot inadvertently shoves the Alien away.

LEGIA

Goodbye promotion. Hello court-martial.

Still holding the SHAFT, the Alien rotates in a slow descent. It grows dimmer -- a speck.

PIOUS

Don't count on it.

Pious calmly stows the disk in a collection pocket and shoves Legia aside. A WHOOSH. He stares in disbelief.

INT. SPACESHIP - VENUS PROBE 36 - MINUTES LATER

Mission specialist JAMES BRISK, fifties, frantically works the controls. His view screen shows an indecipherable image.

BRISK

Major Halifax? Colonel Pious, do you
read? Over?

STATIC emanates from the com speakers.

Behind him, Pious slips through a hatchway.

Brisk turns to the sound.

BRISK

I was worried...Where's Legia?

Pious rips off his helmet, rushes to the flight deck and pushes a button on the monitor.

The screen shows Legia being driven into Venus' atmosphere by her maneuvering unit.

PIOUS

Set a course to intercept, damn it.

Brisk's hands fly over the computer's keyboard.

COMPUTER SCREEN

Shows an intercept spot deep in the atmosphere of Venus.

Visibly shaken, Brisk's eyes water.

BRISK

Impossible.

PIOUS

What about a rescue pod?

On the screen, Legia disappears like a teardrop in the purple atmosphere.

BRISK

Gravity's got her, Colonel.

PIOUS

Son-of-a-bitch!

BRISK

What was it out there? That blast of light blinded the instruments. Then the com-link shut down.

Pious reins in his anger and taps his collection pocket.

PIOUS

It was a lousy glow in the dark meteor.

EXT. GRANITE MONUMENT - DAY

Superimposed: THREE YEARS LATER

Noah Halifax traces his fingers over the names etched in stone: from Lt. Colonel Virgil Grissom to S. Christa McAuliffe to the last inscription, Major Legia Halifax.

Etched on top: TO THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE CONQUEST OF SPACE.

Halifax lays a single daisy at the base of the monument and turns subtly heavenward.

HALIFAX

Why do you kill your creations?

EXT. A HUGE BLUE STEEL DOOR - DAWN

It slowly glides open.

Eight white-coated technicians exit. Four glance over their shoulders into the abyss of the open hangar. Stenciled above the door:

BUILDING XXX

Pious and Brisk wait outside the high tech facility. Pious angrily fingers the Captain's bar on his collar.

Brisk steps into a golf cart-like vehicle fitted with an elaborate computer system.

PIOUS

Brisk, my prick's in a guillotine.

BRISK

So is mine, Captain. Where's your faith?

PIOUS

Not misplaced I hope.

Brisk confidently strikes a series of keys on the computer.

From inside the building comes the HUM of MOTORS and PNEUMATIC pistons.

A six-legged, van-sized robot lumbers onto the tarmac. Large block letters stenciled on its sides read: HERMES - 23B.

The technicians clear a path. Hermes plods to a halt.

Two Video Camera Operators, atop scissor lifts, motor out to the robot.

He strikes a key. Hermes fires up. At first a walk that becomes a reasonable gait.

PIOUS

What is this, Snail 23-B?

Brisk strikes another key.

Hermes' metal legs whirl; twenty, thirty miles an hour. The robot speeds out of the lot onto a long runway.

PIOUS

Bring it around.

Brisk hits a key.

Hermes makes a 180 degree turn and races home.

PIOUS

(excited)

What are its parameters?

BRISK

Any environment Centauri's fourth planet can throw at it. Molten lava to liquid methane.

Pious gives Brisk a congratulatory pat on the back.

PIOUS

Bring it here. Let's take a look.

Brisk whacks a few keys.

Hermes starts to slow down, but its legs become entangled. It falls - tumbles over and over.

The Camera Operators leap off their platforms.

The robot's legs slash through the air. Its body careens into the Scissor Lifts; they fall like bowling pins.

BRISK

Damn you, Hermes! I just updated your deceleration program.

Momentum carries the amalgam of metal into the wall of the concrete building. It CRASHES. A plume of smoke rises from the rubble. Its legs continue to thrash.

Pious shouts at a gawking PRIVATE.

PIOUS
Hit the kill switch!
(to Brisk)
I think you've exceeded its self-repair capability.

A LOUD HUM drowns out the rest of his comment. Pious and Brisk look skyward.

The PEGASUS, a futuristic space Frigate, glides toward the runway. Its landing gear drops.

PIOUS
There's the damn taxi and you just destroyed my passenger.

BRISK
I've got two backups. Add a one forty terahertz C.P.U. Refine the algorithm, and it's back on its feet. It'll work.
The PEGASUS comes in for a landing.

PIOUS
You don't need backups; you need crumple zones.

HERMES 23B

The Private climbs to the thorax and hits the kill switch. The robot's legs go still.

PIOUS
If Hermes isn't aboard...
(points to the Private)
That kid will be giving me orders.

BRISK

Ask for a delay. We're going to the stars for God sake.

PIOUS

Senator Yale can't stall the Space Committee forever. Get Halifax.

Brisk leaps off the computer cart.

BRISK

The Junk Man! Why the Junk Man?

PIOUS

I'm up against a deadline and he's a miracle worker.

INT./EXT. HALIFAX'S OFF WHITE, 1960 PORSCHE

whizzes along a rural road. The last movement of Bach Cantata #140 plays.

BRISK (VO)

Was. He spun himself a cocoon when Legia died on Venus.

Antenna nubs protrude from the fenders and the trunk.

PIOUS (VO)

Time for his metamorphosis. And I'm holding a candle.

The dashboard resembles the cockpit of a Boeing 7237.

BRISK (VO)

That he's going to burn you with.

A finger presses a button next to a lime green video screen. A winding road appears. From a speaker comes

A FEMALE METALLIC VOICE
Mr. Halifax, the road is clear for
three point two seven kilometers.

Halifax expertly down gears around a steep curve, accelerates up a long straightway, flies over the top of the road and drops to the pavement. Sparks fly.

EXT. JUNK YARD - 900 YARDS AWAY

A barbed wire fence completely encompasses a mammoth, rusty quonset hut and four acres of junked robots.

INT./EXT. PORSCHE

It roars down the hill toward a steel gate.

Halifax presses the accelerator.

FEMALE METALLIC VOICE
Obstruction at point 54 kilometers.

HALIFAX
Afraid of crashing?

FEMALE METALLIC VOICE
Collision will terminate my program.

The Porsche gathers speed.

HALIFAX
I wrote your program.

FEMALE METALLIC VOICE
That doesn't make you God.

An antenna rises on the front fender.

HALIFAX
What does it mean to be God?

FEMALE METALLIC VOICE
God creates.

EXT. GATE

Above the gate a sign reads:

IF YOUR ROBOT HAS STOPPED REVVIN'
WE'VE GOT THE PART AT ROBOT HEAVEN

The Porsche races toward the entrance of Robot Heaven.

FEMALE METALLIC VOICE (VO)
Obstruction!

A jack rabbit darts in front of the Porsche and freezes.

Halifax jams the brakes. The Porsche SCREECHES to a stop.

The steel gate swings open. The rabbit hops away.

FEMALE METALLIC VOICE
Thank you.

Halifax hits the gas. The Porsche darts through the gap.

HALIFAX
Thank the rabbit.

EXT. ROBOT HEAVEN - DAY

The Porsche does a 180 around the hull of a Cold War surplus Trident submarine, speeds up a wooden ramp and SKIDS to a halt amidships.

CONNING TOWER - MOMENTS LATER

Halifax stares up the ladder. Climbs a few steps. With each rung more fear creeps onto his face. Beads of sweat form on his forehead. He looks down.

HALIFAX'S POV - EARTH

He imagines himself falling...falling...falling toward a receding Earth.

SUBMARINE MAIN DECK - MOMENTS LATER

Halifax looks up at the conning tower, then disappears down a deck hatch.

INT. SUBMARINE

Exotic electronic gear, computers and robot parts hang from bulkheads and cover the deck of the gutted hull.

Robots of various sizes and complexity clear aisles, arrange parts and catalogue.

Halifax waves to his minions.

HALIFAX

Morning, boys.

ROBOTS

(each in a different tone and volume)

Morning, Noah.

INT. OFFICER'S STATEROOM - HALIFAX'S OFFICE

At a desk stacked with mail sits

STAR, early twenties, a bleached blond, tattooed vamp, complete with a cheek mole and enough make-up to ski on. Her full lips are painted in 'shield-your-eyes' red-orange lipstick.

Halifax bulls through the hatch and heads for his desk.

He shuffles through a stack of papers, finds a remote control and hits TWO buttons. Instantly the first movement of Bach's Cantata #140 fills the office.

Halifax pulls a paper scroll from a slot and spreads out plans for a new cockroach-like robot.

HALIFAX

Star, you want to bring us some coffee?

With a sigh Star stands and sashays past a

WALL OF PHOTOGRAPHS

All of them are of Halifax and Legia.

Halifax and Legia hold opposite ends of a banner that reads, CLASS OF 2022 - ASTRONAUT GRADUATION

Halifax and Legia exchange vows in the weightlessness of a space station surrounded by astronauts. A garland of daisies surrounds her head. Her veil and dress float out of control.

Star turns a corner and walks to a magnificently restored antique Mr. Coffee machine and pours.

STAR

Noah, caffeine increases your systolic pressure by twenty inches of --

HALIFAX

Caffeine's a purine, a building block of DNA. Without DNA there would be no life.

STAR

As you define it.

Halifax looks up from the drawing as

Star sets the cup down on the plans and purposely spills half of it.

STAR

Oops, maybe making coffee isn't in my job description.

Halifax reaches for the remote control. O.S. a sarcastic LAUGH fills the office.

Pious and Brisk step through the hatch. Pious walks to Star and gives her an appreciative leer.

PIOUS

Very good. But we're thinking of something with six legs. Something that can explore a planet orbiting Alpha Centauri.

(a beat)

Of course it wouldn't have to be blond.

Pious caresses Star's face.

PIOUS

Nice dermis.

Star glares. Pious gropes her left breast. She WHACKS him.

PIOUS

Quite a program.

Pious whacks her back. She strikes. Pious catches her wrist, but Star bends him over like a pretzel.

BRISK

Noah, turn her off.

Pious goes to his knees glaring at Halifax.

PIOUS

For Christ sake!

HALIFAX

Star, escort Captain Passed Over to his vehicle.

Star yanks Pious out of the office. Halifax turns his attention to Brisk.

HALIFAX

You have five seconds to get your ass out of my office.

BRISK

Noah, it's a government project. You know what that means.

HALIFAX

You don't know what you're doing.

Brisk pulls out a white envelope and offers it.

HALIFAX

I want nothing to do with you or
Passed Over.

Star re-enters. Brisk nods in her direction.

BRISK

Or anything that's alive.

HALIFAX

There's a huge chasm between nonliving
and dead. You, for example, are living.
But Star is more alive.

Star moves toward Brisk. Brisk slaps the envelope in Halifax's hand.

BRISK

Here, Junk Man, I did my job.

HALIFAX

What is it?

BRISK

A bribe.

Halifax shoots him wary look.

BRISK

In exchange for your help with the Centauri
mission, Senator Yale's offering the
complete Venus Probe Transcript.

Halifax glances at the envelope:

SENATOR CHRISTEN YALE - CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES - SPACE
SCIENCES COMMITTEE

HALIFAX (VO)

YALE! How did a Senator from Ireland
get on our Space Committee?

BRISK

Noah, up periscope.
(gestures around)

Surface for God's sake! Christen Yale's chaired the Space Committee for two years.

Brisk shrugs and steps through the hatch.

Halifax looks at the photograph of his wedding on the wall. A tear creeps out the corner of his eye.

STAR

You owe it to Legia.

EXT. SUBMARINE - MOMENTS LATER

Brisk steers an Electro-Hov Limo, floating one foot off the ground, slowly through a group of junkyard shoppers.

GOLIATH, a twelve foot, one-eyed, copper robot, CLUNKS in the path of the E.H.L. and presses a gloved hand on the hood.

The magnetically confined air cushion collapses with a WHOOSH under the pressure. The E.H.L. strikes the pavement.

Brisk rolls down the windows. Halifax appears on the passenger side -- nose to nose with Pious.

HALIFAX

Yale's offering everything? No deletions?

Pious grunts a nod. Halifax absently slaps his palm with the unopened envelope.

HALIFAX

What's your launch window?

PIOUS

Seven days.

HALIFAX

And your problem?

Brisk leans toward Halifax.

BRISK

Data overload calculating leg dynamics. We need a C.P.U. that can execute ten billion instructions per nano second.

HALIFAX

You're living in Oz.

PIOUS

Aren't you the wizard?

HALIFAX

Brute force is primitive.

Halifax leans in the window and GRINS in Pious' face.

HALIFAX

You screwed up the first manned Venus probe. You get demoted three grades.

PIOUS

Too tough for you?

HALIFAX

(to Brisk)

Why, in God's name do you stay on to oversee a project to Alpha Centauri? This isn't a plum, it's a crumb. A million to one shot. A project that won't bear fruit in your lifetime. Why?

Brisk thumps his glasses.

BRISK
Too old to fly.

HALIFAX
(to Pious)
And you?

PIOUS
The perks.

HALIFAX
Tell the distinguished Senator from
Ireland I'll get your robot running.

He nods to his twelve foot robot.

HALIFAX
Goliath, teach.

Goliath yanks a refrigerator-sized mainframe computer off a pile
of junk and SQUASHES it into the size of a softball.

Halifax glowers at Pious.

HALIFAX
Do not piss me off. Tell Yale I want
the truth.

EXT. BUILDING XXX - DAY

Pious saunters through the steel doors.

INT. BUILDING XXX

Pious marches purposefully through a sterile, spotless maze of
robots -- most of them Hermes class prototypes.

He pauses for a moment where Technicians refit one of the robots
legs. He gives them a thumbs up.

INT. PIOUS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

An American flag with sixty stars stands in a corner of the
well-appointed room.

Leather, teak and crystal. High-tech equipment lines one wall.
Laser video disks fill a bookcase on the opposite wall.

Pious opens the door and ducks.

A necklace like object RATTLES like a snake through the air. A shrill, female voice bleats with an Irish Brogue.

FEMALE VOICE

Jesus, Mary and Joseph. YOU forged my name.

Pious goes to a knee and retrieves a rosary.

PIOUS

Such sacrilege.

He rises with the rosary and rubs the wrist Star twisted earlier.

PIOUS

Say three Hail Mary's and your sins will be forgiven.

Sheets of paper fly at him.

FEMALE VOICE

(Irish brogue)

YOU took MY stationery. And YOU made a vow to Halifax.

SENATOR CHRISTEN YALE, thirties fondles a crystal spar on the desk. A blue patch (which she changes to match her outfit) covers her right eye.

The outputs of a dozen surveillance cameras are displayed on the desk top which is a single, large, flat-screen video monitor.

YALE

Captain Pious, YOU irritate me.

PIOUS

Ditto, Senator. But I hold the key to the universe.

YALE

And I diverted ten billion dollars to a bogus starship.

PIOUS

If the Pegasus doesn't launch in
seven days -- with Hermes.

(runs a finger across his throat)

We'll be cellmates at Club Fed.

Pious eases around the desk and wraps his fingers around the nape of her neck. She frowns. He begins a sensuous massage. She sighs.

PIOUS

Senator, we're so close.

Yale tries to fight his ministrations.

YALE

Close? Me arse. You've a robot that needs
training wheels.

His fingers dig in deeper. She sighs with mounting pleasure.

YALE

I'd curse your soul, but you've no
faith.

Pious thumbs into her shoulder muscles.

PIOUS

On the contrary, I've seen the light;
I believe in U.F.O's.

YALE

Why the Junk Man?

PIOUS

He's a genius. A genius with an
empty heart.

YALE

His wife's death was an accident. It
all came out in the hearings.

Pious glances at the wall lined with video disks.

YALE

Didn't it?

PIOUS

He's convinced I lied.

Yale turns and grins up at her man.

YALE

If they gave you the promotion you earned,
everything would be out on
the table.

PIOUS

When man explores the stars, our little
falsehoods will become insignificant
footnotes in history.

YALE

Know why I love you?

PIOUS

No one else met your standards?

YALE

Of lust.

They kiss viciously.

EXT. UNIVERSITY COMMONS - DAY

Halifax and Brisk walk across a lawn toward an ancient brick
building. A plaque over the door reads SCIENCE.

BRISK

We're wasting time. I've already gotten my college degree.

HALIFAX

You enjoy being in control, don't you, Mr. Brisk?

BRISK

Of my life and my inventions.

HALIFAX

I prefer the serendipitous.

LI DANG, in her late twenties, hurries along a busy path and up a flight of stairs. She gives Halifax the eye. Lost in thought Halifax doesn't notice. Brisk does. He gives her an appreciative nod as she disappears through the doors.

EXT. APPARENT DESERT - DAY

J.S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto waifs subtly.

An arid stretch of sand, sagebrush and cactus.

A MALE ASSASSIN BUG, small, colorful, incredibly intelligent, insect, scurries over the sand and crawls under a rock bridge. O.S. a faint CHIRP. A pleasant melodic sound. The Male Assassin Bug rises on four legs and cocks his head. O.S. The CHIRP repeats. The Male Assassin Bug WARBLERs, darts under the rock bridge and skitters to a halt.

MALE ASSASSIN BUG'S POV - FEMALE ASSASSIN BUG

Six overlapping images in shades of emerald. She gestures haughtily, but maintains her distance for a beat, then extends an antenna. The Male eases forward and WARBLERs.

The Female CHIRPS. Her SONG grows more fervent. Their legs and bodies intertwine. In an erotic waltz, they dance backward up a stone.

Coyly the Female lowers herself across the rock. The Male's SONG increases in volume and intensity. His front legs find purchase on her back.

MALE VOICE (OS)

Aren't we a couple of horny
little T. Sanguisugas.

Silver tweezers descend toward the coupling insects. The Female is plucked from the Male's grasp. In a frustrated rage, the Male emits a fingers-across-a-chalkboard SCREECH.

COMPUTER SCREEN - READING T. SANGUISUGAS VOCABULARY

A voice print of the SCREECH prints out next to several dozen Assassin Bug vocabulary words including "YOU" "ME" "ONE" "FOOD."

INT. SCIENCE LABORATORY

At a computer, Dang rips earphones from her head and turns toward a DESERT TERRARIUM.

DR. SHOCKER, a lecher in his fifties, carries the Female in the tweezers at arm's length across the lab.

Mounting boards packed with thousands of impaled insects -- butterflies, ants, beetles, ladybugs, cockroaches -- cover walls and tables.

DANG

Dr. Shocker, what are you doing?

Shocker rubs Dang's hair in passing. She cringes.

DR. SHOCKER

Miss Dang, if you ran as fast as an Assassin Bug, size for size, you could sprint 40 miles per hour. Aren't you the least bit interested in how they do it?

Dang points to her computer screen.

DANG

I'm interested in their language.

In the terrarium the Male spins around in frenzy.

DR. SHOCKER

The sooner I finish, the sooner you may continue your little vocabulary project.

Dang seizes a tape recorder, sticks a rubber scorpion near the microphone and shoves at Shocker's face.

DR. SHOCKER

April 23, 2037, neural pathway experiment
twenty six -- female response to stimuli.
(without losing a beat)

You don't frighten me, Miss Li.

DANG

Don't hurt her. She's special.

Shocker gives Dang a condescending pat on the head. She flinches.

In the terrarium, the Male emits a frantic WARBLE and races across the twenty foot expanse stopping a fraction of an inch from the glass.

Shocker lowers the Female toward a fuming blob of glue on a microscope platform and peers through the eye-piece.

DR. SHOCKER'S POV THROUGH THE MICROSCOPE

He punctures the Female's head with two electrodes.
She SQUEALS. O.S. the Male Bug WARBLER.

DR. SHOCKER

They're both quite vocal today.

DANG

And I'm losing thesis data. These two are different. They've formed a bond.

DR. SHOCKER

Don't anthropomorphize.

DANG

They're unique. A breed apart.
They care for each other.

DR. SHOCKER

They're insects, Miss Dang. Highly responsive, but insects nonetheless.
And insects don't feel.

In the Terrarium, the Male stacks pebbles and twigs against the glass wall.

Shocker plucks the Female from the glue, sets her on a miniature treadmill, and attaches leads to the electrodes. He checks a computer screen and hits a switch.

The treadmill turns. Caught unaware, the Female falls backward and receives a shock. She CHIRPS in pain and fights to keep pace.

COMPUTER SCREEN

One half shows the female trying to run. Data scroll on the rest of the screen.

DANG

That's enough. She wants off.

Shocker gives Dang a look and hits the key again. The treadmill moves faster. The female races.

DR. SHOCKER (OS)

One whiner's enough.

In the Terrarium the Male reaches the top of the glass. His tower collapses, but he manages to get a leg over the rim.

Flying sparks reflect on the glass while, at the same instant, comes a final pitiful CHIRP.

COMPUTER SCREEN

The Female lies motionless. A thousand zeros scroll.

Shocker drops his arm around Dang's shoulders. She shoves him away, gently lays the dead Female into a small box and places the container into a REFRIGERATION UNIT.

DR. SHOCKER

Don't worry. They don't feel pain.

O.S. a low, nasty WARBLE. Shocker grabs his leg.

DR. SHOCKER

Son-of-a-bitch!

He drops his pants to his ankles and finds the Male Assassin Bug latched to his thigh. Shocker yanks it off, waddles to the terrarium and drops in the Assassin Bug.

Hand over her mouth, Dang stares at Shocker's knobby knees and paisley genital protectors.

DR. SHOCKER

Don't rejoice. Over the years I've built up quite an immunity.

He pulls a tube of ointment from a first aid cabinet and offers it to Dang with a lewd grin.

DR. SHOCKER

You do want to pass your prelims?

She walks away. Shocker hobbles after her and collides with Halifax, who stands near the door with Brisk.

DANG

You do want to pass your tenure review?

DR. SHOCKER

Noah Halifax, finally decided to rejoin civilized society?

Halifax glances at Shocker's state of attire.

HALIFAX

If I can find any.

Shocker grabs for his pants. Brisk eyes Dang and sucks his stomach in.

HALIFAX

I've got a problem. Thought I'd come to the expert.

Shocker beams.

HALIFAX

Our six-legged robot self-destructs at high velocities.

DR. SHOCKER

I'm an entomologist, not an engineer.

He points to the Male Assassin Bug hidden under a rock.

DR. SHOCKER

But I do know that if our friend here would be bird dinner if he had to solve a hundred simultaneous, differential equations just to figure out where to put his place a leg.

HALIFAX

So you think we're trying to solve a hardware problem with software?

DR. SHOCKER

I think it took nature four billion years to
evolve a most elegant solution to movement.

(beat)

Do you think you can outsmart her?

Brisk stares through the glass of the terrarium.

BRISK

Is this thing dead?

DR. SHOCKER

Dear Lord, no.

DANG

Why don't all of YOU leave him alone.

Brisk backs off. Shocker scowls at Dang and apologizes to
Halifax and Brisk.

DR. SHOCKER

Ph.D. candidate Dang believes she's opened a
private line of communication.

Shocker taps the glass with his tweezers. The Male zips across
the sand and disappears under another stone. Shocker lets out a
derisive laugh.

DR. SHOCKER

It's learned that tweezers means
experiment.

HALIFAX

This...insect is intelligent enough
to anticipate?

DANG

It sure can! It knows experiment means
having its brain probed, and electric shocks
to the buttocks.

Halifax turns to Shocker with an 'is-this-true?' look.

DR. SHOCKER

Intelligent may not be the correct
term. More like Pavlov's insects.
Stimulus response. It can't really
think any more than you can think
an erection.

(looks at Dang)
No offence, Miss Dang.

Dang glares.

DR. SHOCKER
(to Halifax)
Though highly responsive, the insect
brain's...
(looks at Dang)
too small to be sentient.

Dang storms to the exit.

DANG
I'll be in the chairman's office.

Brisk trips over himself to get to the door. Dang gets there first, flips Shocker the bird and slams the door.

DR. SHOCKER
Disrespectful little bitch.

Shocker searches the terrarium, finds the insect and plucks it from the sand. The Male's eyes flash violet. It WARBLER in anguish.

DR. SHOCKER
Your guardian angel has flown the coop.

Halifax and Brisk exchange a 'is-this-guy-real?' look.

At the specimen platform, Shocker lowers the Male into the glue. It emits a long HISS.

DR. SHOCKER
Hiss, hiss, hiss. No one's listening.

SHOCKER'S POV THROUGH THE MICROSCOPE

Two needle sharp electrodes pierce the Male's head. Its slit of a mouth opens in obvious pain.

With tweezers Shocker yanks the male out of the glue.

Brisk gives Halifax a 'he's-your-pal' nudge.

HALIFAX

Doctor, if we could just get your current data on motion studies.

Shocker holds up his hand for silence and sets the Assassin Bug on the treadmill.

DR. SHOCKER

I've altered this creature's brain.
It's gone through a million years
of evolution in ten generations.

He hits the activating switch. The treadmill turns.

DR. SHOCKER

Watch it move. It can fly,
strut or pirouette.

He hits the switch again and again. The treadmill spins faster as data scroll out on a computer monitor.

DR. SHOCKER

You want my most current data on
neurological control of leg movement?

He CLICKS on a companion printer.

DR. SHOCKER Here it comes. Hot off the
press.

The Assassin Bug struggles. It bobs clumsily from side to side. It can't keep pace. It falls.

Sounds of an ELECTRICAL SHORT fill the lab. Sparks reflect off Shocker's glasses. He turns off the treadmill.

HALIFAX

He didn't stand a chance.

DR. SHOCKER

It was a bug.

Halifax grabs Shocker by the nape of his neck and shoves his nose back to the microscope slide.

HALIFAX

It was alive!

On the slide, the LEFT REAR LEG of the Male insect twitches reflexively, still stuck in the glue.

Shocker shoves Halifax's hand away.

DR. SHOCKER

Shall I call the coroner?

Shocker struts toward the exit.

DR. SHOCKER

Class dismissed. I have lecture to give. Wisdom to impart.

Halifax picks up the tweezers and throws them at the closing door.

BRISK

Noah, it was just an insect.

Halifax shoots him an icy glare. Brisk bolts out of the lab.

Halifax studies the language monitor, pulls the paper from the printer, then removes the Male and places him in a box.

EXT. BUILDING XXX - NIGHT

Halifax's Porsche SCREECHES to a stop in front of the mammoth doors. Halifax exits one side. Haggard, Brisk stumbles out the passenger door.

BRISK

Do you always drive like that?

HALIFAX

Only when I'm trying to think.

BRISK

Don't think and drive.

They walk to the closed doors. Brisk opens an access panel.

BRISK

I'm sorry about Legia, but it was an accident.

HALIFAX

That's been the party line for three years....You were there. Tell me about THE accident. What did you see?

BRISK

The com link went dead.

HALIFAX

How convenient.

BRISK

Legia was an incredible woman. We all loved her. If I thought there was foul play, I wouldn't be part of this project.

Halifax digests the statement, softens and places a friendly hand on Brisk's shoulder.

BRISK

I hope the transcripts put your mind to rest.

HALIFAX

They won't.

BRISK

Then what do you expect to find?

HALIFAX

A tangled web.

Halifax nods to the access code panel.

HALIFAX

Open it.

INT. BUILDING XXX

A state of the art complex of computers and robots.

With pride, Brisk gestures to Hermes 23B.

BRISK

Everything we need. The Hermes project starts here and ends here.

He points to a mezzanine overlooking the hangar where Pious waves down from the railing.

PIOUS

Welcome aboard, Noah.

BRISK

Everything we need. If it's not here, Pious will get it.

Halifax heads for the exit.

HALIFAX

Too anal. Tell Pious we'll build it in Heaven.

BRISK

He'll never agree.

HALIFAX

Then he'll have to follow another yellow brick road to another wizard.

EXT. HALIFAX'S - ROBOT HEAVEN - DAY

Military transports roar pass the submarine into the quonset hut hangar.

INT. QUONSET HUT HANGAR

Technicians and soldiers off-load equipment.

A crane clears the floor of discarded robot parts and stacks them in mounds.

Computer technicians establish command centers.

Near the ceiling, electricians mount micro surveillance cameras.

INT. OFFICER'S STATEROOM SUBMARINE - HALIFAX'S OFFICE

RATTLING a cup of coffee on a saucer, Star treads gingerly around a floor alive with small model robots.

A six-legged creation pogo sticks across the floor.

A two foot robot with a single mechanical arm gripper advances on rubber tank treads. It snatches objects off of desks, inspects them with laser-eyes and replaces them exactly.

Star sets the coffee on Halifax's cluttered desk.

STAR

You're stressed.

He nods thanks. The mechanical arm gripper of the two foot robot reaches for the cup. Star gives it a whack.

STAR

Watch it.

The arm disappears. Star wades through the sea of robots.

STAR

Are these things really my kin?

Halifax grins and opens a tattered notebook. The cover sheet says Noah Halifax 2027. He flips through the pages. Each page contains a detailed drawing of an insect.

Halifax drums his fingers on a small BLACK BOX, then reaches for a large green textbook titled: "INSECTS: STRUCTURE - FUNCTION AND MOTION." by Dr. W. Shocker.

INT. HEAVEN HANGAR - DAY

A flat bed hov-truck carries in a back-up robot - Hermes 23C. Halifax and Brisk pace around the machine. Pious watches the pair.

Halifax measures the robot with his eyes. A long beat then he gives a nod of approval. Brisk sighs.

HALIFAX

It's a start.

Halifax uses the remote to raise a leg off the ground.

HALIFAX

Modify the head, thorax, abdomen and legs.
Add sensory feedback from the feet.

BRISK

Impossible.

HALIFAX

Star.

Star joins them.

HALIFAX

Please do a handstand.

She gives him a 'give-me-a-break' look.

HALIFAX

Please? It's important.

Star flips to her palms. Her skirt flops down over her torso.
Her pelvis is a maze of flashing lights and integrated circuits.

Pious gawks.

HALIFAX

(to Brisk)

Push her.

Brisk pushes hard. Star's rock solid.

HALIFAX

Tactile sensors in her dermis.

Star rights herself. Pious edges in.

BRISK

Hermes' C.P.U. is in data overload
as is.

HALIFAX

We'll change its name when we modify

the brain.

PIOUS

Why?

HALIFAX

Hermes was a mythical god. We're creating something real.

PIOUS

All gods are mythical.

INT. HANGAR - DAY

Halifax and Brisk laser-weld thin sheets of metal into an aerodynamic, pod-like shape around the abdomen of the robot.

Several curious technicians lean close for a better look.

Halifax and Brisk whip off their face plates. The technicians disappear.

INT. OFFICER'S STATEROOM - NIGHT

Halifax puzzles over a blueprint on a computer screen. Brisk and Star enter carrying a six foot, robot leg section. Halifax turns, befuddled.

Star touches the leg at various places. It responds perfectly.

Halifax gives Brisk a look of admiration.

HALIFAX

Good work.

Star looks from man to man and smiles.

INT. HANGAR - DAY

Together, Halifax and Brisk affix the last coiled leg joint into the abdomen of the robot.

They almost shake hands in congratulations. Almost.

INT. HANGAR - NIGHT

Two fumbling technicians try to insert the thorax (neck) into the body pod. Halifax and Brisk nudge them away and complete the operation themselves.

INT. OFFICER'S STATEROOM OFFICE - NIGHT

Ceramic, plastic and metal prototype robot heads litter the floor and desks.

In a corner, Halifax sticks out his palm. Star slaps in forceps. Halifax opens the black box, extracts a gray mass and sets it on an integrated circuit.

HALIFAX

Melder.

Star hands him a small laser device. He wipes sweat from his forehead and connects minute wires.

INT. HANGAR - NIGHT

Halifax sits cowboy style on the body pod near the thorax. Technicians move in to watch. One jerk makes himself comfortable on the hood of Halifax's Porsche.

Brisk, on a scissor platform, guides the thorax into the head slot. Halifax slides toward the brain chamber.

HALIFAX

Three millimeter spanner.

Halifax sticks out his palm. The wrench lands in his hand.

PIOUS (OS)

We've got three days.

Halifax turns. Pious stands next to Brisk on the scissor platform. Halifax drops to the ground and tosses Pious the wrench.

HALIFAX

You want this done? Do it yourself,
Passed Over.

Pious glares.

Halifax shoves the Jerk off his Porsche, gets in and peels out of the hangar.

Pious barks at Brisk.

PIOUS

Has our Search Program been entered
into the C.P.U?

Brisk shakes his head no. Pious tosses him the wrench.

PIOUS

What're you waiting for?

Brisk chucks it right back.

BRISK

It's worthless without Halifax's
motion program.

Pious boils. Brisk climbs off the scissor platform.

PIOUS
Where're you going?

A soft HUM, and all over the quonset hut lights flicker. The chamber goes dark.

PIOUS
What the hell?

BRISK
The Junk Man closed shop. You want a robot or another aborted mission?

PIOUS
Don't you screw with me.

EXT. QUONSET HUT HANGAR - NIGHT

Two dozen SOLDIERS and TECHNICIANS stand and sit in a semi-circle, all looking toward the center.

Pious parts the crowd and glares at

A TELEVISION SCREEN

An ASTRONAUT steps onto an icy covered extraterrestrial surface.

PIOUS
All of you out of here. Get back to the base.

No one moves. Without warning, Pious shoves the TV onto the ground. Sparks fly. He bulls through the crowd.

The personnel exchange befuddled glances.

TECHNICIAN
What's eating the Captain?

SOLDIER
The first footprints on Europa were supposed to be his.

INT. HANGAR - NIGHT - MUCH LATER

Goliath, the twelve foot robot stands guard at the door.

On the Robot's thorax Halifax unscrews the access panel to the brain chamber and peers into the elaborate maze of wires.

HALIFAX

Let's have your search program.

Brisk hands him an integrated circuit. It slips easily into the brain chamber. Halifax positions his circuit with the grey mass over the vacant space and pushes.

HALIFAX

Damn it!

BRISK

Need a hand?

(spies the strange circuitry)

New software?

Halifax twists the circuit. It fits. He screws back the access panel.

BRISK

What codes did you change?

Halifax pats the robot's head proudly and stares into the complex eyes.

HALIFAX

Made it more reflexive.

BRISK

Like Dr. Shocker suggested?

HALIFAX

Not exactly.

Halifax drops to the ground and grabs a remote. Brisk follows.

BRISK

What exactly?

Halifax admonishes with a finger.

BRISK

Okay, okay, Noah. Serendipity. No

expectations... How about a hint?

Halifax grins, aims the remote at an antenna on the robot's abdomen and hits a series of buttons.

PNEUMATIC PUMPS fill the Creation's actuators. Its head turns.

HALIFAX

It's programmed to learn from its mistakes.

One of the Creation's legs flexes. It takes a step. Leans sideways. Legs grope. It starts in reverse.

HALIFAX

Damn it!

He punches a key.

The Creation sidles crab-like across the floor, plows into a mound of robot parts. A tidal wave of metal flows downward partially burying the Creation. Its legs flail.

HALIFAX

It's blind!

Halifax CLICKS the remote. Nothing. He dives into the metal pile and aims the remote at the antenna. The Creation powers off. Halifax untangles himself from the pile.

HALIFAX

It needs compound eyes.

He pulls open a parts drawer and removes the last two remaining video eyes.

HALIFAX

We need eight more.

INT. BUILDING XXX - PIOUS' OFFICE - SAME TIME

Pious studies his desktop surveillance monitors. The screens show a dozen images of the inside and outside of Halifax's Robot Heaven Hangar.

Pious goes into a rage as one by one the individual screens blink to snow.

He slams his fist into his desk.

INT. HANGAR - LATER - NIGHT

At the bottom of the metal pile, Halifax works at the Creation's open brain cavity using a microscope to connect new wires to the circuit board.

Star sneaks behind him and kneels at its head. Her hands move in a blur. A second later she steps back revealing a warm, friendly smile drawn on the Creation's face.

STAR

No kin of mine's going out in public without a kisser.

Halifax rolls his eyes. Brisk laughs.

BRISK

Nice addition.

Halifax sighs. Brisk points to the mound of metal covering the Creation.

BRISK

I'll get the crane and shift some of the load.

Halifax waves him off, grabs the remote, takes aim at the antenna and hits a key.

A low HUM and the PNEUMATIC PUMPS fill the actuators. The Creation's head revolves slightly. The eyes glow emerald and stare at Halifax.

DISSOLVE TO

BLACK

Black changes to snow.

CREATION'S POV - HALIFAX

An emerald image of Halifax appears in the upper center of the field. Slowly six images come into focus -- reminiscent of the Assassin Bug's POV.

HANGAR

Halifax hits two buttons on the remote.

HALIFAX

Let's see what it can do.

The Creation's eyes flash emerald. Its head swivels upward and surveys its predicament.

Its eyes blink violet. Six legs thrash out shoving a half ton of metal off its body onto the concrete floor.

Halifax, Brisk and Star duck as a hundred pound steel casing flies over their head. Both men exchange suspicious looks.

BRISK

It won't hurt us. It's not programmed to kill.

Brisk looks to Halifax for reassurance about Halifax's modification. He doesn't get it.

The Creation frees itself from the metal web and sidles toward the trio carrying a huge slab of metal. Star cheers.

STAR

Way to go, cuz.

She points to the twelve foot robot at the door.

STAR

It's stronger than Goliath.

BRISK

Sampson?

Halifax punches a button on the remote.

HALIFAX

Hey, Sampson, how about dropping that back in the pile?

Sampson flips the metal slab to its front legs and hurls it into the air - it tears through the ceiling, CLUNKS against the outside of the roof and THUDS.

HALIFAX

Okay, he needs some fine tuning.

BRISK

He?

HALIFAX

Sampson.

Brisk gives him a wary look. Halifax hits the remote.

Sampson responds instantly by backing to, then up the hangar door. Star claps her hands.

STAR

Wow.

Halifax hits another series of buttons.

Sampson climbs to the ground. His eyes flash emerald. He rears, then speeds across the hangar toward the rear wall.

Brisk cringes. Star stares. Halifax hits a button.

Sampson comes to an abrupt halt.

Brisk sighs. Halifax hands him the remote.

HALIFAX

You try it; just don't hit the power button.

Brisk gives him a 'why not?' look.

HALIFAX

We could get some anomalous behavior
if his CPU loses power.

Brisk takes aim and hits a button.

Sampson turns. His eyes flash emerald as he surveys the monstrous pile of rubble.

BRISK

What's he doing?

HALIFAX

Considering your command. Emerald
means he's learning.

BRISK

You're serious.

Sampson's eyes go violet.

HALIFAX

Violet means the lesson has been
assimilated.

Clumsily Sampson scales the mountain of metal debris. But with each movement he grows more confident, moving faster, spider-like, across the side of the pile, along the top and back to the floor in front of the trio.

In awe, Brisk returns the remote.

BRISK

Noah, it's as if he can think.

HALIFAX

Couldn't have done it without you.

The two men grin at each other. On an impulse, Brisk hugs Halifax and pats his back.

Halifax stiffens, pulls away and checks his watch. He hits a button on the remote.

Sampson folds himself into the pile of robot parts and disappears in the metal pile. His circuits power down, but his eyes glow slightly.

Brisk gives Halifax a puzzled look.

HALIFAX

Camouflage mode. We'll run the high speed
tests tomorrow.

BRISK

Not before I check all subroutines
for bugs.

HALIFAX

That'll take all night.

BRISK

Unfortunately.

Halifax yawns, sets the remote down on his workbench next to a computer, and walks for the exit.

HALIFAX

If the concept pans out, I'll down load the data from the prototype and replace his CPU with the working version.

EXT. HANGAR - MOMENTS LATER

Halifax hums the theme from the third movement of Bach's Cantata #140 and almost skips as he and Star climb the ramp to the submarine. Goliath lumbers behind them.

Star zips up the conning tower ladder. Halifax stops humming. He stares up at the rungs and, muttering softly, slowly ascends.

At the hangar door, Brisk stops and turns. He looks at

Sampson - hidden in the metal web.

BRISK

Noah?

Halifax makes it to the tenth rung then returns to the main deck of the sub.

BRISK

Ever wish you could do something over...differently?

Halifax nods and disappears down the deck hatch.

BRISK

Me too.

INT. HANGAR

Brisk plugs a data cable from a computer to Sampson. He sits and begins entering commands. Control code reflects in his glasses. After a few seconds the computer freezes and won't take input.

BRISK

Don't lock me out now.

He tries several commands without luck until the screen changes and displays video of Venus Probe 36.

BRISK

My God!

His expression changes from surprise and disbelief to terror. He grabs the remote and pounds the keys.

Sampson's eyes glow emerald. His front legs twist high in the shadows.

O.S. a GASP of pain.

Sampson's eyes blink violet, violet, violet then go dark.

INT. HANGAR - MORNING

Halifax opens the hangar door HUMMING, off key, the final movement of Bach's Cantata #140.

Near the rubble pile, his pace slows. He looks down at the concrete floor. A brownish swath leads into the metal maze.

Halifax takes several cautious steps, GAGS and falls to his knees.

A bloodied human arm sticks out of the debris. The rest of Brisk's body lies impaled on a spear of metal.

HALIFAX

No! Damn it. No!

Halifax feels for a pulse near the fist, still clutching the remote. Nothing. He rises. The arm comes with him; he flings the severed limb away with revulsion.

HALIFAX

Dear God.

The arm hits the ground. The fist opens. The remote slides on the concrete.

Halifax retrieves it. His eyes follow the data cable from the computer to a pile of rubble where the other end lies disconnected on the ground.

HALIFAX

Sampson?

Halifax's eyes go wide.

Sampson is gone.

Halifax looks to the wall on his right.

Sunlight pours through a hole in the sheet metal the size of Sampson.

INT. HANGAR - LATER

On top of an ambulance, a red strobe light blinks. Two attendants push a shrouded gurney to the rear of the vehicle and carry the body inside.

Halifax and Pious watch the ambulance drive out the door.

PIOUS

How do you propose we launch in three days?

HALIFAX

Your lead scientist is dead, and all you can think about is your project?

PIOUS

I should arrest you.

HALIFAX

For what?

PIOUS

Brisk's murder. You built it here. You removed the surveillance cameras.

HALIFAX

Why would I kill Brisk?

PIOUS

You're hiding something. I don't know what. And where the hell is your alibi?

HALIFAX

Alibi?

PIOUS

The robot. The one you and Brisk were building. You do remember?

Halifax gestures to the hole in the rear of the quonset hut.

PIOUS

Oh, it went for a stroll. How convenient.

A soldier sprints through the hangar door.

SOLDIER

Captain, they've sighted the robot moving North.

PIOUS

(to Halifax)

We'll take my chopper.

Halifax hops in his Porsche and speeds off.

PIOUS

Afraid of heights, but not death. An interesting paradox.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

On a green, one man takes out the flag and lays it on the grass. Two men mark their balls.

GOLFER #1

This time keep your head down.

While his three partners wait patiently, a FOURTH MAN lines up a long putt. He studies the break from several angles, concentrates.

In the b.g. the three other golfers turn to O.S. HUM of PNEUMATIC ACTUATORS.

The fourth man putts the ball. In the b.g. the three men race off in different directions.

The ball rolls up one side of the green, over a contoured plateau and stops an eighth of an inch from the hole.

GOLFER #4

Did you see that! Did you see that!

He spins around looking for his pals. The ground shakes. A CLUNK draws his attention back to the hole. The ball is gone.

Sampson strides across the green and disappears into the woods.

GOLFER #4

Does that count? That counts!

O.S. the WHOMP of rotor blades.

As Sampson takes a bee-line through water hazards and sand traps, GOLFERS abandon their bags, and carts and scatter.

EXT./INT. VERTI-COPTER

A camouflaged military craft armed to the teeth. Senator Yale peers down out of her eye. Her eye-patch matches her pink blouse.

SAMPSON

vaults a brick wall bordering the course and crosses a two lane road. Cars veer to a halt. The occupants stare.

YALE (VO)

It's magnificent. He made that in four days?

PIOUS

(jealous)

It's just a Hermes with a brain transplant.

YALE

There, there. An old Irish proverb goes "Flatter a man's endowment, or he'll use it against you".

Yale slides her hand toward his crotch.

Sampson enters a University complex.

YALE (VO)

Could your software have a bug?

Sampson passes a row of two story dormitories. Coeds peer over balconies and cheer.

ONE COED

Way to go, engineering class!

A volleyball game dissolves as the players chase after Sampson onto a huge, open sports arena.

Sampson trots across a baseball diamond. Exhausted students give up the chase and drop to the grass. Others take their place.

CAMPUS LAWN

Perplexed, Halifax peers through binoculars as he leans against his Porsche holding the remote.

A thousand yards away, Sampson races under a goal post.

HALIFAX

Why are you running? What the hell are you looking for?

O.S. the WHOMP of rotor blades.

HALIFAX

What have I created?

The Verti-copter hovers down. Pious hops out of the vehicle before it hits the ground.

Sampson drives onward and, like the Pied Piper, the line of students behind him continues to grow.

The chopper settles onto the grass. The ROTORS idle down.

Halifax, intrigued with Sampson, barely notices Pious' arrival. Pious shouts to Halifax above the WHOMP, WHOMP of the rotor blades.

PIOUS

What the hell are you waiting for?

Three hundred yards away Sampson struts out of a small stand of trees.

HALIFAX

It's heading somewhere. Where's your scientific curiosity?

PIOUS

Your robot murdered it.

Two hundred yards away, picnicking students scatter out of Sampson's path.

HALIFAX

I'm not your prime suspect?

PIOUS

Damn right. And your weapon's on the loose.

HALIFAX

The robot couldn't hurt Brisk.

PIOUS

Then who did? It's executing your program.

HALIFAX

Don't give me that crap, half of
it's yours.

Sampson climbs a knoll.

PIOUS

Turn it off or I'll cripple it.

HALIFAX

And throw a rock through your
launch window?

Pious jogs to the chopper, grabs a rocket launcher, and aims it
at Sampson.

Halifax races to his side.

HALIFAX

What about the kids?

PIOUS

I don't miss.

Twenty yards away, Sampson looms over the top of the knoll and
gathers speed on the down grade. Pious gets a bead and moves his
thumb to the trigger.

PIOUS

My way or yours?

Indecisive for a long beat.

HALIFAX

If I turn it off, we'll lose the data.

Pious lowers the missile launcher.

PIOUS

What data?

Halifax reacts like he got caught with his pants down.

Pious grabs the remote from Halifax aims at the antenna and hits
the remote button.

PIOUS

We're constructing, not experimenting.

With a soft HUM Sampson's circuits depower.

SAMPSON'S POV

He looks from the remote, to the antenna on his abdomen and back to Halifax.

SAMPSON'S EYES GO VIOLET

then dark.

A loud chorus of BOO'S comes from the students.

HALIFAX

Now you're back to square one.

PIOUS

My team will reinitialize its software.

HALIFAX

It's not that simple.

PIOUS

Brisk tried to stop him and it killed him.

HALIFAX

You really believe that?

Pious pulls a radio from his belt.

PIOUS

(on the radio)

Get the Sikorsky in here right away.

(listens)

Tomorrow's too late! Get me some M.P.'s to keep the vultures away.

A news van drives across the lawn.

A canvas topped troop truck races past the van and slides to a halt near Pious.

As the soldiers pour out the back, Pious barks.

PIOUS

Cover the robot.

Three soldiers drag a tarp over Sampson. Halifax intervenes and points to the antenna projection.

HALIFAX

Careful.

Two other men pound stakes into the ground and secure the lead lines. Pious pulls a SERGEANT aside.

PIOUS

Keep everyone away.

Sergeant salutes. Pious heads for the chopper.

A reporter and cameraman jump in his path. Pious turns on the charm.

PIOUS

Sorry, no story here. Just a student engineering project run amok.

Pious eases past them and hops in the chopper. It ROTORS up and disappears into a setting sun.

Halifax ponders. Looks from the canvas cover to the Science Building.

The campus night lights go on as he races up the steps.

INT. DR. SHOCKER'S LAB - DUSK

Dang throws her things into boxes.

Halifax bursts through the door. Dang jumps.

DANG

You again.

Halifax scans the chemical shelves.

DANG

You do have Dr. Shocker's permission?

Halifax shrugs and collects two bottles of chemicals. Dang sizes up his selection.

DANG
Testing for blood?

Halifax heads for the door.

DANG
Does this have something to do with
the robot?

Halifax exits quickly.

CORRIDOR

Dang chases him down.

HALIFAX
Shouldn't you be working on your thesis?

DANG
Your buddy Shocker killed it.

HALIFAX
He was on my thesis committee. Friends don't
come easy to me.

DANG
Me either.

Halifax stops, stares at Dang, then hurries down the hall.

EXT. SCIENCE BUILDING - NIGHT

Dang catches him again on the front stairs and points to Sampson.

DANG
Your creation?
(off Halifax's nod)
What's it doing here?

HALIFAX
Programming problem.

DANG
What communications protocol are
you using?

HALIFAX
Omicron plus plus.

DANG
Version six or six-one?

Halifax gives her a look of admiration.

HALIFAX
My own modification.

They approach the tarp. The Sergeant blocks their path.

SERGEANT
I have my orders.

HALIFAX
Do your orders include letting its memory
erode because of an emergency shut down?

The Sergeant looks around, worried.

HALIFAX
Every second you waste is another processor
to be replaced.

Sergeant pulls the radio from its holster.

SERGEANT
Patch me through to Captain Pious.

HALIFAX
He'll have your ass if the robot doesn't
come back on line.

SERGEANT
Come on...come on.

Halifax crawls under the tarp. Dang tags along. Halifax sighs.

UNDER THE TARP

Dark except for an occasional glint of light from Sampson's body.

HALIFAX

Hold this.

Dang gropes.

HALIFAX

This!

A flash light turns on. Dang takes it and studies Sampson with wide, astonished eyes.

DANG

What's its primary function?

O.S. the WHOMP of rotor blades.

HALIFAX

Later, okay?

Halifax goes into high gear, spraying chemical reagents on Sampson's legs and grabbers.

DANG

What are you looking for?

HALIFAX

Evidence. They say he killed...my friend.
Hit the UV.

Dang fusses with the flashlight until an ultraviolet light shines. Halifax moves from leg to leg.

HALIFAX

Just as I thought. But what the hell
is wrong with the program?

The tarp flips up. Pious appears with a hand computer unit.

HALIFAX

He didn't kill anyone.

The Sergeant and a Private appear. One grabs Halifax, the other Dang.

HALIFAX

Call off the Cub Scouts.

Pious lifts the tarp and gestures outside.

PIOUS

It passed its final exam. I'm taking
it from here.

The soldiers drag Halifax and Dang under.

HALIFAX

It's a prototype, Pious. Its circuits are
jury-rigged. Cycle it off and on, no telling
what will happen.

PIOUS

My team will make the final adjustments.

Pious plugs a computer interface cable into Sampson, inserts the
other end into a portable computer and enters a code.

Sampson's eyes glow emerald.

PIOUS

We'll have you home in no time.

Pious hits two more buttons.

EXT. LAWN

Under military escort, Halifax and Dang head up the knoll.

O.S. a PNEUMATIC HUM. A soldier near the tent almost jumps out
of his boots. Coffee splashes all over his uniform.

The canvas tarp rears and buckles.

Soldiers level their weapons and form a perimeter circle around
the thrashing tarp.

The canvas billows. The tent pegs strain then explode into the
air as Sampson rips the tarp from his body.

SOLDIER

Man, this was never covered in

basic training.

The soldiers fall back and take aim. Halifax frees himself from the guard and breaks through the circle.

PIOUS

Hold your fire. It's under control.

Pious waves the remote at Halifax.

PIOUS

Up and running.

HALIFAX

Pious, power down!

Sampson flexes his legs.

Halifax races toward Pious.

HALIFAX

Turn him off!

Sampson turns his head slowly and looks at the remote. His eyes blink violet.

Halifax tackles Pious and fights for the remote.

HALIFAX

You stupid son-of-a-bitch!

He grabs the remote and turns.

At the same instant, Sampson's grabber reaches out and SNAPS the antenna off his abdomen. His eyes blink emerald. He turns left then right.

When he spies the Science Building his eyes go violet. He begins to move.

Halifax and Pious struggle to their feet.

Sampson gathers speed.

PIOUS

Where the hell is it going?

Halifax erupts and lands a perfect right in Pious's face.
Before Pious even hits the ground,

Halifax takes off after Sampson.

HALIFAX

One chance: the kill switch.

SCIENCE BUILDING - FRONT STEPS

As Sampson mounts the stairs, Halifax times his leap perfectly and lands on Sampson's back. He crawls up his abdomen to his thorax.

Sampson swivels his head. Creator and Creation come eyeball to eyeball.

Halifax reaches for the kill switch. Sampson vaults into the air. Halifax turns ashen. He gasps and trembles. His arms flail.

A tree limb snags him. He tumbles through leaves and limbs until he slams into the ground gasping for breath.

HALIFAX

Damn it! Damn it!

Sampson scales the wall of the building.

Pious screams into his portable radio.

PIOUS

Get the Kevlar netting out here.

Sampson climbs over the eaves of the roof and disappears.

Visibly shaken Halifax tries to rise. Dang helps him up. She likes this guy.

DANG

Are you okay?

HALIFAX

I get altitude sickness.

DANG

At ten feet?

Embarrassed, Halifax wipes perspiration from his forehead and nods.

DANG

Any other character flaws I should know about?

Halifax gives her a 'aren't you getting a bit personal' look.

DANG

Before I tell my girlfriends about you.

Dang smiles. Halifax turns and stares at the building.

HALIFAX

Where's Sampson?

INT. SHOCKER'S THIRD FLOOR LAB - SAME MOMENT

At his specimen station, Dr. Shocker zaps a live cockroach with an electric probe.

The ceiling lights begin to shake. A loud CLUNKING sound comes from the roof.

Shocker looks up. The lights stop shaking. The noise subsides. Shocker returns to his experiment.

O.S. a soft TAP on the laboratory window. Shocker turns, sees nothing and goes back to work.

O.S. a TAP, TAP, TAP. Shocker stomps toward the window. Suddenly the glass and wall implode. Sampson charges through the breach.

Shocker races for the door. Sampson blocks his path. Shocker dives and fights his way under the lab stations through a forest of stool legs and gas lines.

Sampson follows tearing the lab apart. Test tubes and jars CRASH to the floor. Gas lines sever and HISS. Sampson finds his prey cowering beside a sink.

Shocker tries to run. Sampson drops a leg on his shoe pinning him to the floor. Sampson wraps a grabber arm around Shocker and pulls the flailing Shocker to his abdomen.

Sampson reaches around the lab and grabs the REFRIGERATION UNIT, terrariums, crates and ominous glass cases.

He disappears through the breach with Shocker and the cache of laboratory equipment.

INT. SCIENCE BUILDING - STAIR WELL

Halifax and Dang lead Pious and a squad of soldiers up to the third floor. At the far end of the hall they see light from Shocker's lab.

The group spreads out and moves down the hall.

INT. SHOCKER'S LAB - SAME MOMENT

The hall door flies open. Halifax leads the squad. There's a collective gasp as they take in the carnage.

HALIFAX

Damn.

A human SCREAM comes from the hole in the wall.

Dang and the rest race to the opening. Halifax freezes. Pious shoves him toward the gap.

PIOUS

What the hell did you create?

THE OTHER SIDE OF QUAD

A CRASH OF GLASS and then one by one the lights go on. The last light identifies the building: HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY

INT. WEIGHT ROOM

In terror, Shocker paces on treadmill. Sampson towers above him. His legs a cage - keeping Shocker interred.

Sampson nudges the control panel. The treadmill moves faster. Shocker struggles to keep pace.

Using his pinchers at the end of his arms, Sampson opens the glass jars and crates he carried from Shocker's lab.

EXT. HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Halifax, Dang, and Pious lead the squad into the building.

INT. BUILDING HALL

The group races down the corridor and comes to a stop.

WEIGHT ROOM DOORS

Light pours through the beveled glass fifty feet away.

From inside a WAIL mixes with an odd DRONE.

Halifax and Dang hurry forward. Pious follows reluctantly.
O.S. Shocker's WAIL reaches a new edge.

Halifax throws open the door. Thousands of bees and wasps swarm through the opening. Halifax and Dang scream in pain and retreat with the rest of the squad.

EXT. HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY BUILDING - NIGHT LATER

A team of men launch metal canisters. Glass CRASHES. Windows shatter. Plumes of smoke rise from the building.

Near the front door, Military personnel set the final adjustments on computers, radio equipment and a radar screen at a make-shift command station.

Dang, her cheeks and lips puffy from multiple bee stings, pulls the hood of an environmental protection suit over Halifax's equally swollen head. Pious straps a jury-rigged video camera around the hood.

PIOUS

Find your robot and turn it off.

HALIFAX

(muffled through the cloth)

What about Dr. Shocker?

PIOUS

Secondary priority.

HALIFAX

Such compassion.

Pious points to the command station.

PIOUS

We'll monitor your actions from here.

Dang puts on a headset.

INT. HUMAN PHYSIOLOGY BUILDING - MAIN FOYER

Halifax enters and coughs from the smoke. The door shuts behind him with a THUD.

The sedated bodies of insects litter the floor. Taking a circuitous route to avoid them, he moves down the hall, rounds the corner, and enters the weight room.

VIDEO CAMERA'S POV - WEIGHT ROOM

Through the smoke an image appears.

HALIFAX (OS)

My God.

DANG (VO)
(from a radio)
What is it?

VIDEO CAMERA'S POV

A bloated human form lies draped over the bars of the treadmill.

DANG (VO)
(from a radio)
Halifax, we're blind out here.

Halifax throws open several windows. The smoke dissipates. He wipes the camera lens and points at the treadmill.

The exposed skin of Shocker's body is a red, bulbous mass of swollen pulp.

HALIFAX
You getting this?

PIOUS (VO)
(from the radio)
He should have called the Orkin man.

HALIFAX
That's funny, Passed Over.

DANG (VO)
(from the radio)
Halifax, get out of there!

O.S. Pneumatic actuators HUM. Halifax turns.

DANG (VO)
(from the radio)
You have company.

Sampson looms out of the smoke. Halifax stands his ground.

PIOUS (VO)
(from the radio)
Delta squad, to the rear of the building.

With emerald eyes, Sampson raises his grabber arm to Halifax.

PIOUS (VO)

(from the radio)
Get a verti-copter airborne.

Halifax extends his hand. Sampson drops a small, twisted piece of metal into his palm.

PIOUS (VO)
(from the radio)
Cordon off the front and rear doors.
Halifax stares at the object, then back at Sampson. Sampson rubs his legs together and emits a TWANG.

EXT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME INSTANT

Dang puzzles and cups the earphones tighter to her ears.

PIOUS (VO)
Alpha and Charlie squad enter
the premises.

Through the radio again the TWANG.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM

Halifax looks up to Sampson's emerald eyes.

DANG (VO)
(from the radio)
Vengeance?

HALIFAX
Vengeance?

Sampson's eyes blink violet, once, twice.

The doors fly open. A squad advances carefully. Each man covers the other's position.

Sampson scurries across a mat, hurdles a platform beam, and, using the parallel bars and gymnast rings, disappears through a hole in the ceiling.

The soldiers stand, mouths agape. One points to the hole.

SOLDIER #1
What was that?

SOLDIER #2

Hell if I know, but I'd give
it a ten.

SOLDIER #3

For technical merit or artistic
presentation?

TREADMILL

Shocker's puffed eye opens. A strand of drool hangs from bloody
lips. He pleads hoarsely.

DR. SHOCKER

Anti...toxin....

EXT. PHYSIOLOGY BUILDING - DAY

Dang helps Halifax remove his hood. Pious snarls in his face.

PIOUS

Where's your damn robot?

HALIFAX

Following your damn program.

A SIREN wails. An ambulance jumps the curb, roars across the
lawn, does a 180, and stops with the rear doors facing the steps
of the Physiology Building.

Three men sprint into the structure.

COMMAND CENTER

Dang eases down the zipper on Halifax's protective suit.

Lost in thought, Halifax pulls a tine on the tweezers in his
hand. Dang grabs them.

DANG

These are Shocker's.

Pious shoves them apart. He motions to a soldier.

PIOUS

Escort her to her car.

The soldier takes Dang's arm. She shoves him away.

DANG

My feet work fine.

She scribbles a number on Halifax's hand.

DANG

Call me.

(to Pious)

You and Shocker attend Cretin U. together?

Pious doesn't get it. Halifax stifles a laugh. Dang takes her own sweet time strolling across the grass. Halifax watches her go. He's definitely intrigued.

DOORS OF THE PHYSIOLOGY BUILDING

fly open with a THUD. The soldiers and medic-team hurry out with Shocker's body in their arms.

PIOUS

Victim number two.

HALIFAX

If Sampson wanted to kill Shocker,
he would have used rat poison.

PIOUS

Sampson?

O.S. a SIREN. In the b.g. the ambulance roars away and disappears. Pious puts it all together in a quick beat.

PIOUS

Sampson's THE robot? Brisk was right. You're crazy. You wanted to explore the planets....But you're afraid to stick your ass in a pilot seat. Sampson's an IT, Halifax. And when I find IT, I'll either have IT destroyed or reprogrammed and send IT where it was designed to go. To the stars.

Halifax gets in Pious's face.

HALIFAX

One question. Why did the specs call for anconal instead of beryllium fiber? You would have saved tons of weight and increased the speed.

PIOUS

Classified.

HALIFAX

Why the ultra high melting point?

PIOUS

You're the genius, tell me.

HALIFAX

He's built to explore something else.

PIOUS

What?

HALIFAX

An educated guess?...Someplace very caustic...hellish.

PIOUS

You know why no one likes working with you?

HALIFAX

I'm phobic. I was an astronaut, and
now I'm afraid to fly.

PIOUS

You don't know where to draw the line.

HALIFAX

So where's Sampson going?

PIOUS

The damn robot's a thing. Next
you'll tell me it's pregnant.

HALIFAX

Difficult to achieve.

PIOUS

I'm so relieved.

HALIFAX

He'd have to be female.

PIOUS

But since HE isn't, I have the perfect
form of birth control. One well placed
Stinger missile. The ultimate vasectomy.

HALIFAX

Who would carry out your mission?

PIOUS

Right now the robot's a killer.

HALIFAX

Bullshit! He didn't kill Brisk.

PIOUS

It sure as hell tried to kill Shocker.

HALIFAX

Sampson learns from humans.

PIOUS

Fine. I'm canceling ITS classes.

HALIFAX

Don't piss him off.

Pious turns to the M.P.s

PIOUS

Arrest this son-of-a-bitch.

HALIFAX

For what?

PIOUS
Impersonating God.

Halifax fixes his eyes on Pious and extends his arms awaiting handcuffs.

PIOUS
Get him out of my -- No, take him back
to Building Thirty.

The MP slaps on the cuffs.

HALIFAX
When you lose the scent, don't
come begging.

They shove him into a military vehicle.

EXT. INTERSECTION - MOMENTS LATER

In a relatively abandoned industrial area, the military vehicle stops at a red light.

A bakery van crosses the intersection on the green. The van Driver sticks his head out of the window and stares skyward. He loses control. The van spins through the crosswalk onto the curb and collides with a mailbox. The rear doors fly open; loaves of bread spew to the ground.

The Driver leaps out of the cab and races away.

INT. MILITARY VEHICLE

The Military Vehicle DRIVER grabs the gear shift.

DRIVER
What the hell?

O.S. PNEUMATIC RUMBLINGS. Suddenly two of Sampson's legs crash through the hood and spears the engine. It snaps off its mountings and drops to the street.

The guard draws a Scatto-45 and aims it through the windshield. A metal WRENCH. The roof of the vehicle vanishes. The guard looks up.

Sampson looks down.

The Driver draws his weapon. Sampson flicks it across the block. The driver yells at the M.P. Guard.

DRIVER

Shoot it!

The M.P. tosses him his Scat, opens the door and runs.

M.P.

You shoot it.

Sampson rips the driver's door off its hinges. The Driver takes the hint and hits the concrete in full stride.

Sampson snips off Halifax's handcuffs and sidles off into the industrial park.

Halifax leaps out and gives chase.

HALIFAX

Wait.

INDUSTRIAL AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Halifax surveys the area. Sampson's gone.

HALIFAX

Thanks.

Hidden high in the girders of a building under construction, Sampson's eyes blink violet.

INT. CORRIDOR - SCIENCE BUILDING

A hunched, bi-speckled, elderly MAN sporting a white beard clicks the linoleum floor with a cane as he makes his way toward TWO YOUNG SOLDIERS posted outside of Shocker's lab.

SOLDIER #1

Halt.

Soldier #1 flashes a light in the Elderly Man's face.

It's Halifax. He throws his hand in the air and gums a comment.

HALIFAX

Easy there, sonny. Jumped out of bed

moment I heard the news.

SOLDIER #2
Who the hell are you?

Halifax pokes his cane, misses purposely and tumbles into the arms of Soldier #1.

HALIFAX
I? I am Professor Brian Epstein.
Research scientist and Doctor
Shocker's friend and colleague.
(dusts himself off)
No respect. You young people have
no respect.

He starts for the lab door. Soldier #1 steps in his path.

SOLDIER #1
Off limits, sir.

HALIFAX
Good. Good. Keeps out the riff-raff.

SOLDIER #1
Keeps out everyone.

HALIFAX
Oh, dear me.

He points to a crack of light coming under the door.

HALIFAX
You boys. You boys'll make sure none
of 'em escape. Won't you?

The Soldiers share a puzzled look.

HALIFAX
They told you. They warned you, didn't they?
Surely they trained you in the capture of
Centruroides sculpuratus?

The Soldiers shake their heads.

HALIFAX
But they gave you a vial? A small red

bottle of anti-toxin?

Halifax twists his beard in disbelief.

HALIFAX

Whoa! One escapes. One bite.

His face goes into contortions of pain.

As the men stare, he WHACKS the door to the lab with his cane. Both men jump.

HALIFAX

You boys are brave. Real brave.

He starts back down the corridor muttering.

HALIFAX

You watch it. Watch the crack. I've been trained, but you...you've got guts.

Soldier #2 hooks Halifax by the arm and escorts him through the door to Shocker's lab.

HALIFAX

Any of 'em come out, now, you skedaddle.

INT. SHOCKER'S LAB - MOMENTS LATER

Halifax picks up a jar containing a scorpion labeled Centruroides sculpuratus. He WHACKS his cane on a table and yells over his shoulder.

HALIFAX

One down, three to go.

He puts down the jar and bullets through the lab: opening drawers, cabinets and checking specimens on the walls.

He slides the glass roof off the terrarium, and flips over rocks and stones with a wooden ruler.

WOMAN'S VOICE (OS)

Try to keep me out!

Halifax grabs the jar with the scorpion, unscrews the lid and runs to the door.

WOMAN'S VOICE (OS)

Professor Epstein?

INT. CORRIDOR

Halifax opens the door and slams the jar -- mouth down -- at the guard's feet.

HALIFAX

Thought you'd get away did you?

Dang stares at Halifax like he just escaped from a mental ward. Halifax grabs her arm and drags her into the lab.

HALIFAX

Miss Dang, thank God you're here. I need your help.

(to the guards)

Shut the door. Don't let any more escape.

The door closes. Halifax smiles sheepishly. Dang doesn't. She grabs his hand and points to the number scribbled there.

DANG

Thanks for the phone call. My house is being watched. Who the hell are you and what are you doing here?

HALIFAX

Looking for something.

DANG

What?

HALIFAX

Clues. Why did Sampson come back here?

DANG

Come back?

Halifax steps toward the desert terrarium.

HALIFAX

I broke a few rules and tried something.
Theoretically I knew it was possible.
Silicon/synaptic junctions are
nothing new.

DANG

When was Sampson here before?

Dang looks back and forth between Halifax and the terrarium.

DANG

You used parts of the male Assassin
Bug? Shocker told me it was dead.

HALIFAX

Not brain dead.

Dang goes wide-eyed.

HALIFAX

Shocker mapped out its neural pathways. It
was a simple matter to tap into the brain
and establish connections to the central
processing unit.

DANG

You connected the brain of my Assassin
Bug into the brain of your robot.
Those two were genetically engineered.

She pulls out the tweezers.

DANG

The Assassin Bug knew what these meant.
Pain. Experiment. If it was capable --

Dang rushes toward the refrigeration unit. A square of dust and
grime marks the spot where it used lie.

DANG

I know why Sampson came back.
We have a serious problem.

HALIFAX

We?

DANG
Delila's gone.

HALIFAX
Delila?

DANG
The Assassin Bug's mate. I just
christened her Delila. And she's gone.

CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Dang throws open the door. Halifax crawls out on his hands and
knees gumming his words like an old man.

HALIFAX
Where'd you go? Where'd you --

He points to Soldier #2's leg then shoves the jar against his
buttocks. The Soldier lets out a yelp and stares down at the
scorpion in the jar.

HALIFAX
That's the last of 'em.

Halifax places the Soldier's hand on the jar.

HALIFAX
Get out of those pants, sonny. Keep your
body tilted. Don't let it get away.

Soldier #2 starts down the hall like the Leaning Tower of Pisa.
Halifax gives Soldier #1 a look.

HALIFAX
Give him a hand, soldier.

Soldier #1 races after Soldier #2.

Halifax and Dang move toward the exit. Dang looks back at the
soldiers worriedly.

DANG
He'll die if that scorpion stings him.

HALIFAX

Did you put poison on your rubber bug?

They share a smile.

EXT. SCIENCE BUILDING STAIRS

Dang chases Halifax.

DANG

Where are you going?

Pious and a group of soldiers hurry up the quad.

Halifax bends over like an old man, pulls Dang into his arms and uses her like a crutch. He gums

HALIFAX

Help an old man, won't you, dearie?

Dang catches Pious out of the corner of her eye and goes into the act. Pious and his men pass behind them and race into the building.

Halifax finds the area where he left his Porsche. It's gone.

HALIFAX

Do you have a car?

DANG

Why?

HALIFAX

Because I don't have wings.

DANG

Do I look like an Avis counter?

Halifax sticks out a thumb in a hitch-hiking gesture.

HALIFAX

A lift then?

PARKING LOT - ELECTRO-HOV 2037

rests on the ground. Dang squeezes her identity card into a slot, and the canopy sides open.

Realistic looking plastic insects cover the dashboard.

HALIFAX

On a grad student's stipend?

DANG

Eight years, two months, three days of
scrimping.

HALIFAX

I like tires, rubber tires.

DANG

You like ground contact.

Halifax picks up a plastic bug.

DANG

Burglar repellent.

Halifax turns to the Science Building where Pious and soldiers
exit and fan out across the lawn.

He snatches Dang's card, hops over the door into the driver
seat, inserts the card and the engine ignites. The vehicle
levitates a foot off the ground.

DANG

Where the hell are you --?

Dang grabs the roof. Halifax throws the EH in reverse.

HALIFAX

Tell Pious I stole it.

DANG

You are stealing it.

SHOTS ring out.

HALIFAX

Pious, you asshole.

He hauls Dang into the EH and stomps on the accelerator. The EH
drags tail as Halifax hyper accelerates. Sparks fly.

DANG

You're scratching the frame!

More SHOTS. One SPLATTERS the front head light. Dang screams.

Halifax whips around cars and heads for the exit.

Another SHOT. It careens off the bullet shaped hood leaving a long crease in the metal.

DANG

Look at that! Look what they did
to my finish!

Dang raises her arms in surrender. More SHOTS. Halifax pulls her arms down.

HALIFAX

They're not aiming for your car.
They think you're my accomplice.

Halifax wheels around a corner and down a broad avenue. Dang glares.

DANG

Why?

HALIFAX

You're giving me a ride.

Dang yanks the card out of the ignition. The engine dies.

DANG

Not anymore. Out! Get out!

The air cushion escapes with a WHOOSH. Still moving the EH 2037 strikes the ground. Fireworks spit from the undercarriage as it skids to a halt.

Halifax hops out, tosses off his disguise and stares into the darkness behind him.

Dang jumps into the driver's pod and reseats the card. The engine reignites. The EH levitates.

DANG

Pious will listen to reason. We'll
talk. I'll explain.

STREET CORNER

A Hov-Track whips around the corner. Pious sits high in the back seat and calmly loads a pen-sized object into a tube.

PIOUS

This will slow them down.

The two soldiers in the front exchange a look of fear. They both duck.

SOLDIER #1

Slow 'em down? They're stopped.

ELECTRO-HOV

Without warning Halifax jerks Dang out through the open canopy.

She kicks, pummels and bites as he carries her fireman style over a small brick wall.

Dang struggles to her knees. Halifax peeks over the wall then falls over Dang's body.

DANG

This is kidnap --

A WHOP as the projectile collides with Dang's car. A DEAFENING EXPLOSION. Red shards of metal rocket into the night.

BEHIND THE WALL

The concussion splatters mortar and bricks over their bodies. Halifax cuddles Dang.

HALIFAX

I think you'll find that Pious has a serious communications problem.

EXT. ELECTRO-HOVER 2037

Pious and the two soldiers approach the molten slab.

PIOUS

When it cools off, look for body parts.

EXT. BUILDING XXX - NIGHT

Halifax and Dang creep along the wall, round a corner and stop.

Pegasus, parked between the wings of a U shaped addition, gleams in the off light from the windows.

Halifax whispers.

HALIFAX

The Pegasus. Sampson's shuttle to the starship that will take him to Alpha Centauri's fourth planet.

DANG

So it's Pious'?

HALIFAX

Only for Sampson's mission.

Dang picks up a good sized rock and tosses it at Pegasus. It PLUNKS off the titanium hull. Halifax stares in disbelief.

DANG

I didn't have a missile.

Halifax sighs, leads her to a side door and enters the access code on the pad.

INT. BUILDING XXX

Dang struggles to keep up as they hurry through a canyon of robotic parts.

Above a mound of metal, a pair of eyes rise, hippo-like, each made up of six video cameras. They blink emerald, then violet.

Dang shivers and takes Halifax's arm as they pass through the robotic graveyard toward a door marked MEZZANINE.

INT. STAIRWELL

Halifax and Dang take the stairs two at a time.

DANG

What are we doing here?

HALIFAX

Finding out Sampson's true mission.

DANG

You just said he's supposed to explore
Alpha Centauri's fourth planet.

HALIFAX

The Tooth Fairy's easier to swallow.

DANG

What's Pious got to hide?

MEZZANINE - PIOUS'S OFFICE

Halifax shies away from the railing.

HALIFAX

Something more ambitious.

He glances at the access code panel to Pious' office and tries
the same codes he used to enter the building. Nothing.

Dang nudges him out of the way.

HALIFAX

Two wrong entries set off the alarm.

She removes her glasses, breaks them in half, puts one lens in
the path of the overhead light and the other in front of her
eye.

DANG'S POV - THE NUMBER PAD

Four numbers glow. She presses them. The door CLICKS open.

HALIFAX

How'd you do that?

Dang grins proudly.

DANG

Dichroic properties of human oil illuminated
with Carbon vapor lighting. Bees do it all
the time.

HALIFAX

Even with four buttons there were
still twenty-four possibilities.

DANG

The brightest had to be first.

HALIFAX

Of course.

She fiddles with the broken lenses.

HALIFAX

I'll buy you a new pair.

DANG

You'll buy me a new car.

INT. PIOUS'S OFFICE

Halifax heads for the computer.

HALIFAX

See what you can find.

Dang waves him to work, finds a roll of scotch tape on Pious's desk and rolls it around the bridge of her glasses.

INT. PIOUS'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Dang runs her finger over the laser disc video collection. She reads the titles aloud.

DANG

"Pioneer - 23, Soyouse - 1434,
Endeavor - 359." What are these?

HALIFAX

Not what we're looking for.

Halifax returns to work. Dang shrugs, pulls a laser disc from its cover and inserts it in the player.

SCREEN - VIDEO - INT. OF A SPACESHIP

Pious pompously hits a key on the control panel and waves to the camera.

Typed on the screen:

AUGUST 3, 2029

EXT. MOON BASE

In a spacesuit, Pious exits the spaceship and shakes hands with a group of similarly suited people.

A caption reads:

CAPTAIN VICTOR H. PIOUS
MAN'S FIRST UNASSISTED MOON FLIGHT

PIOUS' OFFICE

Halifax stands and ejects the disc.

HALIFAX

His space exploits, okay? Copies of flight data recorders. Nothing else. Nothing.

Dang stares dumbfounded.

DANG

Jealous?

HALIFAX

Enraged.

He fishes through the video collection. Finds the disc he wants, inserts it and CLICKS on the player.

HALIFAX

Watching it for the millionth time won't hurt any more than the first.

SCREEN - VIDEO

Typed on screen:

VENUS PROBE 36
FIRST MISSION TO VENUS AT SUPERIOR CONJUNCTION
APRIL 21, 2034

INT. SPACE SHIP - FLIGHT DECK

A young Woman steps into a spacesuit. The name LEGIA HALIFAX is monogrammed on her sleeve. Above it a tiny daisy.

Legia and Colonel Pious do the final check out of each other's Extra Vehicular Activity Suit and Maneuvering Unit.

PIOUS' OFFICE - SAME MOMENT

Dang's eyes shift from the screen to Halifax.

In deep concentration, he runs through the check list with Legia, mimicking each step to find her mistake.

SCREEN - SPACE

Pious and Legia float untethered. Venus's atmosphere roils beneath them.

DANG (VO)
Why the EVA?

HALIFAX (VO)
Officially? To retrieve a meteor.

A rainbow of light blinks in front of the astronauts, then the image tears apart.

DANG (VO)
What happened?

HALIFAX (VO)
Pious said the meteor's magnetic field interfered with their transmissions.

PIOUS' OFFICE

Halifax's eyes glaze over. His lips tremble.

DANG
That doesn't explain why a ship mounted camera should fail.

HALIFAX
That's why I want the official transcripts.

VIDEO SCREEN - FLIGHT DECK

The image sputters and clears to - Legia disappearing like a teardrop in Venus's purple atmosphere.

BRISK

Gravity's got her, Colonel.

PIOUS

Son-of-a-bitch!

PIOUS' OFFICE

Shaking, Halifax kills the video and turns away.

HALIFAX

I was wrong. It hurts more each time.

A tear rolls down his cheek.

DANG

Her death triggered your fear of heights.

HALIFAX

Crazy isn't it?

DANG

I'm sorry.

Halifax nods thanks. Dang ejects the disc from the player and snaps it in half.

Slowly Halifax pulls himself together.

DANG

What caused the accident?

HALIFAX

Officially, a reaction jet malfunction.

DANG

You don't believe it?

HALIFAX

I don't believe that recording. I don't believe anything they've told me. I

built Sampson because they've promised the official Senate Space Committee Transcripts.

DANG

What do you expect to find?

HALIFAX

Lies. A web of lies. Someone screwed up. Something happened. My wife didn't have to die.

DANG

You think Pious' incompetence caused her death?

HALIFAX

If he didn't murder her.

DANG

For a lousy meteor?

HALIFAX

Something more important.

DANG

Like what?

HALIFAX

Something worth more than billions of dollars. Something you'd lie for. Risk your career for. Maybe kill for.

Dang absorbs the import of his comment, then plants a peck on his cheek.

DANG

We're not going to find it yakking.

Dang starts shoving aside paintings and generally tearing up the office.

Halifax gets the point, drags away Pious' desk and rips up the carpet. Nothing.

INT. PIOUS'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The room is in shambles.

Frustrated Dang puts her hands on her hips.

DANG

Maybe it's not here.

HALIFAX

It's here. Pious wouldn't let it out---

Pious and four M.P.'s burst through the door.

PIOUS

Your problem, Noah is predictability.

Frankly predictability is boring.

Senator Yale enters holding a plastic folder. Her green eye-patch matches her green dress. She gives Noah an up and down.

YALE

Noah. What a disappointment.

Dang glares at Pious.

DANG

You destroyed my car.

PIOUS

Talk to your adjuster.

DANG
(SNAPS her fingers)
Damn, and I passed on the missile
attack clause.

Halifax looks from Yale to Pious, then laughs.

HALIFAX
Sampson still eluding you?

Pious gestures around his office.

PIOUS
Did you think he was hiding in here?

HALIFAX
Half of his program is.

PIOUS
You could have asked for it.

Halifax extends his hand.

PIOUS
Sorry, national security

HALIFAX
(to Yale)
Why are you in on this?

YALE
Noah, you see conspiracies where
none exist.

Halifax and Dang exchange a quick glance.

PIOUS
You've created a most incredible
machine. But you understand...It
must be found. Reprogrammed. Finely
tuned. Made more --

HALIFAX
Predictable.

Yale nods wearily and hands Halifax the bound package.
VENUS MISSION is stenciled on the cover.

YALE

I've keep my vow.

HALIFAX

Abridged or unabridged?

YALE

You wanted the transcripts. You've got them.

PIOUS

And you'll have plenty of time to peruse the contents.

Pious motions to the M.P.s. and taunts Halifax.

PIOUS

Place them under direct supervision. We may need his expertise when we reprogram ... his robot.

Before Halifax or Dang can protest, they're out the door.

Yale starts to exit, then turns to Pious and warns.

YALE

Forty-six hours. Find the robot.

At the door, again Yale stops and whacks the numbered lock.

YALE

And, lover, change your access code.

Yale slams the door. Pious blows her a kiss.

INT. BUILDING XXX - MOMENTS LATER

A door CLANKS open. A beam of light shines over the hangar.

SAMPSON'S POV - INT HANGAR

Six emerald eyes observe the M.P.s escorting Halifax and Dang through the door under the MEZZANINE sign. Halifax pulls Dang close.

HALIFAX

Sorry about all this.

DANG

It's my fault. I should have let you steal
my car.

Sampson's eyes ease into violet.

INT. PIOUS' OFFICE - WINDOW

Pious draws the curtain.

INT. HANGAR

Sampson looks to Pious' window. Behind him a steel door closes
with a THUD.

SAMPSON'S POV - PIOUS' CURTAIN

His six binocular eyes zoom in on the curtain fabric and focus
on a different gaps formed by the weave of the cloth.

He watches Pious lift the crystal spar off his desk. A blast of
multi-chromatic light obscures his view.

SAMPSON

Collects tools, wire, and circuit boards.

INT. PIOUS' OFFICE

A dissonant HUM fills the room. The laser disk shelves fold into
themselves. The wall peels open - a slit appears.

Pious sticks his hand in the slot and extracts the perfectly
symmetrical DISK taken from the Alien in the first scene.
He fondles it gently.

PIOUS

Halifax, where's Sampson? Noah, you're
holding out. You know -- Of course!

Pious grins, returns the DISK and twists the crystal spar. The
shelves close on themselves. Pious bolts out the door.

INT. HOLDING ROOMS - CORRIDOR

A stark row of dutch doors, steel on the bottom - barred on the top.

M.P. #1 locks up Halifax and Dang in facing cells.

Through the bars M.P. #2 hands Halifax a PAGE READER.

Their steps fade. O.S. A door CLICKS shut.

Halifax sets the Page Reader on his cot, plugs the prong into a single socket and inserts the Venus Probe disc.

A holograph shines on the concrete wall.

The title reads: "OFFICIAL INQUIRY INTO THE VENUS PROBE 36."
For several seconds, Halifax flips pages, then

 HALIFAX
 Censored crap!

He picks up the Page Reader and is about to chuck it against the wall; the connecting cord stops him.

Halifax grins, lays the device on the cot, rushes to the cell door and whispers across to Dang.

 HALIFAX
 Have a nail file?

 DANG
 Me?!

 HALIFAX
 Anything metallic?

 DANG
 Shocker's tweezers.

 HALIFAX
 Perfect. Anything else?

 DANG
 Gum wrappers.

 HALIFAX
 Perfect.

DANG
 Quadramint or herbal?

HALIFAX
 Both.

Dang bowls the tweezers and a couple of packets of gum under her door -- across the hall.

INT. HALIFAX'S CELL - MINUTES LATER

Halifax hums Bach's Cantata #140 as he disassembles the Page Reader, discarding some parts and alternating the connections of others. From across the hall Dang whispers

DANG (OS)
 Noah, my Assassin Bugs loved classical music. Especially Bach.

Halifax glances at the door of his cell, then goes back to work.

DANG (OS)
 Sampson and Delila were developing a vocabulary.
 (a beat)
 But it was dependent on sound. Inflection. Resonance. Musical expression.

He gnaws off a section of the cord with his teeth. Unscrews a light bulb, shatters it, pulls out the filament, twists it round and splices it to the bare cord.

DANG (OS)
 Warbles and chirps. Small wondrous sounds.

INT. HALIFAX'S CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Bare sticks of gum lie on the cot. Halifax twists the tinfoil wrappers into wires, grabs the modified device and, using the make shift soldering iron, rewires several circuits.

Using the tweezers like a telegraph key, he TAPS out a binary code on a contact plate.

O.S. A CLICK, a door CREEKS opens and guard's FOOTSTEPS approach.

HALIFAX
(whispers desperately)
Distract him.

INT. HALLWAY

A guard peers into Dang's cell then abruptly turns away.

INT. DANG'S CELL

On the toilet, Dang screams.

DANG
Can't a woman have one moment of
privacy.

Embarrassed the guard turns toward Halifax.

INT. HALIFAX'S CELL

Butt up, with his head under the cot covering the altered Page Reader.

GUARD
What the hell are you doing?

HALIFAX
She's very shy.

The guard backs down the hall. O.S. A door CLICKS shut.

Halifax goes back to work and TAPS for several more beats.

DANG (OS)
I like these jail toilets: no seats for men
to leave up.

EXT. HALIFAX'S ROBOT HEAVEN - FENCE GATE - NIGHT

Soldiers jump from a truck and take position behind a rumbling tank-dozer. The machine bowls down the gate.

EXT. QUONSET HUT - MOMENTS LATER

The tank-dozer crushes the doors.

The Foot Soldiers advance. From the shadows of the hangar come screams of anguish.

MAN (OS)

Don't shoot for God's sake.

FEMALE (OS)

It's taken us hostage.

The soldiers freeze.

FEMALE #2 (OS)

It'll kill us all.

Pious and Yale break through the ranks.

PIOUS

Who?

MAN (OS)

This damn robot.

FEMALE (OS)

It's huge.

FEMALE #2 (OS)

(sobs)

Pulled me right out of my pick-up.

Please go back.

Pious grins and, with the exception of Senator Yale, motions his men into an orderly retreat.

Pious holds out his hand.

PIOUS

(to Yale)

I knew he'd come home to papa.

Yale slaps a two hundred dollar Reagan bill in Pious' hand.

YALE

But now it has hostages?

PIOUS

What hostages?

Yale stares blankly.

EXT. HALIFAX'S QUONSET HUT - NIGHT - LATER

Pious orchestrates from the top of a Hov-Track.

Armored vehicles surround the building.

From above, four verti-copters aim their search lights downward, illuminating the quonset hut.

A missile CREW backs toward the hangar door.

Senator Yale climbs on the Hov-Track and nudges Pious.

YALE

How are you going to negotiate
with a robot?

PIOUS

I'm going to prod it, snare it, and if we
can't reprogram it, kill it.

YALE

Ruin it and they'll crucify us.

Above, Kevlar netting hangs by cables from a Verti-copter.

Pious motions to the missile crew, then places a conical voice
enhancer to his throat. His voice resonates.

PIOUS

HOSTAGES, LISTEN CAREFULLY. THIS IS
THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.

(a beat)

ON MY COUNT HIT THE DECK.

From inside the quonset hut.

FEMALE VOICE (OS)

Please don't attack.

PIOUS

(over the radio)

Missile batteries target the
southwest corner.

(voice enhancer)

THREE.

MALE VOICE (OS)

My wife...My wife is pregnant.

Pious raises his arm.

PIOUS

TWO.

Senator Yale slaps her hand over Pious' mouth.

YALE

I'm the U.S. government. I signed on,
but not for murder.

PIOUS

Don't be so naive.

YALE

What the hell are you talking about?

PIOUS

Legia's death wasn't entirely accidental.

YALE

It's what the video showed.

PIOUS

I had plenty of time on the trip back
to Earth to do a little creative...
editing.

Yale pops a Roloids.

YALE

And Brisk?

PIOUS

We're going to go to the stars, and
you're worrying about the little people?

Yale pops a second Roloids.

PIOUS

Pass a bill. Tax the middle class, honey.
But don't filibuster me. With power comes
heat.

YALE

HEAT! I gave me right eye for Ireland's
statehood.

Pious gives her a peck. She returns it with a lusty tongue.
grins, then

PIOUS

Sweetheart, the only thing you ever
sacrificed was your virginity. ONE. FIRE!

A WHOOSH, then an EXPLOSION as a missile rips through the right
edge of the hangar. Flames soar into the air. Robot fragments
CRASH to the ground around Pious and Yale.

EXT. QUONSET HUT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

An asbestos-clad soldier emerges from the ruins carrying
robotic heads under each arm.

ROBOTIC HEAD - A

(female voice)

Please don't attack.

ROBOTIC HEAD - B

(male voice)

My wife...My wife is pregnant.

YALE

Be all that you can be.

Pious glares. Yale's Electro-Hov limo glides up.

YALE

You owe me a Reagan.

Yale gets in the limo, sticks her palm through the open window,
and waits till Pious pays his debt.

YALE

And Dear, make sure your Junk Man hasn't
also slipped through your fingers.

INT. HOLDING CELL AREA

Facing the wall a FEMALE GUARD listens on the phone.

FEMALE GUARD

Yes, Captain Pious. Both sound asleep.

(listens)

Yes, sir. I'll check right now.

INT. HALIFAX'S CELL

Against the wall he watches the guard's shadow come down the corridor.

Halifax grabs his stomach, GROANS, falls to the floor and writhes in pain.

The Female Guard unlocks the cell and throws the door open. The Guard's voice now has a familiar ring.

FEMALE GUARD (OS)

Best you could come up with? The old

I've been poisoned, routine?

Halifax holds two wire leads that come from the wall plug. He leaps to zap her. She grabs his wrists, wrenches him to his feet and pulls the wires from his hand.

HALIFAX

I got through!

He hugs the guard to his chest. They whirl around the room for a beat.

Star, without the makeup, puts her hand on the butt of the Scat 45 and does a slow pirouette.

STAR

Like my outfit?

HALIFAX

What did you do with the sentries?

Star folds her hands and lays her head down. Nap time.

DANG

Hey, what am I, chop suey?

STAR
She with you?

Halifax takes the keys and unlocks Dang's cell.

Dang and Star give each other the once over, then turn and give Halifax a 'who's-this-woman?' look.

HALIFAX
Dang, I'd like you to meet Star.

DANG
Did he destroy your car too?

Star extends her hand. Dang shakes it and reacts like she's touched an icicle.

HALIFAX
Her superconducting circuits lower her surface temperature somewhat.

STAR
You're not discussing my stats in mixed company?

Halifax grimaces.

HALIFAX
How was the show?

STAR
I snuck out when Pious had the place surrounded.

HALIFAX
He's desperate. His problem is running loose. Mine is in his office.

INT. PIOUS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The room has been cleaned. The trio roll up their sleeves.

HALIFAX
The maid came a day too early.

INT. ROBOT HANGAR - BUILDING XXX - SAME TIME

A distant CLINK. And another CLINK.

Sampson moves through the shadows and stops next to a Robot almost identical to himself except for the absences of eyes, and sleeker, more feminine lines.

DELILA!

Sampson tenderly embraces her head with his middle legs and implants compound eyes.
Sampson sidles backward - and mimics the dance of the Assassin Bug.

Delila remains motionless.

Sampson rubs his leg softly across his thorax creating a low WARBLE. Delila remains inert.

Sampson opens a compartment in Delila's head chamber, makes adjustments, backs away and again rubs his thorax.

SAMPSON

Warble.

Delila remains still. Sampson begins his dance anew. Sampson rears in frustration.

INT. PIOUS' OFFICE - SAME TIME

In shambles -- files on the floor, desk drawers emptied, pictures ripped from walls. Both women look at Halifax.

DANG

Maybe there is no secret program, no secret mission, no sabotage.

Halifax punts a waste basket into the wall, walks to the mirror, cups his hand over his eyes and peers into the glass. He stands back and heaves a cup. The mirror shatters. He THUNKS a knuckle on the wall. It's solid.

HALIFAX

It's here! I know it.

Suddenly, inches from Dang, the mezzanine window CRASHES. The curtain catches the glass. Dang gasps as the cloth parts.

Sampson's grabber arm extends into the room. It twists the hood of the lamp aiming the light through crystal spar on Pious' desk.

The light creates a rainbow that arcs to the spot on the wall where the mirror was shattered.

Another leg comes through the window and points to the spot.

SAMPSON

Warble.

Dang picks up a piece of mirror and places it in the path of the light. The rainbow reflects off the mirror and back to the wall of laser video tapes. A BLINK OF LIGHT.

With a soft HUM the shelves fold into themselves, revealing the slot. Halifax reaches in and extracts the DISK.

HALIFAX

Way to go, Sampson. I owe you one.

A WARBLE. The grabber arm withdraws.

INT. MEZZANINE

Sampson spiders down the wall to the hangar.

INT. PIOUS' OFFICE

Halifax lays the DISK on Pious' desk. Dang and Star move in. Microscopic grooves create an oil-on-water translucent, shimmering, multi-chromatic effect.

DANG

Look at the writing. It's unearthly.

HALIFAX

Alien. Glow in the dark meteor my ass.

Halifax flips it over and motions to Star.

STAR'S POV - DISK

Her eyes zoom in on the jagged edges and nods.

STAR

It's a piece of something.

DANG

There's more to it?

HALIFAX

And Sampson was programmed to find the rest.

DANG

Proof of extraterrestrial intelligence?
Why would Pious keep it secret?

HALIFAX

Sampson knows that answer.

INT. ROBOTIC HANGAR - BUILDING XXX - MOMENTS LATER

Eerie. Quiet. Star follows Halifax and Dang out the stairway door.

Star cocks her head. Her eyes zoom around the room. She draws her Scatto.

Halifax peers through the hangar, then turns to Star.

HALIFAX

Where's Sampson?

Star shoves her weapon in his spine, and in a blur, pulls his arms behind his back and snaps on handcuffs.

STAR

Move it. Both of you move it.

Dang steps backward in disbelief. Star yanks her.

STAR

You too, sister.

HALIFAX

Have you lost your transistors?

STAR

You can come out, Captain. Found these clowns nosin' around your office.

Pious and a contingent of soldiers ooze out of every nook and cranny.

PIOUS

My sharpest man turns out to be female.

Pious takes a pompous look at Halifax and Dang, then gives Star a snappy salute.

PIOUS

Good work, soldier. A promotion is in order.

Star pinches Pious' cheek.

STAR

Nice dermis.

Pious reacts too late. Star shoves the barrel of the Scatto up a nasal passage.

STAR

Tell your Teddy Bears to leave the den.

Pious wavers under Star's cold robotic glare. She twists the barrel of weapon. Pious nasals a command.

PIOUS

Men, we've been ordered to leave.

HALIFAX

Not you.

The men back toward the exit.

STAR

Sorry, boys. Leave your toys.

The soldiers look at Pious. He nods. Automatic weapons CLANK to the floor and the men make a hasty exit.

PIOUS

(to Halifax)

I have an army outside. What are you going to do, Noah? Call a cab?

HALIFAX

The authorities.

PIOUS

Perfect. Breaking and entering.
Destroying government --

Halifax pulls out the DISK.

HALIFAX

Stealing Alien artifacts. Should be an interesting Court Martial, Captain.

Pious glares.

Halifax lifts his handcuffed wrists to Star. She hands him the gun and fishes in her uniform for a key.

PIOUS

So predictable.

Pious snatches the DISK and runs.

PIOUS

Star might have shot, but you
can't kill.

Still handcuffed, Halifax gives chase.

Pious disappears in a corridor of robots. Two pinchers legs drop out of nowhere and thwart his escape. A high pitched WARBLE echoes through the room.

Sampson herds Pious back to Halifax, then reaches out and snips off his handcuffs. Halifax grabs the DISK.

EXT. BUILDING XXX - DAWN

Armored vehicles roll into position. Soldiers hop out of personnel carriers.

Yale arrives in her Electro-Hov limo. A soldier runs up to her.

SOLDIER

Captain Pious is a hostage.

Yale double-times to a hastily constructed command center.

YALE

(into a radio)

Move Pegasus away from the building.
And set up a phone connection.

INT. BUILDING XXX

Halifax turns to Star.

HALIFAX

I've got to access Sampson's CPU.

Star races into the shadows.

Pious tries to do the same, Sampson drops two legs in front and two in back locking him in a metal cage.

HALIFAX

Sampson?

SAMPSON'S POV - HALIFAX

Through complex eye's Halifax comes into focus. He holds out the Alien Disk.

HALIFAX

Can you identify this?

SAMPSON'S POV - DISK

Six images meld into one iridescent image, a downward view into the swirling EYE of a WHIRLPOOL formed from a spiraling helix composed of symbols.

The first layer is a three dimensional representation of the electronic orbitals of neon.

Sampson's eyes blink violet.

SAMPSON

Warble.

Sampson nods.

DANG

He says yes.

HALIFAX

A page from your thesis?

Star chugs up in Brisk's golf cart control center and uncoils an access cable. The phone RINGS. Automatically, Star lifts the receiver, listens, and looks at Halifax.

STAR

(mimics an Irish brogue)

It's a Senator Yale, and she sounds a bit put off.

HALIFAX

Tell her I'm away from my desk.

STAR
 (into the phone)
 Senator Yale, I'd like to personally
 thank the Supreme Court for term limits.

She slams down the receiver.

Sampson starts across the hangar. Again Pious makes a break for it.

Sampson pulls a length of chain from the metal pile, wraps it around Pious' neck, pries open a link and makes a leash.

He tugs Pious into the piles of rubble. Stops, rubs his rear legs together, emitting a series of CLACKS.

DANG
 He wants us to follow.

EXT. BUILDING XXX - RUNWAY

The Pegasus coasts to a stop at the far end of the tarmac. Two men disembark and hop into a waiting truck.

INT. BUILDING XXX

In an open area, at the bottom of a stack of robots, Halifax and the rest stare in awe at Sampson's more feminine counterpart.

DANG
 Delila!

Sampson sidles around Delila's body, touching her head and thorax. He draws a leg across her abdomen creating a vibrant HUM. The passionate sound of twenty violins.

HALIFAX
 (to Dang)
 Your prophesy came to pass.

Sampson gently brushes Delila's head, then turns to Halifax and Dang and rubs his legs with a new tonal inflection.

SAMPSON
 Warble, twang, warble. Warble, twang.

DANG

Life. Now. Hungry. Life. Now.

Sampson's eyes blink violet. He strums faster. Dang turns to Halifax in disbelief.

DANG

He wants Delila to be like him.

HALIFAX

Like him?

DANG

Sentient.

HALIFAX

Alive?

EXT. BUILDING XXX

Soldiers toss grappling hooks onto the roof and scale the walls. Troops in the rear move forward.

INT. ROBOT HANGAR - BUILDING XXX

Sampson's front legs HUM against his thorax. He points to Delila, then to the DISK.

DANG

He's willing to bargain.

Sampson blinks violet, violet, violet.

HALIFAX

Cut a deal?

Sampson's legs crisscross across his body -- a FLUTE-LIKE sound, then goes silent.

Halifax looks back and forth from Sampson to Delila.

PIOUS

Junk Man, isn't one of these damn things enough?

YALE (VO)

(on P.A. system)

Noah, there's an old Irish saying, 'when you're up to your hips in sheep dip, grab

any hand that's offered.' We're on
the brink of something phenomenal.
You can be part of it.

EXT. ROOF OF BUILDING XXX

Soldiers scamper over the eaves and climb toward the clerestory
windows.

INT. BUILDING XXX

Halifax looks at Sampson and picks up the phone.

HALIFAX

Senator Yale?

(listens a beat)

Okay, but I'll only negotiate with you.

Pious smiles. Dang and Star share a nervous look.

EXT. BUILDING XXX - HALF-TRACK

Yale sneers, then taps the head of the driver. The vehicle rumbles toward the door. A squad of men follows in its wake.

EXT. ROOF OF BUILDING XXX

A SNIPER aims through the clerestory windows and whispers into a radio.

SNIPER

Got 'em, Senator. Give me the green
and I'll take him.

YALE (OS)

Wait for my command.

SNIPER'S POV

Halifax in the laser cross hairs. He and Sampson shake, hand to grabber.

SNIPER (OS)

Senator, you ain't gonna' believe this.

INT. BUILDING XXX

Halifax collects instruments from the cart. Sampson lifts him to Delila's head.

Halifax unscrews her brain plate, studies the circuits for a beat, then turns to Sampson with admiration.

HALIFAX

Incredible.

SAMPSON

Warble.

PIOUS

You're nuts. All of you. Halifax,
you're playing God.

STAR

Define God.

HALIFAX

He can't.

Pious' eyes roll skyward. He spots the Sniper and subtly motions 'what-the-hell-are-you-waiting-for?'

EXT. BUILDING XXX - HANGAR DOOR

Yale brings the radio to her mouth.

YALE

On my command.

EXT. ROOF - BUILDING XXX

The Sniper takes aim. Behind him, a verti-chopper leaves the tarmac.

INT. BUILDING XXX

Star catches a GLINT OF LIGHT from above. She leaps. A single SHOT rings out. Star dives and takes the bullet meant for Halifax.

EXT. BUILDING XXX

Yale screams into the radio.

YALE

Hold your damn fire.

INT. BUILDING XXX

Star tumbles off Delila's thorax. Dang catches her and lays her gently on the floor.

HALIFAX

Sampson, close the panel.

Halifax leaps off Delila and runs to Star. She points to a hole in her side.

STAR

Air conditioning, I don't need.

Halifax grins, reconnects two circuits and pulls her to her feet.

HALIFAX

I charge extra for that.

Pious screams at the roof.

PIOUS

Fire damn it. That's an order!

As Sampson finishes with Delila's brain plate, her eyes blink gold. Sampson WARBLER, then all hell breaks loose. Bullets PING off the concrete floor and metal.

Halifax pushes Star and Dang under a metal shield, then grabs Pious by the leash and drags him to safety.

Bullets ricochet off Sampson. A round smashes through one of Delila's eyes.

DELILA

Squeal.

Sampson BELLOWS, then rips robots apart and throws limbs toward the ceiling windows. Glass SHATTERS. The Snipers duck for cover.

HALIFAX

(to Pious)

Warned you not to piss him off.

THOUGH THE OPENING

A verti-copter appears behind a ducking sniper.

Delila hurls a robot leg through the aperture. It collides with the rotor blades.

EXT. BUILDING XXX

The verti-copter smacks the pavement. The crew leap for safety as the craft bursts into flames.

A ground battery launches a missile.

INT. BUILDING XXX

The missile whips through the hangar, EXPLODING against the far wall. The mezzanine lurches; flames pour out of offices.

The far wall crumbles leaving a gaping hole.

EXT. BUILDING XXX

Prone on the ground, Yale screams into the radio.

YALE

Hold your damn fire.

INT. BUILDING XXX

The smoke settles. Halifax picks up a phone. Wires dangle uselessly. He looks at Sampson.

HALIFAX

Get us out of here.

Sampson gestures to Delila. Her single eye blinks violet.

The front wall implodes. A bulldozer crushes through the concrete.

Yale and a contingent of soldiers appear out of the dust cloud, wipe their eyes and gawk.

On Delila's back Star waves with one hand and holds Pious' chain with the other. Delila rears and disappears through the hole in the rear wall.

Sampson follows suit with Halifax and Dang.

EXT. TARMAC

Sampson and Delila zip across the field toward the fence.

INT. VERTI-COPTER - WEAPONS OFFICER'S POV

Sampson is in the cross hairs.

WEAPON'S OFFICER (OS)

(over the radio)

I have the target. Permission to fire.

YALE (OS)

Hit them and I'll have your nuts.

They've got my hus--

Captain Pious. Corral them.

The weapon's officer launches a rocket.

TARMAC

Sampson and Delila hurdle the fence with ease.

WEAPON'S OFFICER (VO)

Rearm.

A rocket explodes a hundred yards in front of them. They glide into a ninety degree turn.

WEAPON'S OFFICER (VO)

Fire.

Sampson and Delila rear to a halt as the second rocket explodes in their path.

WEAPON'S OFFICER (VO)

Rearm.

On Sampson, Dang screams.

DANG

The Pegasus is our only chance!

Halifax wipes sweat from his forehead. The WHOMP of rotor blades grow louder.

WEAPON'S OFFICER (VO)

Fire.

HALIFAX

I can't fly.

The missile explodes twenty yards to their right. Dirt and shrapnel CRACK through the air.

DELILA

Chirp.

SAMPSON

Warble.

Sampson turns and blinks gold at Halifax.

DANG

You don't have to fly. Yale won't blow up the Pegasus.

A missile EXPLODES, closer, more violent. A metal shard SEVERS Sampson's middle leg. He lists. Dang screams.

DANG

Noah, they're going to kill us and your creations.

Directly ahead, two verti-copters rise above a sand dune.

Halifax steels himself and rubs Sampson's head.

HALIFAX

Pegasus.

Sampson's eyes blink violet. He rears, adjusts for the missing limb and spins around.

SAMPSON

Warble.

Delila turns, rears and takes the lead. They speed down the border of the compound, scale a knoll and vault the fence.

COMMAND CENTER

Yale glares as Sampson and Delila closes on her position. Pious waves for help.

YALE

Don't worry, sweetheart.

A rocket explodes. Yale lurches and screams in the radio.

YALE

Hold your fire! Damn it!

She peeks above the control panel, then dives.

Sampson's and Delila's legs trample the command center. Sparks fly. Smoke plumes upward.

PEGASUS

Sampson and Delila race thorax to thorax up the runway.

SAMPSON'S POV - CARGO BAY

Six complex eyes view the open doors.

PEGASUS

Sampson and Delila leap in.

INT. PEGASUS CARGO BAY

Halifax and Dang jump off Sampson. Star drags Pious off Delila.

Visibly shaken, Halifax stands in the doorway and stares down at the ground.

In the b.g., Sampson rips a security camera off the wall and tends to Delila's eye.

EXT. COMMAND CENTER

Yale pops a Roloids into her mouth.

YALE

Don't let them launch.

INT. PEGASUS - CARGO BAY

Outside, soldiers race up the tarmac. O.S. the WHOMP of rotor blades.

PIOUS

End of the line, Noah.

EXT. TARMAC

The troops advance.

INT. PEGASUS

Halifax rushes down a passage to the

INT. FLIGHT DECK - SECONDS LATER

Dang follows and hops into the co-pilot seat.

DANG

We have the disk. It's enough to
convict them both.

He flips on the radios, and puts on a head set.

HALIFAX

Mayday, Mayday, Mayday. This is Space
Frigate Pegasus. Anyone read?

SEVERAL RADIO VOICES

Go ahead, Pegasus.

HALIFAX

Captain Victor Pious and Senator Christen
Yale have --

STATIC. Halifax madly switches frequencies. More STATIC.

HALIFAX

Damn! She's jamming the com channels.

EXT. PEGASUS

The WHOMP of a verti-copter rotor. The troops rappel down ropes
to the cargo bay door.

Sampson and Delila stretch out their pincher arms and tug the
ropes. The soldiers bob like marionettes.

INT. FLIGHT DECK

Ashen, Halifax stares at the control panel.

STAR (OS)

Noah, when you have a moment, seal
the ship.

Halifax points to a button. Dang hits it.

A WHOOSH. As the doors close, the light dims.

Halifax shivers in the half-light.

DANG

Get us out of here.

CLANKS of chain as Pious drags himself into the Flight Deck.

PIOUS

He can't. Demons stole his courage. Right,
ex-fly boy?

Halifax turns to Pious.

PIOUS

(to Dang)

What did the flight surgeon call it
when his wife died? Gephyrophobia?
No, that's fear of crossing a street.
Auranophobia! Fear of the heavens.

HALIFAX

And you're hadephobic.
(a beat-then to Dang)
Buckle up.

PIOUS

Shall I raise my dinner tray to its
full upright position?

Star enters, wraps the chain around Pious and shoves a shoe in
his chest forcing him to the floor.

STAR

You're not listening. Our pilot said,
'Fasten seat belts.'

INT. CARGO BAY

When Sampson finishes adding a new lens to Delila's eye; Delila strips sheet metal off the walls and molds a new leg for Sampson. They WARBLE.

INT. FLIGHT DECK

Dang waits for orders.

DANG

What's hadephobia?

Beads of perspiration appear on Halifax's brow. Reluctantly, he punches the on flight computer button. The cabin bursts in light.

COMPUTER VOICE

OMEGA 3 on line.

SCREEN

Halifax scrolls through data and finds Alpha Centauri.

PIOUS

You'll kill us, Noah. You haven't
flown since --

FLIGHT DECK

HALIFAX

You killed Legia.

PIOUS

Bullshit. Her death cost me my career.

OMEGA 3 (VO) To initiate program engage
throttle.

Halifax takes the throttle. He tries to move it forward. His mind won't allow it.

Dang plants a wet one on his lips.

Halifax returns it, then shudders at his own response.

PIOUS

The wizard has problems. Big problems.

DANG

Pull some G's. You think better
at high speed.

PIOUS

Done grieving, Noah?

Halifax's eyes dart from Dang, to Pious, to the control panel.

OMEGA 3 (VO)

Ten seconds to mission abort.

Halifax lifts his hand from the throttle.

PIOUS

I knew it. The man's a coward.

OMEGA 3 (VO)

Eight, seven...

Halifax kisses Dang softly with passion.

HALIFAX

Hadephobia is...

He slams the throttle forward. The engines ROAR.

EXT. PEGASUS

The troops dive to the ground and shield themselves from the blast of ignition.

INT. PEGASUS

Halifax looks at Dang.

HALIFAX

...the fear of hell.

EXT. PEGASUS

The brakes hold until the engines reach maximum R.P.M.'s. then, PEGASUS roars down the runway and arches into the sky.

At two thousand feet, the booster rockets kick in. The Frigate disappears into the clouds.

INT. FLIGHT DECK

Outside the cockpit window, the blue sky turns to purple, then black.

EXT. COMMAND CENTER

Yale pops a whole roll of Roloids into her mouth.

INT. FLIGHT DECK

Halifax sets several dials.

HALIFAX

Omega 3, magnify Centauri One.

VIEW SCREEN

Through several iterations the starship enlarges until it fills the monitor.

SAMPSON (OS)

Warble.

Halifax looks over his shoulder at Sampson who watches through the hatch to the flight deck.

HALIFAX

Your ticket to freedom.

Sampson blinks violet and disappears toward the cargo bay.

HALIFAX

Omega 3, give me an E.T.A.

OMEGA 3 (VO)

Twenty-nine minutes fourteen seconds.

CORRIDOR TO THE CARGO BAY - MOMENTS LATER

Pious stretches his chain as Halifax and Dang float by overhead.

PIOUS

There are no facilities for humans
on the starship.

HALIFAX

Cross your legs.

PIOUS

For four and a half light years?

INT. CARGO BAY

Star gapes as

Delila's new eye blinks through the spectrum. She CHIRPS, then backs up the wall, across the ceiling and drops into Sampson's open legs. He WARBLLES melodically.

Halifax and Dang glide through a hatch.

HALIFAX

Sampson is the key. He has the answer --

Dang places a finger across his lips. They both watch in wonder as

Sampson's and Delila's legs twist in the air: fondle, and brush against each other's body and thorax.

STAR

A first. An X-rated in flight show.

HALIFAX

Sampson, we need your help.

DANG

Looks like fun.

Halifax turns. Dang floats into his arms and plants a long wet one. Stunned he takes a beat to get with the program, but he's up to the occasion.

STAR

Hey, anyone appreciate a blond?

O.S. a chain rattles.

CARGO BAY DOOR

At the end of his leash, Pious peers into the room.

STAR

Something more human.

OMEGA 3 (VO)

Twenty-two minutes to rendezvous.

Reluctantly Halifax pulls away from Dang. She presses her finger tips against his lips.

DANG

Soon. Very soon.

They glide downward to Sampson and Delila. Sampson continues to stroke his mate. She bends and tilts her head.

HALIFAX

SAMPSON, I turned her on...
electronically. You owe me.

SAMPSON'S POV

Halifax in six compound eyes.

DANG

No one likes her foreplay interrupted.

STAR

You're damn right.

CARGO BAY

Halifax sighs and lifts a computer access cable from the bulkhead.

HALIFAX

It won't hurt.

SAMPSON

Warble?

DANG

He says, 'how do you know?'

SAMPSON

Warble? Click?

DANG

He says, 'when's the last time you were probed with a twenty meter cable?'

HALIFAX

It's not the length.

Dang and Star exchange an amused grin.

DANG

Noah, he was joking.

Halifax looks from Dang to Sampson incredulously.

Delila leans closes. Her eyes blink gold.

HALIFAX

It's okay?

Sampson nods and motions to Delila. She blinks violet.

Halifax plugs the cable into Sampson's access socket.

OMEGA 3 (VO)

Sixteen minutes to rendezvous.

HALIFAX

(to Dang)

Can you get his vocabulary on line?

Dang and Halifax move to separate terminals. Dang's fingers fly over a key board.

COMPUTER SCREEN

Unintelligible figures scroll, row after row across the screen.

HALIFAX (VO)

We'll start with a visual playback. Omega 3,
save to NV ROM.

Through Sampson's complex eyes:

Six images of the DISK meld into one, forming a spiraling helix composed of alien symbols.

Halifax, Dang, and Star edge nearer the screen.
Pious bites his lip.

Halifax points to the top-most symbol.

HALIFAX

Two 1-S, two 2-S, six 2-P.

DANG

Neon?

HALIFAX

(nods)

Its electron orbitals. What about
the rest?

She points to a series of loops that connect the symbols.

DANG

In English we read left to right.
In Chinese we read right to left
and up and down. But both are
based on tradition, not efficiency.

(a beat - excited)

But suppose we read in loops.

HALIFAX

Loops?

He studies the screen. Points to various swirls.

HALIFAX

These are quantized energy levels. This must
represent the energy of a photon!

(points to a second symbol)

This....matter anti-matter annihilation!

DANG

In plain English?

(beat)

Or Chinese, Fortran, or...

Halifax shivers and backs away. His puzzlement turns to a broad grin.

HALIFAX

Suppose I'm Newton and struggling with the
laws of motion. I'm sitting under an apple
tree and someone drops the formula - E
equals MC squared in my lap. If I have an
open mind, I'd say 'You've got units of
energy on both sides of the equation.' But I
wouldn't have a clue
on how to split an atom.

Halifax scans his bewildered audience.

Pious frantically tries to pry open a link on his chain.

HALIFAX

Light speed! It's a formula for light
speed travel.

DANG

You mean these symbols explain how

to travel faster than light?

HALIFAX

They say it's possible. Like E equals M C squared says an atomic bomb is possible. But it doesn't tell you how to start a chain reaction.

STAR

But what good is an equation?

Halifax points to where the object broke off.

HALIFAX

(to Sampson)

You're programmed to find the other part of this, aren't you?

SAMPSON

Warbles.

Attached to Sampson, the computer translates.

OMEGA 3 (VO)

Yes.

Halifax punches the computer keys.

HALIFAX

Let's see what else you have in your memory banks.

OMEGA 3 (VO)

Ten minutes to rendezvous.

Dang gives Halifax a peck on the cheek.

DANG

I like being around your brain at light speed.

SCREEN - SAMPSON'S POV

An exact mirror image of the first time Sampson was activated in Halifax's hangar.

Halifax appears holding the remote.

Racing backward across the floor and up the door.

Racing through the hangar, stopping at the far wall.

Halifax hands Brisk the remote.

Turning, sizing up the pile of rubble, up the sides, along the top, faster, then leaping to the floor in front of Halifax, Brisk and Star.

Halifax and Brisk shake hands - hug.

Stepping back into the pile of robotic parts.

BLACK

A fuzzy focus, then out of the shadows Brisk appears. Brisk races forward madly zapping the remote.

Pious enters the scene and points a weapon at Brisk's chest.

He motions Brisk to turn around and whacks him across the skull. Brisk crumbles to the ground.

Pious closes with an axe-like bar of metal and hacks at Brisk's arm and shoulder.

VIOLET, VIOLET, VIOLET

INT. CARGO BAY

Halifax hits a switch.

Pious moves forward. His chain RATTLES.

PIOUS

Bullshit! You doctored the program.
What's my motive?

Halifax raises the DISK.

PIOUS

Proves nothing.

HALIFAX

Proves everything.

OMEGA 3 (VO)

Three minutes to rendezvous.

HALIFAX

Brisk suspected you were lying about Legia's death. And somehow he found out Sampson's mission was bogus.

Halifax pushes off the floor and glides toward the Flight Deck, but stops in front of Pious.

HALIFAX

I'm going to get you a cell on the top floor prison. Something with a terrific view of the stars.

OMEGA 3 (VO)

Two minutes to rendezvous.

Using hand and foot holds, Halifax makes his way to the Flight Deck.

COCKPIT WINDOW - FLIGHT DECK

Centauri One rotates slowly.

INT. FLIGHT DECK

Halifax hits a series of switches and expertly twists the manual thrusters. The shuttle edges to the starboard.

A chain RATTLES. A WHOOSH.

The chain leash smacks Halifax on the fingers. Droplets of blood splatter through the air and onto Pious. Halifax screams in pain. He thrashes from side to side, trapped in the seat restraint, clutching his smashed fingers.

Pious whacks the control panel several times. Sparks, metal and glass fly. A puff of smoke drifts aimlessly.

Pious, with most of the chain wrapped around his stomach, stares down. Halifax writhes in pain. Glass shards protrude from his lips and cheeks.

PIOUS

Bon voyage!

Pious pulls himself along the ceiling to the door. Dang sticks her head into the flight compartment, sees Halifax and screams.

Pious drops from his roost and seizes her. She fights as he pulls her to the ESCAPE POD DOOR.

OMEGA 3 (VO)

One minute! One minute to collision!

COCKPIT WINDOW

Centauri One looms closer.

INT. FLIGHT DECK

Halifax turns to see Pious shove Dang into the Escape Pod.

HALIFAX

Sampson, stop him!

INT. CARGO BAY

Sampson pulls out the access cables, but Star is faster. She crosses the bay in a blur and dives through the closing door of the Escape Pod.

INT. ESCAPE POD

Star goes for Pious' throat. Too late. He hits the eject button. A WHOOSH. The pod washes off the shuttle into space.

Dang screams and pulls herself to a window port.

DANG

No, damn it. No!

INT. FLIGHT DECK

Through the cockpit window, the Centauri One fills the entire windshield.

Maimed, Halifax works through the pain using elbows and thumbs to turn Pegasus.

OMEGA 3 (VO)

Ten seconds to collision.

Pegasus veers further starboard.

OMEGA 3 (VO)
Five seconds.

COCKPIT WINDOW

Black space appears around the hull of the starship.

HALIFAX
Turn, damn you. Turn!

A huge section of the starship appears out of nowhere. Collision is inevitable.

INT. FLIGHT DECK

Halifax steels for the impact. Nothing.

Pegasus flies straight into - Centauri One. Spectacular flashes of light fill the compartment.

Halifax watches in wonder as the structure of the starship parts before him like the Red Sea.

HALIFAX
What the hell?

In a blink, the light show's over and Pegasus speeds on into deep space.

Halifax looks rearward.

Centauri One glows perfectly in the black.

Suddenly the starship "explodes" -- seemingly sending debris crashing into Pegasus. But again there is no damage.

HALIFAX
A HOLOGRAM! Centauri One is nothing but a ten billion dollar hologram.

Halifax stares out the cockpit window as IMAGES of metal streak by.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - EARTH

In a room designed for a staff of one hundred, only TWO TECHNICIANS monitor computer data screens.

Yale peers up at video screen showing Centauri One.

Suddenly, each screen goes to zeros. The Technicians push buttons trying to restore the picture.

FEMALE TECH.

We have a data transmission problem.

VIDEO SCREEN

Centauri One explodes in a spectacular light show.

YALE

(almost a smile)

Damn. What a shame.

COMPUTER DATA SCREEN

Two lines of computer figures, repeat and repeat on the screen.

FEMALE TECH.

There's hope, Senator.

Yale glowers.

FEMALE TECH.

We show one escape pod away.

YALE

Who's in it?

FEMALE TECH.

No way of telling.

YALE

Can't you ask?

FEMALE TECH.

You jammed the com frequencies.

YALE

Unjam them, idiot!

INT. ESCAPE POD

Dang stares out the port window, tears streak down her cheeks.
From the E.P. speaker comes a ray of hope.

FEMALE TECH. (VO)
Escape pod Alpha, this is control.
How do you read?

O.S. chains RATTLE.

Star fastens Pious' hands above his head, pulls the chain
through a ceiling mount and twists the rest of the leash around
his neck and crotch.

FEMALE TECH. (VO)
Do you read?

At the control panel, Dang gathers herself and snaps on the
radio.

DANG
Where's Pegasus?

INT. PEGASUS - FLIGHT DECK

Halifax monitors the conversation.

FEMALE TECH (VO)
We've got your twenty. We've dispatched a
rescue vessel. Who's aboard?

DANG (VO)
Two women and a murderer.

YALE (VO)
Halifax?

DANG (VO)
Captain Victor Pious.

FEMALE TECH (VO)
And Commander Halifax? Was he still aboard
the Pegasus when it exploded?

Halifax lifts a microphone.

HALIFAX

Mission control, this is Pegasus.

DANG (VO)

Noah! Are you alright?

HALIFAX

I'll be back as soon as we get the flight deck repaired.

He looks at the carnage and shrugs.

HALIFAX

Mission Control, I have data to download.

FEMALE TECH (VO)

Data?

HALIFAX

Evidence.

He gingerly touches a maimed finger on the computer keyboard.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Brisk's murder and the holographic Centauri One play on the computer screen.

Yale pops one Roloids into her mouth, then the entire packet.

INT. PEGASUS

Halifax at the control panel.

HALIFAX

Did you copy that Mission Control?

FEMALE TECH (VO)

That's a Roger, Pegasus. We'll take it from here.

INT. MISSION CONTROL

Yale's mouth foams like a rabid dog as she quietly backs out of the command center.

INT. PEGASUS

Halifax runs his battered hands over the splintered remains of the control panel.

INTERCUT - FLIGHT DECK/ESCAPE POD

DANG
(growing faint)
Noah, how does it look?

HALIFAX
A lot like your car.

DANG
Not too encouraging.

HALIFAX
You can borrow my Porsche till I
get back.

DANG
(fainter)
Swell....Noah...I...

Tears pour down her cheeks. She fights for composure, but loses the battle and sobs. Star gently takes the microphone.

STAR
(fainter)
I'll say it for her.

Star cuddles Dang to her chest.

STAR
(a whisper)
I love you Noah. With all my heart
I love you.

HALIFAX
Tell her I love her too.

DANG
(fades)
Noah... I have....

INT. FLIGHT DECK

Halifax rattles the speaker.

HALIFAX

I'm losing you. Dang, I love you.

STATIC

HALIFAX

I love you. I love you...

STATIC

He rubs the speaker for a long beat, then smiles softly.

HALIFAX

She loves me.

Halifax hums BACH'S CANTATA #140 loudly off key, shoves off the control panel, floats toward the Cargo Bay and hears

SAMPSON (OS)

(alto-sax)

Warble. Warble. Warble.

DELILA (OS)

(fifes and flutes)

Chirp. Chirp.

Halifax backstrokes through the hatchway.

INT. CARGO BAY

Sampson and Delila gesticulate, touch antennae, their emerald eyes brighten to gold, warm like the sun. Their legs pluck the delicate strings of a HARP on each other's thorax.

CARGO BAY DOOR

Unconsciously, Halifax sways hypnotically to their melody.

Delila's eyes melt into a kaleidoscope of color.

DELILA
(trumpets)
Warbles.

SAMPSON
(cantata like)
Warbles.

DELILA
(orchestra winds - oboes)
Warbles.

Delila tickles her six appendages over, under and across Sampson's body. Sampson's quivers in ecstasy.

SAMPSON
(a bassoon)
WARBLE.

Sampson returns the sensations. His legs move in a blur over every segment of Delila's body. She TWILLS. A cat purr, the whoosh of an eagle's wing, a human sound of orgasm and pleasure. Incredible pleasure.

The CHANT of their song slowly fades as Halifax wipes a voyeur's sweat from his brow and reenters the

INT. FLIGHT DECK

Exhausted, he pulls wires here and connects others there. He whistles - a futile attempt to mimic the love song of Sampson and Delila.

In pain, he strikes keys on the computer board.

One by one red warning lights disappear from the consoles.

INT. FLIGHT DECK - LATER

In front of a stainless steel plate, Halifax plucks the glass shards from his lip with Dr. Shocker's tweezers. He studies them for a beat, then grins.

HALIFAX

Make a unique wedding band.

Faintly from the Cargo Bay a high pitched CHIRP.

Halifax turns and stares down the empty corridor.

SAMPSON (OS)

Warble.

Halifax's eyes glaze over.....Close....He falls to sleep on his arm.

INT. CARGO BAY

Both of Sampson's and Delila's brain compartments are open they ease their bodies together.

INT. FLIGHT DECK - MUCH LATER

Halifax rises from his slumber to find himself in a sleeping unit. Clean bandages protect both of his hands. A pale lotion covers his facial wounds.

INT. CARGO BAY

Sampson and Delila's eyes glow gold as they dance to music of their own making.

CARGO BAY DOOR

Halifax grabs a ceiling strap.

HALIFAX

Hey you two. We have the greatest discovery since the opposable thumb, and all you can think about is.....sex?

Halifax puzzles over his own remark.

Sampson rubs his front grippers together; sparks fly. With a middle leg he points to Delila's brain compartment.

SAMPSON

Warble.

HALIFAX

Okay, the brain's the biggest sex organ,
but aren't you carrying this too far?

Sampson shakes his head no.

HALIFAX

I need your help.

Lazy eyed, Sampson looks at Halifax.

HALIFAX

Watch out; she'll eat you. That's
what insects do after sex.

Sampson and Delila exchange a glance, rub their stomachs and
rock back and forth emitting short WARBLING squeals of joy.

Halifax laughs with them for a moment, then

HALIFAX

Sampson, please? I have to know.

He holds out the DISK.

HALIFAX

Tell me more about this.

Sampson takes a long look at Delila, then with a reticent nod,
reattaches the computer cable to his access port.

HALIFAX

You know there's a missing part?

From the Omega 3 speakers, a cacophony of sound fills the Cargo
Bay for an instant, then Omega 3's voice into a deep, warm
baritone.

SAMPSON

Yes... I know.

Halifax shivers with the timber of Sampson's response, then
elbows several dials on Omega 3 and looks up at the Cargo Bay
monitor screen. Nothing.

Sampson sets his grabbers on several dials and spins them
simultaneously. The Cargo Bay monitor blinks on.

SCREEN

The Alien Disk appears, then disappears in a pulse of light.

SCREEN - PIOUS' EVA HELMET CAMERA - (FROM THE FIRST SCENE)

The light diminishes, the Alien reappears holding the entire -
STAFF & DISK.

HALIFAX (OS)

The other part's a staff!

A gloved hand snaps off the DISK portion. The Alien spins toward Venus.

"PRIME TARGET SEARCH" blinks above and below the image of the SHAFT.

Pious looks to his wrist control panel and pushes a button. He hears a SCREAM. He turns to see Legia's face plate and control panel buckling from his own blast. Her rockets fire, spinning her out of control. She drops toward Venus.

Pious looks to the Alien and chases it toward Venus, but he quickly loses ground and gives up pursuit. The screen goes blank.

HALIFAX (VO)

Pious, you bastard. You went after the Alien.

CARGO BAY

Halifax glares at the screen. Delila wraps a grabber arm around him for comfort.

SCREEN

Black for a beat, then VENUS appears on the screen, immediately followed by a radar map of the planet.

The image zooms into a valley. Probability contours appear surrounding X's. "POSSIBLE SEARCH SITES" blink next to the X's.

The image blurs again and returns to a close up of the STAFF.

A BLIP - everything disappears for a beat, then

DIGITIZED MAGNIFICATION SHOTS OF THE ALIEN FALLING

"SECONDARY SEARCH" blinks on and off at the bottom of the screen.

A series of still shots appear. Each frame another enlargement.

1. ALIEN SIDE VIEW - wide - close - closer

2. ALIEN REAR VIEW - wide - close - closer
3. ALIEN'S BACKPACK
4. ALIEN'S EXOTIC TOOL BELT
5. ALIEN - FULL FRONTAL

Halifax hits a key. The screen returns to the fourth frame.

ALIEN'S EXOTIC TOOL BELT

The image enlarges several times.

Halifax moves in close and puzzles over the instruments for a beat. His eyes open wide, then with a sad laugh.

HALIFAX

The Alien was a MECHANIC! A lousy mechanic.
He must've been on an E.V.A and they left
him on the side of the road.

Halifax strikes several keys. The program rewinds to:

The Alien holding the SHAFT. The image enlarges.

Halifax touches the screen and runs his fingers up and down the Shaft.

He studies the Disk in his hand. His eyes dart back and forth from the Shaft to the Disk. A long beat of puzzlement then

HALIFAX

It's a book! A manual!

He holds out the DISK.

HALIFAX

This is the cover.

He touches the SHAFT on the screen.

HALIFAX

The shaft's a book. The physics of
light speed!

Halifax leaps. Sampson stops him from hitting his head.

HALIFAX

Sampson, the galaxy's ours! We hold
the key.

Halifax sticks out his hand and shakes Sampson's grabber.

HALIFAX

When we get back to Earth, we'll build a
real starship.

Halifax shoves himself through the hatch to the

INT. FLIGHT DECK - MOMENTS LATER

Halifax hums Bach's Cantata #140 as he settles in at the control panel. He reaches for a toggle switch, but Sampson gently restrains him with a grabber. Halifax looks up perplexed.

A stubby metal tine finger extends from Sampson's grabber. Halifax stares, bewildered.

HALIFAX

An opposable thumb? Who made that?

DELILA

(chirps - Omega 3 translates)

Me.

Sampson points to himself and Delila.

SAMPSON

Dead on the Earth.

HALIFAX

You think you'll be killed?

Sampson and Delila nod.

HALIFAX

Not for Brisk's murder.

SAMPSON

No. We are different. We are
a new species.

Sampson's eyes turn violet.

SAMPSON

We learn.

Sampson rubs a leg across his thorax. His SONG fills the chamber. He nudges Delila and their eyes turn gold.

SAMPSON

We love.

Their middle legs intertwine.

SAMPSON

Noah, we are living beings.

HALIFAX

No one on Earth will harm you.
You have my word.

SAMPSON

Ten billion of you....three of us.

Halifax laughs nervously and points to Sampson and Delila.

HALIFAX

Two. There are only of --

Halifax's eyes dart from Creation to Creation as Sampson's eyes blink blue? then pink? to Delila.

Delila drops her body. All six legs rise high above her abdomen in a good imitation of a human shrug.

HALIFAX

You. Impossible. You couldn't? How?

Delila's eyes turn to a rose blush.

DELILA

Embarrassment.

Halifax waves a bandaged hand at Sampson.

HALIFAX

You sired an offspring? They won't
let you bred on Earth.

SAMPSON

We are not going to Earth.

HALIFAX

Then where the hell are we going?

SAMPSON

Pious programmed Pegasus for Venus.

Halifax stares at them both for a beat, then strikes a key.

HALIFAX

Omega 3, ETA?

OMEGA 3 (VO)

Arrival time on Venus is exactly
four weeks. At zero nine hundred
hours...Temperature will --

Angrily Halifax cuts off voice.

HALIFAX

There's one minor problem.

Sampson and Delila's eyes blink emerald.

HALIFAX

Me. What about me? You think I should
die so you can live?

SAMPSON

You are our creator.
If you die, your species will continue.
If we return to Earth, your creations
will become extinct.

HALIFAX

You've got the wrong god. Omega, can
the shuttle be turned back to Earth?

OMEGA 3 (VO)

Do you wish the program?

HALIFAX

You're damn right.

CONTROL PANEL

Two lights blink on. One blue, one red.

OMEGA 3 (VO)

To terminate "mission" press "ABORT". To proceed with mission enter "CONTINUE".

FLIGHT DECK

Halifax glances cautiously at Sampson and Delila.

HALIFAX

Survival is a primal instinct.

Sampson's eyes glow gold.

SAMPSON

We know. Much like reproduction.

Halifax reaches for the ABORT button.

HALIFAX

You're going to have to kill me.

SAMPSON

The created will not kill. The children of the created must flourish.

Sampson's eyes blink violet.

HALIFAX

Must learn.

SAMPSON

Our children will never know...

Sampson's eyes blink crimson.

HALIFAX

Hatred.

SAMPSON

On Earth, the creator will die.
And, after a time, be forgotten.
On Venus, the creator will live.
In the minds, and souls of his

creations... Forever.

HALIFAX

I don't want to be immortalized.

OMEGA 3 (VO)

To terminate mission press "ABORT". To
proceed with mission enter "CONTINUE".

Sampson lifts Shocker's tweezers from the control panel and lays
then in Halifax's hand.

SAMPSON

Will you forsake us?

Sampson nudges Delila.

Together they exit the flight deck. From the connecting door
comes a glorious WARBLE. Like a tidal wave, gold light and music
flood into the flight deck.

Bathed in the light and sound, Halifax trembles.

OMEGA 3 (VO)

To terminate mission press "ABORT". To
proceed with mission enter "CONTINUE".

Halifax stares at the tweezers.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A bailiff returns a slip of paper to the Jury Forewoman.

JUDGE

Has the jury reached a verdict?

FOREWOMAN

We have, Your Honor.

The Judge motions. The Forewoman reads.

FOREWOMAN

We find Captain Victor H. Pious guilty--

Pious WAILS.

FOREWOMAN

Count 1: larceny of government

property: guilty.

Yale, without an eye patch, glares at her lover with two good eyes.

YALE

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, will you
grow up?

Yale distances herself from her sobbing lover at the defendant's table.

FOREWOMAN (VO)

Count 2: misappropriation of government
funds: guilty.

INT. BASEMENT COURTHOUSE

Guards escort Pious and Yale into a prison van.

FOREWOMAN (VO)

Count 35: Murder with malice of forethought:
guilty.

The prison van drives into the daylight. Along a city street it passes a Mercedes dealership.

INT. MERCEDES DEALERSHIP

Dang sits with a SALESWOMAN at a desk.

SALESWOMAN

And how will you be paying for your XL9000?

Dang hands over a check.

SALESWOMAN

Government check. Tax refund?

DANG

Settlement.

SALESWOMAN

Please sign these.

She collects a pile of papers and sets them in front of Dang.

SALESWOMAN

Congratulations, Dr. Dang

She looks up. Dang cries silently and takes back her check.

DANG

On second thought, I'm sort of attached to
my...wheels.

EXT. GRANITE MONUMENT - DAY

Dang stares teary eyed at the names. Star would cry if she could.

Dang's fingers trace down to the name LEGIA HALIFAX, then further to NOAH HALIFAX.

Below it she places a perfect model of a 1960 Porsche.

EXT. VENUS - DAY

Under the canopy of a violent, electric atmosphere, Sampson and Delila sidle across a lava flow to a gigantic stone edifice. Their eyes turn gold as they stare upward.

TOP OF THE STRUCTURE

The Alien's STAFF and DISK have been rejoined. A rainbow arc of light spews up from the disk through the atmosphere -- into the depths of space.

A WARBLE. And another and another.

Sampson and Delila look downward. Beneath their legs dart a half dozen semi-clones. Each different, each unique, each made from a different part of Pegasus.

Sampson gently lays the tweezers at the foot of the edifice.

ADE OUT.

THE END