

"A L I E N I I I"

by

William Gibson

Revised first draft screenplay

from a story by David Giler and Walter Hill

FADE IN:

DEEP SPACE - THE FUTURE

The silent field of stars -- eclipsed by the dark bulk of an approaching ship. CLOSER.

ANGLE ON THE HULL

A towering cliff of metal, Sulaco.

INT. SULACO -- HYPERSLEEP VAULT

TRACKING down the line of empty, open capsules. Frozen twilight. The final four capsules are sealed, lids in place.

ANGLE -- INSIDE CAPSULE

NEWT, then RIPLEY. HICKS next, his head and chest bandaged. Then BISHOP in his caul of plastic. But the lid of Bishop's capsule is misted with hothouse condensation.

CLOSER

A tear of fluid streaks the condensation.

An alarm SOUNDS.

A monitor begins to scroll data.

TIGHT ON MONITOR

TROOP TRANSPORT SULACO
CMC 846A/BETA
MISSION/LV-426/RETURN
STATUS RED
TREATY VIOLATION
REF: #99AG558L5
CAUSE: NAVIGATIONAL ERROR

Bland feminine voice of the ship's computer, as the alarm continues to SOUND.

COMPUTER

Attention. Due to failure of navigational circuitry, Sulaco has entered a sector claimed

by the Union of Progressive Peoples. Auxiliary systems are now on line. Course corrected. Hardwired protocols prevent, repeat, prevent arming of nuclear warheads in the absence of Diplomatic Override, Decryption Standard Charlie Nine. On present course, Sulaco will exit the U.P.P. sector at nineteen hundred hours fifty three point eight minutes.

EXT. SULACO

The ship slides past beneath us. A U.P.P. interceptor descends INTO FRAME, matching course and speed with Sulaco. The interceptor settles on Sulaco like a wasp.

INT. INTERCEPTOR

Three commandos climb into spacesuits. The Leader opens a hatch in the deck, revealing one of Sulaco's airlocks. FIRST COMMANDO, a young Vietnamese woman, scrambles down and attaches magnetic units to the airlock. SECOND COMMANDO studies a monitor, tapping out a sequence on a keyboard. First Commando gestures from hatch: no good. Second Commando tries again. A grating SOUND as Sulaco's airlock begins to open.

INT. SULACO -- CARGO LOCK

Darkness. Armed commandos climb through opening and descend a ladder. Reaching the deck, they fan out, weapons ready. Their leader examines the damaged dropship. First Commando gestures urgently. She's found something.

Bishop's legs, broken, grotesquely twisted, still in fatigues, the white android blood clotted into powder. First and Second Commandos exchange looks through their faceplates.

COMPUTER

Attention. Integrity breach, Cargo Lock 3.
Security alert. Integrity breach, B Deck...

INT. HYPERSLEEP VAULT -- LEADER'S POV

The chilly aisle of capsules.

Commandos move down the line, guns poised. They peer in at Newt, Ripley, and Hicks, but the lid of Bishop's capsule is pearl-white. The Leader tries the controls at the foot of the capsule, where green and red indicators glow. Nothing happens. He opens a panel, finds an emergency lever, tries it. The green indicators wink off. The lid rises. A dense pale mist flows out, spilling over the edges of the capsule, revealing the ovoid of a gray Alien egg. Rooted in the center of Bishop's synthetic entrails, the egg instantly ejaculates a Face-hugger, which strikes the leader's faceplate in a spray of acid. He screams, blinded by the acid, grappling with the thing as it begins to force its way into his helmet, its tail lashing furiously. Clawing at it, he plunges blindly back down the aisle, stumbling, smashing into the empty capsules. He vanishes through the entranceway, his screams giving way to frenzied gaggling SOUNDS.

The First Commando scrambles after him.

INT. CARGO LOCK

The Leader writhes on the deck beside the main cargo lock. First Commando rushes in, crouches beside him, takes careful two-handed aim with her

sidearm -- she FIRES, attempting to kill the face-hugger without hitting the Leader. The face-hugger EXPLODES in a gout of acid; ragged holes burn through the side of his helmet. First Commando frantically works the lock controls. As the inner lock opens, she shoves the leader over the edge with her foot.

EXT. SULACO

Helmetless, headless, trailing a cloud of blood and acid, the Leader tumbles through space.

INT. CARGO LOCK

Eyes of the First Commando through her faceplate. Beat. Something moves, behind her. She spins, bringing up her gun. Backlit in the entrance to the vault, a black, multi-armed figure. The beam from her lamp finds it -- the Second Commando, with Bishop in his arms.

DISSOLVE TO:

IN DEEP SPACE -- VARIOUS ANGLES

A station the size of a small moon, and growing; unfinished sections of hull are open to vacuum. A vast, irregular structure, the result of the shifting goals of successive administrations.

MOVE IN on hundreds of windows -- most of them dark. A light comes on in one of the windows.

INT. ANCHORPOINT -- TULLY'S SLEEPING CUBICLE

A phone is RINGING. The cubicle, terminally sloppy, resembles the nest of a high-tech hamster, not much larger than a berth of a train. The walls are plastered with a wistful collage of posters, ads, photos torn from magazines: beaches, desert, the Grand Canyon, redwoods, blue sky -- a hedge against claustrophobia and the emptiness of space.

TULLY, sitting up in bed, knuckling sleep from his eyes, wincing at the light; he slaps the phone console and the glum face of OPERATIONS OFFICER JACKSON (female) appears. She wears a nylon baseball cap with a computer light-pen attached to the bill.

JACKSON

'Morning, Tully.

TULLY

Morning? Jesus, Jackson, it's the middle of my downtime...

CLOSE ON THE CONSOLE SCREEN

ANGLE

The room behind Jackson is Achorpoint's nerve-center, the Ops Room.

JACKSON

None of us up here in the Ops Room have seen downtime for a while, Tully. A Marine transport came in on automatic sixteen hours ago.

She bobs her head as she speaks, using the pen on her cap to move a cursor on a screen in front of her.

JACKSON

(continuing)

The Sulaco. Departed gateway four years ago with a compliment of fifteen. A dozen marines, an android, a company representative, and the former warrant officer of a merchant vessel...

TULLY

So?

JACKSON

So, the bio-readout gives us the warrant officer, one -- count him -- marine, and a nine-year-old girl. Makes you wonder what happened out there, doesn't it?

TULLY

So ask 'em. Wake 'em up and ask 'em. Them, not me.

JACKSON

But that's the good news, Tully. Three hours before Sulaco turned up, we docked a priority shuttle out of Gateway. Two passengers. Milisci, Tully. Weapons Division.

TULLY

That the bad news?

JACKSON

They want the ship pulled in, with full biohazard precautions, by oh-eight-hundred hours. BioLab techs are priority for the deck squad. That's you Tully.

The phone screen goes blank.

TULLY

(heartfelt)

Shit.

He begins to fumble through his sleeping bag, looking for his clothes -- disturbing SPENCE, a young technician, who sits up groggily, hugging the bag to her breasts.

SPENCE

What? What is it?

TULLY

It's called the military-industrial complex; it's called my ass out of bed; it's called jerking me around... Any way you wanna call it, it's the same bullshit...

INT. CORRIDOR

Tully, groggy and irritated, emerges from his cubicle, wearing a battered leather flight jacket, its sleeves plastered with embroidered logo-patches for various products. His photo, name, job description, and number are slotted on the door in a transparent envelope -- TULLY, CHARLES A. TECH-5, TISSUE CULTURE LAB.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANCHORPOINT -- DRY DOCK

A plain of gray steel, the size of several carrier decks, walls lost in dark and distance. Service vehicles lumber past in the b.g. Massive floods on towers of raw scaffolding backlight twenty waiting figures, the Deck Squad. Their spacesuits are white, clinical; over these they wear disposable Biohazard Envelopes of filmy translucent plastic. Some are Colonial Marines, armed with pulse-rifles or flame-throwers. Others are scientists and technicians, carrying recording and sampling gear. Their voice, over helmet-radio are furred with STATIC. Something CLANGS and BOOMS overhead, metal thunder.

OFFICER (V.O.)

Deck Squad brace for pressure drop. She's in the cradle. She's coming in.

A sudden WIND rushes across the deck, then dies. RUMBLE overhead as a monstrous hanger door rolls slowly open, revealing the naked stars. The dark hull of Sulaco blots out the stars as it descends.

OFFICER (V.O.)

(continuing)

Entry team to secondary cargo lock.

A cherry-picker vehicle, with extended boom, WHINES up to Sulaco.

The lock SIGHS open on darkness.

BUZZ of static, indistinct RADIO exchanges, as a half-dozen lights play over the drop-ship, the walls of the lock. Tully enters, stares around, eyes wide through his faceplate. Beside his is a MARINE with a pulse-rifle -- obviously psyched for combat.

TULLY

Lights, how come they got no lights?

MARINE

Hey, man...

He shines his light on a blackened scar on the bulkhead.

MARINE

(continuing)

Lookit that. Been some action in here...

TULLY

Action?

MARINE

Man, what the fuck you supposed to be doing here?

TULLY

Forging a new home for mankind in the depths of space.

The Marine isn't amused. Tully raises an instrument; it makes a SUCKING noise.

TULLY

(continuing)
Collecting atmosphere samples.

MARINE
So just do it, right.

He move away.

TULLY
Sure.

But he doesn't want to be alone; hustles after the Marine.

OFFICER (V.O.)
Technician Tully to the hypersleep vault,
atmosphere sample...

MARINE
Sounds like you.

TULLY
Yeah.

MARINE
Let's not keep the man waiting.

INT. ENTERANCE TO HYPERSLEEP VAULT

The Marine OFFICER holds up a tracker -- one of the small motion-sensors familiar from the previous film. Beside him are TWO MORE MARINES. The Officer raises the tracker and scans the face of the door.

EXTREME CLOSEUP

of tracker screen: zero.

ANGLE

OFFICER
One sample, here.

SOUND of Tully's device sucking air.

OFFICER
(continuing)
Get another on the way in. Have they patched
line in yet?

SECOND MARINE
Yessir. Lights on in there.

The Officer presses a button.

The door slides open. Bright, white. The aisle. Empty. The row of capsules. Tully's Marine is first through the door, gun ready, slow, careful. Tully steps in after him, raises his instrument, takes a sample.

INT. HYPERSLEEP VAULT

The other two Marines move past Tully. Soft SCUUFF of their boots on the deck. Tully doesn't know quite what to do. Lowers his sampler, hesitates. The first Marine reaches Newt's capsule. He lowers his rifle.

MARINE

(something startled,
almost gentle in his
voice)

They're here...

Eight inches of razor-sharp serrated tail plunges out through the back of his suit as he's lifted off his feet by something we can't see. Ugly RIPPING noise as the ALIEN withdraws its stinger -- blood tidily contained by the translucent membrane of the biohazard envelope.

The stinger of a second Alien whips around the neck of one of the other two Marines; the Alien is clinging to the ceiling. He screams. Tully's Marine sags against the foot of Ripley's capsule, his arm across the controls -- the green indicator lights go out -- as the first Alien lunges up INTO VIEW.

CLOSE

On the jaws.

ANGLE ON RIPLEY

Her eyes snap open.

RIPLEY'S POV

As the beast mounts her coffin, terminal nightmare.

ANGLE

RIPLEY

No-ooooooooooooooooooooo!

Her hands claw frantically at the smooth curve of the plastic canopy.

The remaining Marine, crazy with adrenaline and terror, unleashes his flame thrower. The first Alien and Ripley's capsule vanish in a napalm fireball. The Marine spins, screaming incoherently, and liquid fire hoses the second Alien, which drops its victim and falls burning into the deck.

The vault is an inferno. Ripley's capsule is sagging, melting.

DISSOLVE TO:

A scorched hypersleep capsule is wheeled in under brilliant lamps. The waiting crisis team plug bio-monitor leads and a HISSING air-supply line into sockets on the capsule. A technician with a small hand-held power saw begins to cut away the heat-crazed canopy. Hands in surgical gloves lift the canopy away.

Ripley lies curled in a tight fetal knot.

INT. ANCHORPOINT -- MEDLAB QUARANTINE

A small white room, a white bed surrounded by medical gear. Hicks, in his underwear, is hunched on the edge of the bed, impatiently smoking a cigarette. The dressing on his head and shoulders have been changed. Spence enters. She wears a biohazard envelope over coveralls, bubble-goggles, a transparent filter-mask.

SPENCE

(lightly)

You know you can't smoke in here?

HICKS

Yes, ma'am.

He takes a puff.

SPENCE

I'm Spence. I'm not a medic, I'm from the tissue culture lab. I have to get a sample.

She opens a small white case and takes out a gleaming cylinder.

SPENCE

(continuing)

Uh, just stick your thumb in here.

Hicks gives her a hard look, inserts his thumb; she touches a stud -- SNIK! -- he winces, look ruefully at his thumb.

SPENCE

(continuing)

Sorry.

(putting the tissue-sampler away)

You're the last one...

HICKS

(grabs her wrist)

The others. Ripley, Newt -- they came through okay?

SPENCE

Who's Newt?

HICKS

The kid.

SPENCE

Rebecca. Rebecca's fine.

HICKS

Ripley?

SPENCE

(hesitates)

Ripley's fine, Hicks.

HICKS

Bishop. Where's Bishop?

SPENCE

(puzzled)

Bishop?

HICKS

The android.

SPENCE

(carefully, worried that she's gotten in over her head)

There were three of you. Three that I know of,
anyway. Maybe you should try to sleep now.
You want the nurse? They can give you something...

HICKS

(leaning forward, still
gripping Spence's wrists)

Why haven't I been debriefed? Where's the brass?

SPENCE

All I know is, we've all been sleeping short
hours since your ship came in, soldier.

A CRASH from the corridor, a pained BELLOW, and Newt scuttles in, wearing a hospital gown. She backs into a corner as a large ORDERLY rushes in, clutching his right hand. Like Spence, he wears biohazard gear.

ORDERLY

Goddamn it! She bit me!

He starts for Newt. Hicks comes off the bed like he's mounted on springs, hand cocked for a trained blow. The Orderly backs off.

NEWT

(near hysteria)

Where's Ripley? Where is she?

HICKS

(straightens out of hand-
to-hand crouch without
losing any of the threat)

She's asking you a question.

ORDERLY

You looking to get yourself sedated, Corporal?

NEWT

Where is she?

HICKS

Now I'm asking you the question...

Spence yanks her mask down in a reflexive, very human gesture. Move slowly toward Newt, extending her hand.

SPENCE

Rebecca... Newt. Honey. It's okay. Ripley's
going to be okay. C'mon now, I'll take you,
you can see her...

ORDERLY

Spence, there's no way --

He moves to stop them, but Hicks takes a very deliberate step forward.

INT. MEDLAB -- ANOTHER ROOM

Ripley lies in a coma, monitored by assorted white consoles. Her forehead is taped with half a dozen small electrodes. Newt, expressionless, walks slowly to the bedside as Hicks and Spence look on.

SPENCE

She's sleeping.

(she and Hicks exchange glances)
Sometimes people need to sleep... To get over
things...

Newt looks up at a monitor that display's Ripley's EEG. Watches the jitter of peaks and valleys.

NEWT

Is Ripley dreaming?

SPENCE

I don't know honey.

NEWT

It's better not to.

EXT. RODINA, THE U.P.P. STATION -- VARIOUS ANGLES

Smaller than Anchorpoint.

INT. RODINA - CYBERNETICS LAB

CLOSE on Bishop. He stares straight ahead, the corner of his mouth twitching mechanically. PULL BACK. Bishop's torso is mounted in the center of a large square platform; tubes are wires snake from his ruined lower ribcage. The walls of the labs are lined with monitor screens and printers.

Information is being reamed out of the android at high speed, printouts of measurements, graphs, formulas. COLONEL-DOCTOR SUSLOV is beside the Vietnamese Commando, who wears a sleeveless fatigue-blouse revealing regimental tattoos: a yin-yang, hashmarks, an ID marker like a supermarket bar-code. They watch as a graphics program generates a detailed anatomical drawing of a face-hugger on a large monitor. She says something short and emphatic in Vietnamese, repeats it: yes.

SUSLOV

And this?

He taps a keypad and the face-hugger vanishes. The screen begins to draft an Alien in side and frontal projections.

FIRST COMMANDO

(eyes fixed on the screen in
horror and fascination)

No...

On the slab, the robotic tic still works the corner of Bishop's mouth.

INT. SULACO -- CARGO LOCK

Two TECHNICIANS in biohazard gear squat on either side of Bishop's legs. An electronic microscope has been set up on a low tripod. A small monitor displays magnified skin and a few dark gobules. One Technician extracts an ultra-fine probe from its sterile package and leans forward.

TECH WITH PROBE

You getting tape of this, Miller?

SECOND TECH

You bet your ass. Orders.

TECH WITH PROBE

That's good because I'd swear I just saw a piece of this shit move...

On the monitor, the tip of the probe trembles, brushes one of the globules. The Second Tech takes it, inserts it in a plastic tube, seals the tube in a small metal canisters, and writes #17 on the side in red grease pen.

SECOND TECH

Since when do androids get diseases?

TECH WITH PROBE

I dunno. Sure looks like something got to this poor bastard...

INT. ROSETTI'S OFFICE CUBICLE

COLONEL ROSETTI, Colonial Marines, is Anchorpoint's head of military operations. His office is furnished in the best futuro-Pentagon style: imitation rosewood, division insignia plaques, a desktop model of the drop ships from "Aliens."

Rosetti glances up from his monitor as his SECRETARY enters, a young woman in semi-dress Marine uniform.

SECRETARY

(hands him a stiff red plastic envelope)

Welles and Fox, Colonel. Military Sciences, Weapons Division.

Rosetti eyes the envelope with evident distaste, scrawls his signature in the required box before opening it, removes documents, and the empty envelope back.

ROSETTI

Show them in.

Secretary exits.

ROSETTI'S POV -- CLOSEUP

on two plastic microfiche cards, each with front and side views of Fox and Welles, retinal I.D. images, scaled-down fingerprints, etc. Stamped "MILISCI, WEAPONS DIV."

FOX (O.S.)

Kevin Fox, Colonel.

ROSETTI'S POV -- FOX

is tanned, athletic, hyperconfident, his smile a heart-less display of state-of-the-art enamel-bonding techniques. WELLES is just behind him.

WELLES

Susan Welles.

Same spa-tuned look, same expensive casualwear.

ROSETTI

(flatly, with no other effort at greeting)

Welcome to Anchorpoint.

Fox and Welles seat themselves without waiting to be asked.

FOX

We're impressed, Colonel. Susan and I are definitely impressed.

WELLES

The videos don't really give you an idea of the scale, do they?

She might as well be talking about a tour of Notre Dame.

FOX

But we're particularly impressed with your handling of the situation, the situation so far. We're impressed with your cooperation...

ROSETTI

(flicking the cards down on his desktop with suppressed hostility)

We call it "following orders."

WELLES

Yes. It would simplify things if everyone did, wouldn't it? Particularly the civilian component of that Deck Squad. I think we may have a potential problem there...

FOX

We've been going over psyche profiles, Colonel. Anchorpoint seems to be the kinds of project that attracts... idealists.

ROSETTI

(with a thin grin)

Liberals.

WELLES

Let's just say we've noticed a certain antipathy to Military Sciences, Colonel. A certain lack of sympathy with the goals of the Weapons Division...

ROSETTI

Anchorpoint is under Colonial Administration authority. This isn't a military operation. If it were, we'd be in violation of the Strategic Arms Reductions treaty.

FOX

Looks great on paper, Colonel, but we want the civilians who boarded Sulaco sewn up. Tight.

WELLES

Forfeit of shares, for starts. Anyone talks, they lose their shares. We've found it reasonably effective, in most cases...

FOX

(taking a sheaf of
printout from his attach_)
But that's a simple matter. This isn't. Sulaco's
data base indicates a boarding operation en
route, Colonel.

ROSETTI

A boarding operation? Why wasn't I informed?

WELLES

We're informing you. You seem to have lost an
android, Colonel. The Union of Progressive
Peoples have Bishop...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ANCHORPOINT -- ENTRANCE TO ANTI-BUGGING BUBBLE

A MARINE ushers Hicks into a large bare chamber. Hicks wears his dress
uniform. The room is dominated by the bubble, a mirrored sphere.

MARINE

This way, Corporal.

The Marine leads Hicks up a gangway. Hicks enters the bubble. The Marine
closes the door behind him.

INT. THE BUBBLE

Three members (Rosetti, TRENT, SHUMAN) of Anchorpoint's directorate are
seated at a round table; with them are Fox and Welles. Hicks comes to
attention and salutes.

ROSETTI

At ease, Hicks. Be seated. My name is Rosetti.
Station's military attach_. From my right:
Trent, exobiology... Shuman, Diplomatic Corps...
From your right...

FOX

I'm Kevin Fox, Hicks. This is Susan Welles.
We're with the Company. We'd like to congratulate
you on a successful mission.

HICKS

Successful? I lost my squad in that hole...

WELLES

But you returned, Corporal. And you've rescued
the colony's sole survivor...

ROSETTI

(picks up a sheaf of printout)
We've all read the transcript of your debriefing,
Hicks...

HICKS

Where's Bishop? Sir.

ROSETTI

(blinks)

If you don't mind, Hicks, we'll table that until --

TRENT

I've read the transcript. Are you certain, Hicks, that you have nothing more to tell us about the alien's life cycle? Detail, Hicks. Detail is crucial...

ROSETTI

Trent, the subject is classified. Corporal Hicks' security rating need to be upgraded before we can --

HICKS

(ignoring Rosetti, he addresses Trent)

I've already told you everything I know.

ROSETTI

Hick --

FOX

Let the Corporal have his say, Colonel. After all, he's seen these creatures in action.

ROSETTI

You ordered the subject classified Maximum Security, Fox.

TRENT

I seriously doubt the Corporal Hicks knows anything more than he's already told us. Which is a great pity. But the android, Bishop, was designed for scientific observation. A Hyperdyne model A/5, a walking data bank...

WELLES

Corporal Hick asked the right questions to begin with.

ROSETTI

(stiffly)

To answer your question, Hicks: we aren't certain.

WELLES

(heavy sarcasm)

But we can guess, can't we Colonel?

HICKS

(to Welles)

Where?

FOX

Rodina station.

HICKS

The U.P.P.? What's the U.P.P. got to go with this?

ROSETTI

Sulaco's navigation system failed. You were in disputed territory for something over eighty-five minutes, Hicks. The U.P.P. would ordinarily respond to that as a violation of their space. So far there's been no protest. Nothing.

(he hesitates)

Sulaco's computer indicates a covert boarding operation...

FOX

"Indicates"...

SHUMAN

To put it in diplomatic terms, Hicks, they've got our ass in a sling. If they want to regard the Sulaco incident as a hostile act -- and let me assure you that they will, eventually -- they can compromise our position in the current round of arms reduction talks. We're talking serious ramifications here. Then we have the communications lag to and from Earth. A week either way. So we're looking at a fourteen day wait for policy clarification. We may have a major crisis on our hands.

WELLES

We arrived with a policy brief, Shuman, and you've seen it. We're here to implement that brief.

ROSETTI

And your orders predate knowledge of U.P.P. involvement.

FOX

We're here to do our job, Colonel.

SHUMAN

In this case, "doing your job" might involve the distinct possibility of precipitating nuclear war --

ROSETTI

(quick to break in; the subject's too sensitive for enlisted ears)

Any further questions for the Corporal? No? In that case, Hicks...

HICKS

Sir.

Hicks stands, salutes.

INT. ACHORPOINT -- R & R ZONE, "THE MALL"

Tully slopes along looking haggard and spaced. He wears his trademark jacket. The Mall is a cross between a Hyatt atrium and an airport shopping concourse: shops, vegetation, fast food outlets, a bar. He arrives at what are apparently elevator doors. The doors open on a miniature subway car. Tully steps in and the doors close.

INT. TISSUE CULTURE LAB

Spence is working with cultures. Her arms are up to the elbows in a pair of white gloves mounted in round openings on the side of a transparent plastic tank. She looks up as Tully enters.

TULLY

Hey.

SPENCE

You look like homemade shit.

(she withdraws her hands,
the gloves pop out)

What happened down there, Tully? There's some kind of security blackout on...

TULLY

Yeah. And I'm part of it... I can't tell you anything. Had to sign a whole new set of papers. Talk to anybody and I lose my shares. All my shares, right?

SPENCE

You joking, Tully?

TULLY

Wish I were...

(changes the subject)

What's the old man got for me to dick around with this shift?

She crosses to a lab bench and takes something from a white wire basket.

SPENCE

Here. All yours. Orders are, you use the manipulators for this.

She hands him something wrapped in a sheet of white printout held with a rubber band. He removes the band, unrolls the paper. The canister. Number 17.

SPENCE

(continuing)

What the hell did happen on the ship, Tully? How come all the biopsy work on those three? and his very quiet sudden backlog of autopsy material? How come it's all triple-classified? What's going on? We had these two spooks from Gateway in here today acted like they just bought the place...

TULLY

(with a nervous glance
around the lab)

Okay, okay... But later, okay? Not here...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TISSUE CULTURE LAB

Tully at the controls of a pair of high-tech servo-manipulators visible through the tick glass of an ultra-heavy duty rectangular tank. The controls are gloves. A cable leads from the wrist of each glove to the face of the tanks. Tully move his hands, testing. The skeletal steels waldos inside the tank mimic each move. He uses them to open the canister. An electronic microscope is built into the tank, its monitor just above the window. He positions the probe's tip under the microscope.

ANGLE OVER TOP OF MONITOR

for his reaction.

TULLY

Spence... What is this? Where did it come from?

Spence strolls up behind his with a cup of coffee, a pen tucked behind her ear.

SPENCE

C'mon, Charlie, don't you read the spec sheets anymore? It's off the shop. Off your transport. It's... God.

SPENCE'S POV -- CLOSE ON THE MONITOR

The tip of the probe is encased in a sheath of glittering back filigree.

ANGLE

SPENCE

Up the rez...

Tully taps a lapboard; magnifications increases by twenty powers.

EXTREME CLOSEUP -- MONITOR

As the screen fills with an image that might be a bizarre landscape, its lines and textures recalling the interior of the derelict ship in "ALIEN."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ECO-MODULE

An experimental pocket Eden: a half-acre of artfully ragged concrete Disneyland into lush rainforest, sun-dappled miniature meadows, patches of African cactus. Newt crouches in long grass, her hand extended toward a small animal. A lemur. Hicks stands nearby.

NEWT

Have you been there, Hicks? Africa?

HICKS

Morocco. Four weeks of Basic. But was mountains. Not like this.

The lemur scoots away, spooked by his voice; Newt watches as it scurries up a tree.

NEWT

I'd like to go there...

HICKS

No problem. You're going to Gateway station on Sulaco, right? Then you catch a shuttle down and you're in Oregon. Just a jump over a puddle, to Africa, once you're there.

Spence walks out of the miniature jungle, carrying a white wire tray of samples in plastic lab bottles.

NEWT

I don't remember them...

SPENCE

Your grandparents?

Newt nods.

SPENCE

(continuing)

Well, guess they remember you. Sure.

NEWT

But what if Ripley wakes up and I'm not here? Can't I wait?

HICKS

Hey. She'll know where you're going, right? Anyway, Sulaco's the only ship back to Gateway for two months. But look, you want to make double sure, then you leave her a map, exactly where you're going...

Spence grins at Hicks.

INT. NEWT'S DORM CUBICLE

Newt at a fold-down desk, at work on an elaborate multicolor feltpen starmap. A dotted line zigzags from Anchorpoint to Portland, Oregon. She carefully prints her new address:

NEWT JORDEN
c/o
MR. & MRS. RICHARD JORDEN
34877 GREENLEAF AVE. #582
NEW PORTLAND, OREGON AB994J2

Ripley wan and comatose. Hicks waits awkwardly in the doorway, dangling Newt's knapsack, as she enters and tapes the finished starmap to the wall; the first thing Ripley would see, waking. Newt beside the bed, look down at her friend.

NEWT

Ripley? Ripley, it's Newt. I... I gotta go now. I'm going to stay with my grandparents, in Oregon. Hicks says that's a good place... There's a map for you, Ripley, how to get there. You can come there and stay with me, okay? You have to, okay?

Tears on her cheeks as Hicks puts his hand on her shoulder and they leave the room.

INT. DEPARTURE BAY

Newt and Hicks amid a bustle of power-loaders, assorted robot vehicles. They approach the entrance to a narrow corridor. Sign: DEPARTURE BAY -- CREW ONLY BEYOND THIS POINT.

HICKS
That's you.

NEWT
I know.

HICKS
Good luck in Oregon.

He holds the red knapsack as she slips into the straps.

NEWT
Hicks...

HICKS
Yeah?

She look at him: ghost of a grin. She gives him the thumbs-up sign.

NEWT
Affirmative.

He returns the sign

HICKS
Affirmative.

She turns and makes her way up the narrow boarding corridor. It's long, tapers to nothing. Tiny figure, receding, bright dot of the knapsack. She turns, waves. He waves back. She's gone.

EXT. ANCHORPOINT

Sulaco pulls away, begins to accelerate, dwindles against the stars.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RODINA -- CONFERENCE CHAMBER

Cigarette-smoke drifts above a long narrow table in a narrow space. A half-dozen ranking TECHNOCRATS are jammed along wither side in folding chairs, with Colonel-Doctor Suslov at the head.

BRAUN
(Rodina's chief of R&D)
Obviously, Colonel Doctor, the purpose of their mission was to obtain specimens of this lifeform. The android dissected a single specimen. One of the pre-larval forms -- like the thing that killed Lenko.

AN OFFICER
And you believe that these creature are of potential military importance?

BRAUN

Yes, provided it's possible to clone the alien spores recovered from the android's skin and clothing...

SUSLOV

With the goal of programming these "machines" for use as weapons?

BRAUN

The adult form, Colonel-Doctor, is evidently a killing-machine of great strength, extraordinary sophistication. No evidence of intelligence. Purely instinctual.

INTELLIGENCE OFFICER

Our sources in the corporationist infrastructure are aware of the existence of a special project with Weyland-Yutani's Weapons Division. We have been unable to penetrate their security...

SUSLOV

The Intelligence Officer suggests that this special project concerns the alien?

DIPLOMATIC OFFICER

I remind you, Colonel-Doctor, that we experiment with the alien genetic material only if we are prepared to violate primary biological warfare limitations in the Strategic Arms Reduction treaty...

BRAUN

An I reminds the Diplomatic Officer that the Weyland Yutani corporation is obviously prepared to do so -- that they may already be doing so... As ever, our level of technology lags slightly behind that of the capitalist cartels... But now, by chance --

MILITARY OFFICER

By chance? You refer to the proven bravery and constant initiative of our People's Commando Division --

BRAUN

(smoothly, a seasoned
political infighter
covering his bases)

Not at all, Major. Their courage is unquestioned. Nonetheless, consider: we are in possession of a potential weapon -- a whole new technology, if you will -- which Weyland Yutani clearly intends to develop. We are in, as they might put it, on the ground floor. But only if we choose to be, if we choose to hold our advantage.

SUSLOV

I agree. We have no choice but to proceed.

DIPLOMATIC OFFICER

Then I go on record as strongly advising that

the android be returned to Anchorpoint. Are our technicians capable of repairing the thing?

BRAUN

Repairing it? Why?

DIPLOMATIC OFFICER

You lack a sense of the importance of gesture, Braun. Let us avoid their customary accusations of barbarism... And buy ourselves time...

SUSLOV

Our technicians will repair the thing. Return it to them... And we will proceed. We will clone the alien...

INT. ANCHORPOINT -- TISSUE CULTURE LAB

TRENT, head of BioLab, Rosetti, and Fox wait, seated, as Tully wheels a Holographic Display Module into position. The lights dim. A faint, ghostly cube shimmers in front of the three men.

TRENT

Initially this was merely routine, you understand. We attempted to determine its compatibility with terrestrial DNA.

FOX

What kind of DNA exactly, Doctor?

TRENT

Human, of course.

Something shivers and shakes and takes form in the cube of light: a double helix threaded with green and red beads of light.

TRENT

(continuing)

Watch closely, please.

The alien genetic material looks like a cubist's vision of an art deco staircase, its asymmetrical segments glowing Day-glo green and purple.

ROSETTI

That's a biological structure? More like part of a machine...

The alien form makes contact with the human DNA. The transformation is shockingly swift, but its stages can still be followed: the thing seems to pull itself into and through the coils, and for an instant the two are meshed, locked, and then the final stage. A new shape glows, a hybrid; the green and red beads have been altered beyond recognition.

FOX

Like a high-speed viral takeover...! What's the real-time duration on this, Trent?

TULLY

(from the shadows beyond
the glowing cube)

That was it. What you see is what you get.
That's how fast it is...

INT. ANCHORPOINT -- MACHINE SHOP

Hicks enters the cavernous shop, dodging out of the way of an emerging power-loader. The place is an oily forest of steel; machines of various kinds await repair. WALKER is at a workbench, a big man in a grease-stained vest.

HICKS

Hicks. Temporary duty assignment.

Walker works the joystick on a handheld remote control unit. An unmanned power-loader comes to life and lumbers toward the bench. He brings it to a halt expertly, exactly where he wants it, with few casual twiddles of the stick.

WALKER

Walker. Know how to blow out the hydraulic lines on a force-feedback system?

HICKS

No.

WALKER

Never too late to learn.

He offers Hicks a cigarette, lights it for him with a micro-torch from the bench.

WALKER

(continuing)

You off the mystery ship, Hicks?

HICKS

Sulaco? What's the mystery?

WALKER

(lighting his own
cigarette)

Popular question. Whole thing's triple-classified now and word's getting around that two of the deck party never came back.

HICKS

(shrugs)

I was iced.

WALKER

Sure...

HICKS

You ready to show me his feedback system?

WALKER

(eyes Hicks narrowly)

Anytime.

INT. OPS ROOM

PAN along Jackson's multi-screen array in Operations, video images of various Anchorpoint locales: space-suited figure and robot welders making routine hull repairs.

HIGH ANGLE -- THE MALL

A buzzer SOUNDS. Screen directly in front of Jackson displays:

INCOMING TRANSMISSION
SOURCE: U.P.P. RODINA
DIPLOMATIC INCRYPT>>>
>>>DIPL CORPS SHUMAN

Jackson bobs her head, moving the cursor-cap to various "windows" on the screen.

JACKSON
(speaking into headset
mike)

Somebody find me Shuman -- tell his we got
incoming Rodina coded standard diplomatic.
His opposite number must've decided it's time
for the weekly bullshit session...

INT. ANTI-BUGGING BUBBLE

Shuman is seated alone at the round table. A miniature video camera is set up on the table. Opposite him is a large wall screen displaying an image of the U.P.P. Diplomatic Officer, also alone, seated at the far end of the narrow table in the Rodina conference room.

SHUMAN
Androids, by law, are afforded the status of
persons. Citizens.

DIPLOMATIC OFFICER
Under your system, yes. We prefer to afford them
the status of machines.

SHUMAN
You're holding one of our citizens captive.

DIPLOMATIC OFFICER
The "citizen" in question, the synthetic, Bishop,
has been held in regard to a treaty violation
involving an armed vessel.

SHUMAN
Sulaco was homing on Anchorpoint. The so-called
violation was the result of a malfunction.

DIPLOMATIC OFFICER
The matter is under investigation.

SHUMAN
I repeat: you are holding one of our citizens.

DIPLOMATIC OFFICER
The incident is also being investigated with
regards to an apparent violations of the Strategic
Arms Reductions treaty.

SHUMAN
Sulaco's weapons-systems fall entirely within
the prescribed --

DIPLOMATIC OFFICER

I refer to those sections of the treaty concerned
with biological warfare.

Beat. The U.P.P. Diplomat has just scored, but Shuman maintains his poise.

SHUMAN

The allegation is false.

DIPLOMATIC OFFICER

We make no official allegations at this time.
The matter remains under investigation. Bishop,
however, is of no further use in the inquiry.
We are returning him to you.

EXT. ANCHORPOINT -- SHUTTLE BAY -- A U.P.P. SHUTTLE

docking. The bay closes behind it. (V.O.: STATIC, VOICES of Anchorpoint
docking crew.)

INT. SHUTTLE BAY

Shuman and two Marines enter the bay. They wear biohazard envelopes, masks.
The shuttle's hatch opens and the Vietnamese Commando steps out. Bishop
emerges. He looks at the Commando, then at Shuman and the Marines waiting at
the bottom of the gangway. The Commando gestures: go.

SHUMAN

You're under quarantine orders, Bishop.
(to the Marines)
Escort him to MedLab.

INT. THE MALL

Hicks has just come off shift; the Mall's bar catches his eye. The facade
says it all: ye olde pre-packaged genuine simulated wood-grain generic tavern
and the only joint in town.

One wall is a screen showing a stale rerun of a Brazilian soccer match. Some
of the customers play hologram game-consoles. Tully is seated at the bar.
Hicks takes a stool beside him.

HICKS

Beer.

He fishes his dog tags out and detaches one, passes it to the bartender; the
bartender inserts it in a terminal, rings up the beer, hands it back.

TULLY

You're Hicks. Sulaco...

Tully, in his trademark jacket, is obviously drunk.

HICKS

Who're you?

TULLY

Tully. Tech Five. Tissue lab. D-fucking-NA.
Jesus... Sulaco... Lucky.

HICKS

Lucky? Who? You lucky, man?

TULLY

You. You're one lucky sonofabitch, Hicks.

Knocks back his drink.

HICKS

How's that?

TULLY

All that way. All the way back here with those...
Those fucking things, man...

Tully has just gotten his sudden, undivided attention.

HICKS

Things? What things?

TULLY

Shit... We had to sign. All of us. Lose our
fucking shares we tell anybody, right?

HICKS

(his whole body tense)

They were on the ship...

TULLY

Yeah. Jesus. I saw 'em...

Reaches for his glass, but it's empty.

HICKS

Where? How many? When?

TULLY

(Suddenly remembering
his shares)

Look, I...

(cuts a glance around the
bar)

Bad place to talk... I gotta go now, leave...

HICKS

(grabbing Tully before he
can slide off the stool)

You aren't going anywhere, buddy.

Tully, sudden energy, not so much at Hicks as at his whole situation:

TULLY

I didn't come out here to work on shit like that.
Came out here to help design ecosystems, not
build designer for the next year... You want an
earful? You got it. Shift after next, place
called DP-54, Level 7 map. Can't talk here...

He twists out of Hick's grip and into the crowd.

Hicks sits at the bar, staring at his untouched beer.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE BUBBLE

Rosetti, Trent, Fox, and Welles.

WELLES

And Bishop has agreed to undergo complete physical and chemical analysis?

ROSETTI

He requested it himself.

FOX

Results?

TRENT

No irregularities so far. No trace of the alien cellular material...

WELLES

Tampering, then? Reprogramming? Any new circuits in our Mr. Bishop? Any little surprises courtesy of the U.P.P.?

TRENT

No. Nothing.

FOX

And his data on the Aliens? All there? Intact?

TRENT

Yes, it seems to be. But if his memory's been tampered with, we'd have no way of knowing. Neither would he...

WELLES

In any case, we have to assume that the U.P.P. accessed Bishop's memory. That they have the data. They may also have specimens of the alien genetic material...

ROSETTI

In other words, you want to get on with your brief, don't you? You want Trent to clone the cultures. And you didn't want Shuman at this meeting.

FOX

This isn't a question of diplomacy, Colonel Rosetti.

ROSETTI

Isn't it? A violation of the S.A.R. treaty?

FOX

Has anyone mentioned military applications, Colonel? Trent?

TRENT

(smiles)

No. I think a very nice case can be made for applied exobiology. We do have a standing order to study alien life-forms when we encounter them.

Preliminary analysis of the material from Sulaco reveals a remarkable adaptive capacity. The potential for cancer research alone...

WELLES

Imagine, Colonel: if it can be programmed to only kill cancer cells...

ROSETTI

And what exactly is it you propose to do, Trent?

FOX

(before Trent can answer)

We'll nourish the cells in stasis tubes, under constant observation. We'll terminate them before they become embryos...

ROSETTI

I see. Cancer research. And our motives are exclusively humanitarian. Is that it?

WELLES

Colonel, when Shuman gets his reply from Earth, priority will go to military development of the Alien. We know that because we know where our orders came from. The decision has already been made.

FOX

And potential U.P.P. research in the same direction only adds to the urgency, Colonel.

ROSETTI

The decision rests with me.

WELLES

Perhaps you misunderstood, Rosetti. The decision has been made.

FOX

They won't just break you, Colonel, they'll see to it that it's as though your career never happened. They're top people. That can do that. And you know it.

Rosetti, with a long, cold look for both of them; he got the message:

ROSETTI

Shuman, of course, will have to be informed.

FOX

Of course. "Cancer research"...

INT. MEDLAB -- SCAN UNIT

Bishop patiently undergoes a scan; he lies on his back on a narrow support as a massive donut-shaped sensor moves down the length of his body. A life-size color scan-image is displayed on a large screen: his "organs."

TECHNICIAN

The knees. Looks like they do the joints in polycarbon...

MEDIC

How about it, Bishop? Knees okay?

BISHOP

Yes...

Tentative smile.

TECHNICIANS

Polycarbon. Won't hold up worth a damn...

INT. RODINA -- BIOLAB

smaller than the Anchorpoint lab. Equipment look less advanced. The only light is the yellowish glow from a stasis tube; Braun and two assistants are clustered around the tube, observing the thing suspended there: thumb-sized, grayish-pink. An embryo.

INT. ANCHORPOINT -- A TUNNEL AT THE EDGE OF THE CONSTRUCTION ZONE

Hicks jogs through the tunnel. Its brightly-lit arc of white ceramic recalls London tube stations, but the floor is paved smooth and black, with freshly-painted traffic symbols. He passes a woman jogging in the opposite direction, keeps going. Small video cameras are mounted at intervals overhead, panning slowly from side to side. As he continues, less of the tunnel is finished; sections of tile are missing, revealing pipes, wiring, structural steel. Past a certain point eh's jogging the raw steel tube, splashing through shallow puddles of condensation. Fewer lights, widely spaced. He reaches a junction and pauses, chooses a tunnel.

INT. CONSTRUCTION ZONE CHAMBER -- HIGH, LONG SHOT -- HICKS

comes out of the lit mouth of a tunnel. The space he enters is the size of a football stadium, but dark and industrially Gothic. Stacks of hull-plate and geodesic struts. A shower of sparks as he passes a robot welder (a la the machine in the opening sequence of "Aliens"). Down the aisle of material and heavy machinery. Spence is waiting.

SPENCE

Hicks.

She's in the shadows, smoking a cigarette.

HICKS

You, huh? Why you?

SPENCE

I work in the lab with Tully. He couldn't make it.

HICKS

Hangover?

SPENCE

Sacred... That forfeit agreement he had to sign.

HICKS

Doesn't scare you?

SPENCE

I haven't signed. Not yet. They've only given

them to the ones who saw what happened.

HICKS

Why you?

SPENCE

Tully's okay, Hicks. I know him. Believe it or not, he doesn't scare that easy. He told me what was on that ship, Hicks. What he saw. You know what is was.

HICKS

I don't think anybody knows what it is...

SPENCE

They've got us growing the stuff. We've been running recombinant DNA routines on it, using human genetic material...

HICKS

You've been what?

SPENCE

(stutting out her cigarette)
Cancer research. Tully says that's just a cover. Says it's like trying to cure cancer with a shotgun. Anyway, everybody know those two spooks from Gateway are MiliSci...

HICKS

Fox and Welles?

SPENCE

Weapons Division. Not even supposed to exist, these days. Not officially, anyway.

HICKS

(lights a cigarette
of his own)

I still don't see why you're telling me this.

SPENCE

Maybe I don't either. It's just... we've got to tell somebody... Now there's a rumor somebody came in on a U.P.P. ship today, somebody off Sulaco...

HICKS

Bishop...

SPENCE

I don't know.

HICKS

Maybe Progressive Peoples'll get their own Alien too. Maybe they'll grow some...

SPENCE

(horrified)
Shit! You'd better hope not...

HICKS

Why's that?

SPENCE

Their lab gear's five years behind ours.
They'd never be able to control it.

HICKS

Think you can, huh?

SPENCE

I don't know...

INT. OPS ROOM

A BLEEP as Tully appears on one of Jackson's screens, looking up at a camera in the tissue culture lab.

TULLY

Get me some maintenance people down here, will ya? Run a check on the stasis system. Pressure differential's off and the read keep fluctuating. And punch it Priority One; Trent'll cover it.

JACKSON

(with a characteristic little
jerk of her head, light-pen
winking)

Sure. You want a piece of the Superbowl, Tully?

TULLY

Nah.

JACKSON

Denver...

TULLY

Denver? No way. Gimme a tenth on Chicago.

INT. RODINA -- BIOLAB

Braun is seated at a computer, entering data. Suslov is staring into the stasis tube containing the developing Alien.

SUSLOV

There's an irony in this...

BRAUN

(engrossed in the data)

Irony, Colonel-Doctor?

SUSLOV

The readiness with which it lends itself to genetic manipulation, Braun. The speed with which its cells multiply.

BRAUN

Yes. Remarkable.

SUSLOV

As though the gene-structure had been designed for ease of manipulation. And this apparently universal compatibility with other plasms...

BRAUN
(reluctantly abandoning
his task)
And you find this ironic?

SUSLOV
Ironic that we are attempting to program it as
a weapon, yes.

BRAUN
How is that?

SUSLOV
Perhaps it is the fruit of some ancient
experiment... A living artifact, the product of
genetic engineering... A weapon. Perhaps we are
looking at the end result of yet another arms
race...

BRAUN
A defeatist attitude, Colonel-Doctor. Our
project can only strengthen the Union of
Progressive Peoples...

CLOSE -- THE STASIS TUBE -- A CHEST-BURSTER

is suspended there like an eyeless fetal dolphin.

INT. MACHINE SHOP

Hicks, alone in the shop, mechanically going through the motions of the
busywork he's been assigned to keep him out of the way.

BISHOP
(from the doorway)
That's quite a piece of machinery, Corporal
Hicks...

HICKS
(looking up, grinning)
That's what we used to say about you. How the
hell are you, Bishop? Brass said you were
snatched by the U.P.P. How're things in the
socialist paradise?

BISHOP
I was returned. I assume they had no further
use for me.

He moves among the silent machines, touching them as he speaks.

BISHOP
(continuing)
There are rumors, Hicks, that Weapons Division
intends to develop the Alien.

HICKS
(with a glance at the
video camera on the wall)
Where'd the bastards get one, Bishop?

BISHOP

One of them managed to board Sulaco, Hicks.
Ripley killed it...

HICKS

Good for her.

BISHOP

She called it "the queen." It was larger than
the others. Very large. Somehow is deposited
genetic material in the ship.

HICKS

Then they're stone cold crazy, man. I hear the
U.P.P. might try it themselves.

BISHOP

Given the current state of the arms race, it's
entirely possible. I'm programmed to protect
human life, Hicks. It's my... nature. Everything
I am, everything I know, tells me this experiment
must be aborted.

HICKS

Yeah. I know the feeling.

BISHOP

But I can't be entirely sure you can trust me,
Hicks.

HICKS

You can't what?

BISHOP

The U.P.P. may have reprogrammed me. I've been
very thoroughly examined, of course, but the
possibility does exist.

HICKS

Wouldn't you know?

BISHOP

No. I may be functioning as an enemy agent.

HICKS

(beat)

What the hell. We have to kill it, don't we?

BISHOP

I have to try.

HICKS

I'm in man. And I think I know where we can find
us a little help...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TISSUE LAB

Spence and Tully are alone.

SPENCE

What coffee? I'm going to the machine.

TULLY

No.

He peers into one of the stasis tubes; a small ovoid of tissue suspended there.

SPENCE

Maintenance cure your pressure differential problem?

TULLY

Said there wasn't any. Said it was a glitch.

SPENCE

Didn't want to get his hands dirty?

TULLY

It settled down by itself.

Spence exits; Tully moves closer to the tube.

CLOSE -- THE SINGLE DEVELOPING SPORE

inside; it looks like a much smaller version of the alien egg.

WIDER ANGLE

TULLY

Hey there. Hi ya. How ya doin'? Nutrient solution agreeing with you, hm? We're looking lots bigger today, aren't we? You bet. Terrific. Just absolutely fucking wonderful...

His monologue is interrupted by Welles' entrance; he's startled, looks up guiltily. The heavy glass doors HISS shut behind her.

WELLES

Communing with nature, Tully?

TULLY

Your not wearing a badge.

(taps the plastic ID
clipped to his lab coat)

White strap registers contamination. Turns red if you're accidentally exposed to something. Got it?

WELLES

Where's Trent?

TULLY

Lunch.

WELLES

And how's our friend?

She moves to the stasis tube, looks in.

TULLY

Friends. Our little friends. Growing.

WELLES

Get me hard copy for the past six hours.

TULLY

Sorry. Ask Trent.

WELLES

I don't think you understood me, Technician
Tully...

She's following him as he nears the main computer console; in the b.g., a stasis tube begins to HISS. CRACKS loudly, a hairline fracture emits a superfine spray of fluid. An alarm SOUNDS.

WELLES

(continuing)

What does th --

TULLY

O Jesus...

Two of the tubes BLOW OUT. Nutrient fluid and plastic shards everywhere. Welles and Tully go down. A louder ALARM cuts in; red lights strobe. Locks in the doors THUNK shut, an automatic containment measure, as Spence, outside, throws down her coffee and begins to struggle with the door-controls, trying to reach Tully. Tully, facedown in a pool of the fluid, see that he's nine inches away from the gray pigeon's-egg of alien tissue. His eyes widen. Gets to his knees as carefully as he can. Reaches slowly -- slowly -- sideways, manages to snag a pair of plastic tongs and a shallow lab tray from the counter...

Welles tries to scramble to her feet, loses her balance in the slippery goop, and snatches at his arm. He nearly falls on top of the thing, but cuffs her roughly away, kneels, tongs poised... Beat. A tiny orifice opens; for a split-second something glitters above the thing, a faint, fist-sized cloud of dark mist. Then it's gone and Tully's moving, swooping in with tongs and tray.

SPENCE (V.O.)

(intercom)

Tully! Tully, Goddamn it! What's happening?
Are you okay?

TULLY

De-con. Get us down to De-con!

Welles is struggling to her feet.

INT. DECONTAMINATION CHAMBER

Drenched, naked, furious, Welles is nearly invisible behind a scalding downpour as techs in biohazard gear scrub her down with detergents and antibacterial agents. She shoots eye-daggers at Tully, who's being worked over by two more techs.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. OPS ROOM

Jackson at work. PAN ACROSS screens to security camera view of the DNA lab,

clean now but minus two stasis tubes -- image identified: TISSUE CULTURE / 25 AUGUST / 1900:15 HOURS. Jackson's attention is elsewhere.

INT. A CORRIDOR

Hicks keeps watch as Bishop open a panel, exposing complex wiring; no hesitation whatever as he strips two wires, removes a Walkman-sized VCR from his belt, and clips lead to the stripped wires.

INT. OPS ROOM

CLOSE on monitor image of the lab. The picture fuzzes out, scrambles, returns -- but now reads: TISSUE CULTURE / 23 AUGUST / 1200:02 HOURS and the missing tubes are back in place.

INT. ENTRANCE -- OUTSIDE LAB

BISHOP

We have three minutes at the outside.

HICKS

Go.

Bishop punches the code-sequence and the door hisses open; they're through, moving.

INT. TISSUE CULTURE LAB

They move down the row of stasis tubes. Bishop pauses when they reach the two units with missing tubes, then quickly moves on. He opens a wall panel, exposing controls and a large, very serious-looking red switch. Label above switch:

STASIS SYSTEM MICROWAVE STERILIZATION

Then, he hesitates. Turning slowly, as if under compulsion, he looks back; the line of glowing tubes.

HICKS

Do it!

And still he doesn't move... Hicks darts his arm past Bishop, breaking the trance and yanking the red switch.

A burst of unpleasant high-frequency SOUND as the fluid in the tubes instantly begins to boil.

CLOSE ON ONE OF THE ALIEN CULTURES

as it bursts, disintegrates into a film of slime lost behind a storm of bubbles. The lab's ALARM system goes off. The doors slide open as three MARINES cover Hicks and Bishop with handguns.

MARINES

Just don't you fucking move, Jack.

Hicks stonefaces the Marines. Then cracks a grin.

INT. DETENTION UNIT

Hicks and Bishop, in white plastic "medical restraints" (like arm and leg-irons) precede the grim-faced Marines along a corridor and are thrown into separate cells.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE BUBBLE

Meeting of Anchorpoint's full directorate, including Welles and Fox, Jackson, and a number of new faces. Welles is white-lipped with fury.

JACKSON

They knew the code, didn't they? The code for the door...

FOX

You got it, Ops. And they knew just where to go which button to push to poach our eggs for us, didn't they? Struggling with an idea, Ops? Think it may even have been an inside job?

JACKSON

You're a Grade A Company prick, aren't you, mister?

(Her bitch truckdriver side; a tough lady, used to taking a lot of life-or-death responsibility in her job.)

WELLES

The Anchorpoint phase of the project is terminated, Rosetti. You'll keep Hicks and the android in solitary until they can return with us to Gateway to stand trial for treason.

TRENT

The Anchorpoint phase? What do you mean? We have no more material to work with...

FOX

You have no more material to work with, Trent. In any case, it's become obvious that you aren't quiet the man for the job. We took the precaution of obtaining our own samples. They're on their way to Gateway.

WELLES

(with cold satisfaction)

... and everything, every move each of you have made, since our arrival, is going to be gone over with a fine toothed c-c-c-c--

As Welles begins to stammer, her eyes betray a terrible consternation. She rises from her chair, lurches forward, catching herself on her hands. The C-C-C-C-C phases into a chattering palsy as a thick strand of blood-streaked drool descends toward the table. Fox, seated to her left, has instinctively shoved his own chair back, ready to run. Everyone else is frozen with shock.

As the chattering tooth-burr becomes a shrill SHRIEK of inhuman rage, the transformation takes place. Segmented biomechanoid tendons squirm beneath the skin of her arms. Her hands claw at one another, tearing redundant flesh from alien talons. Then the shriek dies. She straightens up.

And, rips her face apart in a single movement, the glistening claws coming away with skin, eyes, muscle, teeth, and splinters of bone... SOUND of ripping

cloth. The New Beast sheds its human skin in a single sinuous, bloody ripple, molting on fast forward.

An instant of utter silence as the featureless mask moves. From side to side. Scanning.

Trent vomits explosively. The Marine guard snatches his pistol from its holster and FIRES wildly across the table. Blind screaming chaos.

OVERHEAD SHOT

as the directorate plunges, like a single panicked organism, to the far side of the bubble. The thing is on Fox before he can get up from his chair.

CLOSE

On his scream as the sucking, fanged tongue plunges through the orbit of his eye.

ANGLE

A Marine with a flamethrower bursts through the door, torching Fox and the New Beast, setting fire to the bubble's acoustic foam baffles.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE TULLY'S SLEEPING CUBICLE

Spence is coming down the corridor, carrying a clear plastic bag of styrofoam food containers. Nobody else in sight. She look tired, but not particularly worried. She reaches the door to his cubicle. Thumps on it with the heel of her hand.

SPENCE

Tully! Hey! Open up.. Got you some food...

No reply. She thumps again, then punches the combination (the lock look like a telephone key-pad). Door opens. Dark inside.

SPENCE

(continuing)

Tully? You sleeping?

She climbs in. Dark. Very. A red LED glows on the phone console. She crawls through the detritus of Tully's housekeeping and fumbles with the lights. Can't find the switch.

SPENCE

Tully?

Lights CLICK on. Nobody there. Nothing. Looks even messier than she last saw it. She sighs, puts the bag of food on a ledge, scoops up a mound of dirty cloths off the pillow in an automatic cleaning-up gesture. And sees Tully's lab badge. Picks it up.

CLOSE ON THE BADGE

The contamination indicator strip is red.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DETENTION CELL

Hicks sitting on the narrow bunk.

Door opens. One of the Marines who arrested him in the lab; he wears combat armor now.

HICKS

What's your problem, bud? Got a war on?

The Marine steps back, admitting a haggard Rosetti.

ROSETTI

Get up, Hicks. We need you in the Ops Room.

HICKS

We didn't kill it.

ROSETTI

No. It killed Fox and Welles...

INT. TUNNEL, CONSTRUCTION ZONE

Small vehicle WHINES TOWARD US through puddles of condensation: a skeletal electric motor-jeep with heavy roll bars, scratched and paint-scarred. Walker driving. Hick behind him in partial combat armor and communication rig, cradling a pulse-rifle.

Walker is pushing it, driving fast; the jeep bounces and sways, skitters around a corner. Into the gloom of the big construction chamber. Halts.

HICKS

(into mouthpiece)

Gimme a read.

JACKSON (V.O.)

(from headset)

You're close. Hang a left.

HICKS

Is he moving?

JACKSON

No...

Walker swing the jeep around and they roll toward a narrow gap between massive stacks of geodesic struts.

INT. OPS ROOM

Jackson studies a simulator screen; a moving cursor, the Jeep, navigates a 3D grid-representation of the construction zone.

JACKSON

No left again.

The cursor turns. Nears a blinking red dot.

Spence, drawn and anxious, looks over Jackson's shoulder. Bishop and Rosetti are beside her.

SPENCE

You're sure it's him?

JACKSON

It's his locator frequency, isn't it? No two

alike. Surgically implanted. Just like yours...

SPENCE

(gnaws at her lip)

He's not moving...

ROSETTI

Why would he go down there?

BISHOP

The badge. He knew that he's been infected...

SPENCE

Scared. He's scared.

(shudders)

Tully...

INT. CONSTRUCTION CHAMBER

Dark. The Jeep creeps along between stacks of prefab hull units, emerges into a open space, junctions of several corridors. The deck is an inch deep in water.

JACKSON (V.O.)

He's there! You're right on top of him!

Walker stops the jeep. Hicks stands up, plays the beam of a flashlight around the area. Presses the mute button on his headset.

HICKS

(bellows)

Tully! Tully! Yo!

ECHO. DRIP of water.

Hicks clips the flashlight beneath the barrel of his gun and jumps down. Reflections ripple as he moves forward. Swings the beam along the surface -- something there... The logo-patches down a sleeve of Tully's ruptured, blood-soaked leather jacket. Drifting shred of human tissue...

JACKSON (V.O.)

Can you see him?

HICKS

Yeah.

And the thing that was Tully launches itself from the top of one of the stacks of construction material. Lands on top of the jeep, going for Walker, through the roll bars.

CLOSEUP ON JAWS

CLOSEUP

as the thing's tail lashes past Walker's face, taking a nick out of a steel bar.

on the controls, a pair of levers: he yanks one back, shoves the other forward, thumbs both drive buttons simultaneously.

ANGLE

The jeep (separate drive-trains for each wheel) pulls two three-sixties on a

dime, hurling the thing toward Hicks. It smashes into the desk, splash of water, leaps for Hicks instantly. The charge from his pulse-rifle takes it in mid-air, hideous bile-yellow spurt of acid... And it hits the water again with a terrific EXPLOSION of steam. The jeep lurches out through the steam, engines SCREAMING, wheels losing traction through the puddle, throwing up fantails of water, nearly overturning. Hicks jumps, snags a roll bar, empties the pulse-rifle's clip into the steam on full-auto as Walker hauls ass back down the corridor...

JACKSON (V.O.)

Hicks! What's happening?

INT. OPS ROOM

JACKSON

Hicks? Hicks!

CLOSE ON SCREEN

as the jeep-cursor speeds away from Tully's blinking locator-dot.

Spence's eyes fixed on the screen as she makes a serious stab at swallowing her own fist.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RODINA -- BIOLAB

VERY SLOW PAN past monitors -- one flickering like a defective strobe, the other displaying a readout in Russian -- past an overturned mug on a keyboard, past assorted equipment, past the shattered ruin of the big stasis tube, to Suslov and Braun cocooned in a glittering biomech structure of alien resin. Braun is dead, his rib cage gaping.

SCEAMS and the HAMMER of automatic weapons. Station crew fleeing in panic enter through one door, crash into tables, scattering trays of food, claw at one another to escape through another door. The Vietnamese commando and her partner are last into the room; they spin in unison and FIRE back through the door. SOUND of rending metal and loud inhuman RAGE.

The commandos scramble for the far door as the alien crashes into the mess: a new form, the result of Suslov's genetic tinkering. Bigger. Meaner. Faster. Able to reproduce more quickly.

The frantic crew are climbing a ladder. The commandos start up the ladder. They climb through a circular hatch. Like the deck they stand on, the hatch is made of heavy steel expansion-grid. The alien swarms up the ladder, slams into the hatch just as the commandos close and lock it. The alien keeps on slamming. The steel begins to bulge and tear...

INT. ANCHORPOINT -- OPS ROOM

Hicks, Bishop, Rosetti, Shuman, and Jackson.

JACKSON

Cant's raise 'em, boss.

SHUMAN

Try the diplomatic codes...

JACKSON

Diplomatic codes? They aren't responding to Mayday International. Maybe they've got a transponder down, but -- hey, check this, outgoing traffic...

(she bobs her head, taps her lapboard)

It's a squirt transmission... Military decryption standard.

ROSETTI

What do they have in the area?

JACKSON

(taps up a fresh screen of data)

Not much. Automated mining system working NC-313... Test module for a terraforming operation enroute MV-45... And, here we go, the battle cruiser Nikolai Stoiko. Nine hours from Rodina if they push it.

HICKS

What I wanna know is, what do we have in the area?

JACKSON

(another screen of data)

Not much. How about the Kansas City, Colonel Admin transport? We hit her with a mayday, she'll get here inside twenty hours.

HICKS

Then what?

ROSETTI

We abandon the station.

HICKS

Destroy the station, man! We got nukes?

ROSETTI

Outlawed under the Strategic Arms Reduction treaty.

JACKSON

We can fiddle the overrides on the fusion package. Baby nova.

BISHOP

We're dealing with a new form, Colonel. We know nothing of this new mode of reproduction. Others may have already become hosts...

ROSETTI

What are you suggesting?

BISHOP

In order to be entirely certain, Colonel, it would be necessary to override the fusion package now.

Jackson looks up at Bishop; he's suggesting mass suicide.

HICKS

I thought you were programmed to protect human life?

BISHOP

(with android blandness)

I'm taking the long view.

Jackson's console CHIMES, begins to display new data, ID shots of three crew members.

JACKSON

Missing persons.

(she taps her way through windows of data)

Two were members of the clean-up crew who did the lab after the blowout. Third doesn't check... No, wait. Lives with one of the first two.. But that makes a total of fifteen... Something's happening...

HICKS

Goddamn, Rosetti, it's catching!

ROSETTI

(ignores him)

Mayday Kansas City, Jackson.

HICKS

What about Sulaco?

SHUMAN

It would take two days to raise her.

HICKS

(bitterly)

With that shit on board.

ROSETTI

Gateway will have our warning before Sulaco arrives.

SHUMAN

Fine, Colonel. And who do you suppose will be willing to take it seriously? Weapons Division?

JACKSON

Hey, I'm getting something! The socialist space brothers speak at last...

Her main screen flickers and jumps; the speakers fill with a roar of STATIC --

JACKSON

(continuing)

Their transmission standards get worse all the --

She falls silent as the screen clears, revealing a young Slavic madwoman -- one of Suslov's lab assistants -- in blood-drenched coveralls. Jerky handheld video, grainy transmission, indistinct background. She clutches a sheet of paper, reads aloud from it in a foreign language.

SHUMAN

Get a translation program on line, Jackson!

Jackson's already punching. An instantaneous computer translation cuts in as V.O.; the girl's lips move, out of sync, like a cheap dub; the transmission is rendered in flat synthi-voice.

CLOSE UP ON SCREEN

SPOKESWOMAN

... of Progressive Peoples. Technician First Class, Tatjana Malik. Please, we wish to inform you: we have undertaken an experiment with genetic material obtained from the military transport vessel... We attempted to clone the xenomorph in stasis. Failure of the stasis system occurred in the fifteenth hour... Attempted modification of the genetic structure has resulted in a variant which replicates rapidly, more rapidly...

(and here, horribly,
she smiles)

It has... taken... most of us. Those of us who remain... We wish to warn you: you must terminate any experiment with the material now. It is impossible. It cannot be contained. There is no --

The image flickers, vanishes.

ANGLE

JACKSON

Lost 'em. That's it... Goddamnit, she was just a tech. Their brass didn't bother...

HICKS

No brass left...

JACKSON

And you better check this, Hicks.

Her other screens display assorted images of nearly identical tunnels and passageways, but three of them are black; she gestures to the dark screens.

JACKSON

(continuing)

This is down by the main air-scrubber. System says those cameras are still operational, but there's something in the way. Something big...

EXT. ANCHORPOINT -- ECO-MODULE

Huge louvers pivot smoothly, like Venetian blinds, revealing lush vegetation through thick plastic...

INT. ECO-MODULE

Spence sits cross-legged in Newt's meadow, tearfully hugging a small tame primate. Light crosses the meadow as the louvers open overhead, beyond the geodesics. Artificial dawn. BIRDS begins to sing. Quiet before the storm...

EXT. RODINA

No sign of movement.

Dimly lit. Clutter of spacesuits, machinery. The Vietnamese commando seated on the floor, back to the wall, cradling her gun. The corpse of her partner is sprawled on the deck beside her, face hideously burned, his armor fretworked with acid. Her face is blank, eyes straight ahead.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ANCHORPOINT

The station.

INT. ANCHORPOINT -- MEDLAB -- CORRIDOR

Hicks, still in his fighting gear, walking purposefully. MedLab staff in hospital whites dubiously note his passage.

INT. MED LAB -- RIPLEY'S ROOM

Ripley comatose, still hooked up to assorted biomonitors, the only movement in the room the restless flicker of a bank of colored diodes.

Hicks enters, crosses to the bed, seems about to speak, makes a helpless little gesture with his hands -- then yanks the biomonitors leads from the bedside console. The diodes go out; a buzzer begins to SOUND. The bed is mounted on casters. He starts to pull it out of the room. Stops. Looks up at Newt's map on the wall.

He rips the map from the wall and stuffs it into her hospital gown.

INT. MEDLAB -- CORRIDOR

Hicks hustles Ripley through MedLab, not about to stop for anyone; startled staff jump out of the way.

INT. ANCHORPOINT -- ANOTHER CORRIDOR -- ENTRANCE TO A LIFEBOAT

Signs and notices detailing lifeboat launch procedures. Hicks lifts Ripley from the bed, carries her through hatch into lifeboat. Places her in a hypersleep capsule, presses a button. The lid comes down. Silent moment as he looks down at her through the lid, his palm on the smooth plastic in a gesture of farewell, resignation. Then back through the hatch, where he activates controls that seal the boat, setting the launch-procedure in motion.

ANGLE on the blunt prows of the lifeboat receding around the curve of the station's hull.

INT. LIFEBOAT BAY

Hicks watching digital countdown. Muted WHUMP of explosive bolts --

EXT. LIFEBOAT

Flash of the bolts as Ripley's boat is launched into the sweep of night.

INT. LIFEBOAT BAY

Bishop enters behind Hicks.

BISHOP

But can you be certain she hasn't been infected?

HICKS

I'll take the chance.

BISHOP

Why?

HICKS

I owe her one.

INT. OPS ROOM

Jackson at her screens; display as before, the tunnels near the air-scrubber -- with three screens dark. CLOSEUP on one tunnel-view as an open, six-wheeled personnel carrier rolls past the video camera, Hick looking up. Five Marines in full battle dress ride with him: ALSOP, GREENFIELD, BRICE, COSTELLO, WALLACE.

JACKSON

Next junction, hang a right...

INT. TUNNEL

Dim; light spaced far apart along tunnel. The carrier takes a right.

JACKSON (V.O.)

Left at the fork and you wanna take it slow.
Fifty meters to whatever's in front of that
camera...

Hicks gestures to Wallace, the driver. The carrier halts. SOUND of the air-scrubbers from down the tunnel. The Marines shift their weapons, uneasily eye the tunnel ahead. These are young recruits, not the hard-case vets of "ALIENS."

HICKS

Now listen up. We don't do this by the book,
we don't pair off. Stay together, tight.
Greenfield up front with me; anything moves,
you torch it. The rest of you, if it moves,
kill it. You gotta get the fuckers before they
get close. You know about the acid; you know
they don't show on infrared. And you know you
don't let them take you alive. You might have
to do a friend a favor... Ready? Move out.

He climbs down from the carrier, heavily burdened with gear. The others follow. Greenfield has a flamethrower. They move forward. Toward the next light; beyond it, the tunnel curves out of sight.

JACKSON (V.O.)

You're right up on it, Hicks. Right around the
corner...

HICKS

Affirmative...

They round the turn, weapons ready. And stop, stunned.

GREENFIELD

Wha' 'th...?

The tunnel, which widens here as it approaches the massive air-scrubber, has been transformed; its lights are dimly visible through shrouds of resin. Vast ribs of the stuff sweep up from a dim and monstrous shape that covers the deck at the base of the scrubber; we're looking into an Alien grotto, black and pearlescent, and obscene fairyland. The shape's symmetry suggest function. Patient DRUMMING of the air-scrubber's giant fans.

HICKS

Scan it. Motion?

COSTELLO

(consulting tracker,
adjusting knob)

Negative.

HICKS

Alsop, gimme the flood...

Alsop passes Hicks a portable halogen-flood. Hicks thumbs it on...

WALLACE

Holy Christ.

The central shape is revealed as an enormous mutant queen. The thing is splayed on its back, mortared into the mass of resin, its vestigial head toward Hicks and the Marines. Its abdomen is arched like an inverted scorpion-tail, tipped with a swollen, semi-translucent sac that ripples and pulses in the glare of Hick's lamp. A biomechanical birth-factory.

HICKS

(passing the flood
to Brice)

Hold it... steady.

He kneels, unslings one of his gear cases, open it, revealing a squat tube.

HICKS

Moving. Something's moving...

Hicks is working on the tube-thing, snapping components into place.

Brice suddenly swings the beam away from the queen, revealing half a dozen new-model Aliens twisting out of recesses in the grotto walls...

INT. OPS ROOM

Jackson and Bishop hear SCREAMS and FIRING over the comm-link.

HICK (V.O.)

The light! The goddamn light! (garble)

The Aliens tear into the Marines like living chainsaws. Wallace and Costello go down immediately; the Aliens begin to drag them away. Hicks has gotten hold of the light, struggles to keep it on the queen as he props the tube against his thigh. SCREAMS. Blue stutter of pulse-rifles. A tongue of fire from Greenfield's flamethrower, but an Alien jumps him; the napalm-stream arcs wildly, splashing the resin structure -- and the Queen wakes. The huge tail extends, lifts in the floodlight beam...

Hicks is still trying to assemble his mortar.

As the swollen, podlike tail-tip splits open with a sickly, tearing SOUND, releasing a puffball cloud of dark mist -- we've seen it before, in miniature, with Tully in the lab -- which begins to rise, drawn up toward the giant fans above the air-scrubber...

INT. OPS ROOM

HICKS (V.O.)

Stop the fans!

Bishop is instantly on the case, leaning over Jackson's shoulder to punch the right button, but...

INT. SCRUBBER-TUNNEL

Too late. The cloud of spores is sucked into the fans -- as Hicks drop a shell into the mortar. It bucks against his thigh and the queen is blown to shred in an EXPLOSION that rips out the side of the scrubber.

HICKS

The vents! Seal the vents!

INT. OPS ROOM

Bishop's fingers fly as he punches another sequence.

INT. VENT

Straight down the pipe, a long way, to the whirling fans. Huge hermetic barriers SLAM across the vent in sequence -- one, two, three.

INT. SCRUBBER-TUNNEL

Hicks scramble to his feet.

HICKS

Out! Out of here! Now!

The Marine beside him begins to spasm and quake as the Change comes. Hicks SHOOTS him in the chest at close range and sprints for the carrier.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RODINA -- HUB

The Vietnamese commando nears the station's hub. The walls, in one large chamber, are decorated with official U.P.P. art, like a blend of Mexican Socialists agitprop murals and Syd Mead techo-fantasy. She passes evidence of brief violent struggle: a wall splashed with dried blood, a single shoe, smashed equipment, ragged acid-scars in the deck.

She looks like a child now, moving through all this, small and alone. But not helpless: she still moves with a cat's wariness, her gun ready.

Three face-huggers scuttle across at an intersection of corridors, tails thrashing...

She comes to a door that opens onto Rodina's central hub, a large cylindrical space surrounding a core of equipment. The door is ajar; she edges through...

Virtually the station's entire crew, perhaps a hundreds people, have been cocooned along the multi-storey column, a bas-relief of human bodies and glittering resin.

She stares from a railing, appalled, then slips through the door.

INT. ACHORPOINT -- OPS ROOM

Rosetti, Jackson, Bishop

JACKSON

I don't know what they did down there, but it's
screwed up internal comm-link for the whole
area; I can't raise 'em...

One of Jackson's consoles CHIMES; her central screen suddenly glows with a hi-rez simulation of Rodina.

JACKSON

(continuing)
Rodina's got company...

EXT. SPACE

Silent approach of the U.P.P. cruiser Nikolai Stoiko, a vicious-looking mile-long slab of armament. Stoiko slows, comes to an ominous halt.

INT. RODINA

The commando bolts down a corridor. Total desperation. She's lost her gun. A CRASH behind her. The beast's shrill RAGE. She throws herself through the first available door -- and sees the interceptor waiting. She scrambles up a ladder, through the hatch, and frantically begins to activate systems. Sirens begin to SOUND in the launch bay. The interceptor's hatch closes as the twin gates of the bay begin to swing open -- and the beast is on her, striking at the view-port in the hatch, inches from her face. She flips open a safety-override on the interceptor's joystick and thumbs a red button.

EXT. RODINA

Total overdrive: the interceptor BLASTS out through the half open gates in a fireball of exhaust gases, the beast and the service ladder tumbling after it...

EXT. SPACE -- STOIKO

Something streak from the bow of the cruiser...

INT. ANCHORPOINT -- OPS ROOM

Jackson huddled over her screen.

JACKSON

Missile!

EXT. SPACE -- RODINA -- INTERCEPTOR IN F.G.

The U.P.P. missile takes out the station. Whiteout of nuclear EXPLOSION; the interceptor is a black blot tumbling toward us like a singed leaf in a whirlwind...

INT. OPS ROOM

The simulation of Rodina on Jackson's screen is surrounded by an expanding blue sphere. The sphere stops expanding. The simulation blurs into digital static, fades as the sphere begins to contract...

JACKSON

Nuked 'em! Twenty megs! That coded transmission...

ROSETTI

Send Mayday.

JACKSON

I don't believe it! They send for help, their own people nuked 'em!

HICKS

(quietly)

Maybe they asked for it...

ROSETTI

That's an order, Jackson!

Bishop looks at Rosetti as though he's about to offer an opinion, but doesn't.

JACKSON

Maybe they'll nuke us too...

BISHOP

No. They're leaving...

EXT. SPACE -- STOIKO

The cruiser begins to move, accelerates, is gone.

INT. OPS ROOM

ROSETTI

Bastards!

JACKSON

Yeah. And they violated the fucking arms treaty, too, didn't they? Well, Colonel Rosetti, how about a situation update? We got, lessee, fifty-six missing crew members as of fifteen hundred hours...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE MALL

Deserted. The only SOUNDS are Muzak and the trickles of an artificial waterfall. Some signs of trouble: an overturned trash canister, someone's red nylon baseball cap on the polished concrete.

Walker strolls around a corner beside the bar with a pulse-rifle, grenades, and assorted gadgetry slung across his chest. Goes to the bar entrance, nudges the door open with the barrel of the rifle. Nobody there. Same soccer game on the big screen, but the sound is off. Silent cheering crowd rising to its feet, the flicker of the holo-game consoles. He glances around the mall, enters. Crosses to the bar, checks behind it, then fishes up a big plastic jug of liquor. Opens it, drink from the jug.

Behind him, a mug topples, CLATTERS on the floor. He slowly lowers the liquor to the counter; just as slowly, he turns. A beast is there, waiting, beyond the Glimmer of the holo-games.

Walker and the beast move simultaneously. But he doesn't go for his gun -- he grabs the control unit hanging on his chest.

An unmanned power-loader walks straight through the glass facade, plowing tables and chairs out of its way, big vise-grip claws extended. The Alien SCREAMS, leaps for it, but the steel claws close and grip.

Walker twiddles the controls; the power-loader responds, pinning the Alien against the wall. The Alien writhes and HISSES, striking furiously at the hydraulic arm. Walker tightens the grip, locks the loader in place. Picks up the jug of liquor and has another swallow.

WALLACE

Fuck you.

Beat. As his satisfied grin is replaced by something else. The Change...

INT. ECO-MODULE

Artificial dusk. Spence is crossing the mirco-meadow with a wire basket of food the module's population of small primates. Moths flutter through narrowing beams of sunlight as the louvers gradually close overhead. CRICKETS in the long grass.

She enters the scaled-down forest, ducking branches, and Spanish moss. Begins to make Tk-tk-tk sound, calling the lemur, the monkeys...

And stops. Suddenly aware of a stillness, an absolute silence. Even the crickets...

She turns -- gasps. The primates have been cocooned in the branches of a tree. And screams as something pounces on her from above, the transformed lemur: a very small Alien. She bats the thing away with the strength of desperation. It hits the ground HISSING; she hurls the basket of food at it and bolts from the forest, sobbing.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. A TUNNEL

WHINE of an approaching engine. The six-wheeled carrier come INTO VIEW, Hicks driving, alone. His face is fixed, white. The carrier slews against the tunnel wall, strikes sparks, bounces off. He hardly seems to notice. He plows into a row of big plastic crates, tumbling them like a child's blocks, bringing the vehicle to a halt. Beat. He look up from the controls: the doors of a freight elevator.

INT. A CORRIDOR OFF THE MALL

Automatic CHIME as elevator doors open, revealing Hicks and his gun.

INT. THE MALL

Hicks warily crosses the Mall. SOUND of perpetual Muzak. He eyes the wreckage of the bar, but keeps moving. Into stuttering neon light from one of the shops. HISS and CRACKLE of bad wiring. He move toward the shop, gun ready.

INT. SHOP

Hicks enters, surveys the wreckage of display cases, scattered 21st century consumer toys.

He finds five cocoons at the read of the shop.

INT. THE MALL

LONG on the shop. Beat. SOUND of five rounds from the pulse-rifle. With the last shot, the neon flicker dies. Muzak stops.

Hicks emerges, continues across the Mall.

Arrives at the elevator-like entrance to the mini-subway, punches in his destination ("OPS" lights up in red). Muffled SOUND of the breaking car; the door HISSES open -- on Spence, both hands white-knuckled on the loop of a hanger-strap, the car an abattoir, red with the blood of Transformation. Shredded clothing and rags of flesh.

HICKS

Spence...

She screams.

INT. OPS ROOM

Rosetti and Jackson are hunched over the screens as Hicks enters with Spence over his shoulder, brushing past two nervous Marines at the door. Bishop is making calculations on a console in the b.g. Hicks eases Spence down into a chair.

JACKSON

Revised ETA fro the Kansas City's another
thirteen hours...

HICKS

(yanking Rosetti around
in his chair)

Things don't look so shit hot out there right
now, Rosetti. What about rigging the fusion
package?

ROSETTI

(to Jackson; ignoring Hicks)
Sound the general alert, routine lifeboat
drill...

HICKS

A general fucking alert? Lifeboat drill? Who
the hell you think's gonna be left to pick up?
I say we do the fusion package now!

JACKSON

(wearily; without looking
up from her screen)

Hicks, you took out the scrubber, the main air-
scrubber. Pretty soon there isn't going to be
anything to breathe in here. We'd by okay for
about five days, except you also started an
electrical fire and we got no way to put it out.

The crew's down to one-twenty-eight.

HICKS

(stunned)
More than half...?

JACKSON

That's what I said.

HICKS

And you haven't rigged the place to blow?

JACKSON

(glances at Rosetti)
No.

ROSETTI

(as if noticing him
for the first time)
You'll lead the group from this sector, Hicks.
At the alert, they'll gather at blue assembly
points. Proceed to the nearest lifeboat bay...

BISHOP

(approaching Rosetti with a
single sheet of printout)
Colonel, my analysis indicates that a minimum
of one fifth of the one hundred and twenty-
eight remaining crew are already incubating
the --

ROSETTI

(on the edge of hysteria)
Listen to me, you motherless zombie! Those are
people! Can't you understand that? And we're
going to get them out!

BISHOP

Yes, Colonel, I...

ROSETTI

(to Hicks)
You have your orders!

HICKS

I don't leave here until Jackson sets it to blow,
Rosetti. Got that? Kansas City shows up, maybe
there's nobody left for them to pick up. Then
what? They'll send a boarding party in here!

JACKSON

I can't. The fusion package is under the
scrubber, Hicks. You trashed the wiring, man.
That's where the fire is. Those lines. I can't
link through. I can't set it.

BISHOP

I'll go; I'll get it manually.

HICKS

I'll go with you.

BISHOP

No. Assist with the...
(glances down at the figures
on the sheet of printout)
The evacuation.

JACKSON

(to Rosetti)
You just want to get your own ass out of here,
don't you? They couldn't have done this without
you approval, could they?

SPENCE

Hick!

As one of the Marine guards stumbles forward, dropping his weapon, hands
upraised in claws of agony --

MARINE

Please, I...

He trips, fall across Jackson's console and the barrel of Hick's gun -- as
half a dozen New Model Chest-bursters erupt simultaneously from his torso in
a spray of blood. Hicks bellow, jumps back, grabbing Spence.

The chest bursters tumble from the body of the dead Marine, scuttle into the
shadows; one leaves a trail of small bloody prints across Jackson's keyboard.

HICKS

Out! Out of here!

INT. CORRIDOR

Hicks, Spence, Bishop, Rosetti, Jackson, and the remaining Marine guard hustle
along, Hicks and Bishop bringing up the rear. Rosetti carries the dead
Marine's pulse-rifle. Bishop touches Hick's shoulder as they reach the
intersection.

BISHOP

I'll try to give you an hour. Overload at
twenty-two hundred.

HICKS

(quietly; doesn't want
the others to hear)
Blow it. That's what matters.

EXTREME CLOSEUP on Hick's watch as her set the alarm for 2200 hours.

BISHOP

Yes.

Bishop splits off, down another corridor, running.

INT. LIFEBOAT ASSEMBLY POINT

Another intersection of corridors. A pathetic remnant of Anchorpoint's crew
cluster beneath a flashing blue light. A dozen people, including HALLIDAY,
a woman Spence's age; TATSUMI (male Japanese); a LAB TECH (male).

ROSETTI

Where are the others? There should be thirty

people here...

HALLIDAY

(dazed and confused)

I can't find Tom. What is it? What's going on?
He was just here. I mean there. But then...

JACKSON

Forget it, he's probably already on the boat.
You know him, right? C'mon, we're getting out
of here ourselves...

Hicks pulls a service automatic from his vest and slips it to Jackson.

HICKS

(under his breath)

Keep an eye on everybody, okay, Ops?

JACKSON

(to the others)

Okay! You all know the Goddamn drill! Done it
often enough, right? We're taking A-52 to Blue
Concourse. We stick together. We'll meet up
with two others groups at Bay Five and proceed
to board...

TATSUMI

What is happening, please?

JACKSON

What's happening is we're getting on the boats!
Move!

INT. THE MALL

Dense haze of smoke from burning insulation; half the lights are out. A body floats face down in the pool at the foot of the waterfall; the pool is overflowing, splashing on polished concrete. Bishop emerges from a doorway and hurries along toward the freight elevator. He freezes. Hears something else. Moves quietly in the direction of the SOUND. The bar. He peers into the wreckage. Four Aliens are at work, cocooning their prey. Cocooned bodies -- CLOSE on the face of Shuman -- have been glued to the big screen, where silent images of the soccer game repeat endlessly. Bishop stares, then turns -- looks up.

A Queen. The thing towers above him in the Mall, utterly still.

Beat.

He takes a step backward. Another.

The Queen's head sways.

Another step. He bolts for the elevator.

The Queen screams her rage, scrambles after him like a famished mantis.

He's reached the elevator -- stabs desperately at the controls -- as the doors open and he's through, punching more buttons -- as the Queen strikes, her first blow buckling the steel doors.

INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR

Her huge stinger lashes in through the gap, whipping and slicing, Bishop braced up straight in a corner, hand still on the controls. The elevator GROANS, SHUDDERS, begins to descend, then jams in the shaft. The stinger whips back out. SOUND of rending metal as the Queen continues her attack.

INT. A CORRIDOR AT BULKHEAD HATCH

Jackson ducks through first, still wearing her Ops cap. Rosetti next, then Spence, helping Halliday; the others follow, Hicks bringing up the rear. Hicks pauses, looks back through the hatch. Hears a distant CRASH, an inhuman cry. Takes a small bat of plastic explosive from his vest and squashes it against the edge of the bulkhead. Pulls a grenade from his harness, twists its neck in the delay-detonate combination, sticks in into the plastique, closes the hatch, and runs.

The smoke is getting worse.

INT. BLUE CONOURSE

Another of the white-tiled traffic-tunnels, this one identified by a wide band of blue along either side. A small vehicle has overturned, amid blood and torn clothing. Jackson and her party are skirting the wreck as Hicks catches up with them. Jackson whirls at the SOUND of running feet, bringing up the pistol.

HICKS

Easy, Jackson!

JACKSON

Where y'been?

A distant EXPLOSION shakes the tunnel, jarring loose several tiles.

HICKS

(low, so the others
won't hear)

They're following us. Left 'em something to
slow 'em down.

JACKSON

Might as well. Just try not to put a hole in
the hull, okay?

(coughs)

Remember the air-scrubber...

HICKS

Let's move.

INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR

Bishop on his knees, running his hands delicately over the ribbed plastic flooring. The Queen HISSES, BASHES the door. He finds a seam, levers up with his nails, gets a grip. Pulls. Sense of his android strength as the flooring comes up on pale streamers of super-glue. The elevator shakes with the Queen's fury. He finds a section of the floor that can be removed. Forces the glue-caked catches. Slams down with the heel of his hand -- the panel falls away, tumbling through smoke toward a point of fire-glow at the shaft's distant foot.

INT. SHAFT

Bishop lowers himself through the opening, dangles. An emergency service-ladder is recessed in one wall. He tries to reach one of the rungs with his foot, but the toe of his boot slips. Too far. He begins to swing back and forth like a gymnast, building momentum -- and lets go. Falls six feet before he manages to get a grip.

He begins to descend the ladder. It's a long way down.

INT. BLUE CONSOURCE

The lifeboat party emerges, coughing, from a wall of acrid smoke.

REACTION SHOT

dismay and amazement.

The tunnel has been sealed with a plug of Alien resin. Human bones, weapons, and Marine helmets protrude from the biomech convolutions of the resin-wall. Another of the six-wheeled military vehicles carriers is skewed across the tunnel in a pool of blood.

ROSETTI

It doesn't want us to get out...

HICKS

Bugs. Just fucking bugs... C'mon.
(he climbs into the driver's
seat of the carrier)
We're taking the bus. Which way, Ops?

JACKSON

(getting in beside him)
Way we came, unless you think of something
better.

HALLIDAY

What's he mean, "bugs"? What is that thing?
(pointing at the resin-plug)
Where's Tom? Where's Tom?

SPENCE

(taking her arm; leading
her to the carrier)
It'll be okay. Here, get up... There was an
experiment. It got out of control. We have
to go...

TATSUMI

What kind of experiment?

HICKS

(throwing the carrier into
gear; cutting off their
questions)
Come on!

INT. BLUE CONCOURSE

TRACKING on carrier, CLOSE on Hicks and Jackson. She takes a flat gadget from her jacket and flips it open; a miniature computer-map on anchorpoint, like a pocket video game.

As she wiggles a tiny joystick, EXTREME CLOSEUP on miniature color screen; she's looking for an alternate route to the lifeboats.

JACKSON

(still studying the map)

Left at B-83. We'll cut through Aquaculture, up to level to Aeroponics. We can get into Residential from there, then it's up a service tunnel behind the central mainframe...

HICKS

Sounds complicated.

JACKSON

Quickest way.

Flips the map shut. Spence is trying to comfort Halliday.

INT. AQUACULTURE FARM

An automated fish farm; factory space ranged with dozens of waist-high round white vats of dark green water. Low ceiling, dim light. Sweeps rotate slowly across the water in some vats; others are still, with floating green vegetation.

Hicks leads the party along a narrow aisle between the vats. Jackson pauses to check her map and watch; Hicks light a cigarette, leans his elbow against the nearest vat.

JACKSON

We're doing okay...

The surface of the water behind Hicks' elbow erupts as the fish go into a feed frenzy. He yelps and jumps back, dropping his cigarette.

SPENCE

Bass. They're just hungry... Ready to be harvested.

HICKS

Sure. Let's get out of here, okay?

The others follow, keeping their distance from the vats.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT

Bishop jumps down, dodges a dangling power cable, squints through the smoke. Finds a manual emergency level that opens the shaft's door.

INT. TUNNEL

A blast of air fans the flames behind him as he steps out. The carrier is there, among the scattered crates, where Hicks left it. Bishop climbs in, tries the power. A feeble whine. Touches another button. The dash flashes "BATTERY RECHARGE." He climbs down and sets off along the tunnel at a jog.

INT. AEROPONICS FARM

State of the art. Epcot-style soilless cultivation. Tall A-frame structures of white styrofoam are studded with hundreds of precisely spaced plants, their roots watered by periodic bursts of high-pressure mist. Vegetables sprout from the sides of tapering styrofoam columns. All of the wreathed in mist

under brilliant halogen lamps.

Hicks scans the chamber, gun ready, as the party emerges from a hatch in the white deck behind him. Spence has to help Halliday, whose cheeks are streaked with tears. Rosetti's up last, clutching his pulse-rifle a bit too tightly, eyes darting around the chamber.

HICKS

Keep the safety on, Colonel. You could hurt somebody.

He kneels beside the hatch, takes plastique and a grenade from his harness, and slaps together another bomb.

ROSETTI

What are you doing?

HICKS

They may be following us.

He closes the hatch over the charge and locks it. Halliday starts to weep hysterically in Spence's arms; goes to her knees, she tries to curl into a fetal position on the white deck, shuddering, crying like a child. Rosetti rushes over as Spence is trying to get her to her feet.

ROSETTI

They'll hear you!

Rosetti slaps Halliday's face, hard; eliciting a piercing scream. Spence -- no hesitation -- punches him solidly in the face; his head snaps back and he's down, reaching for his rifle.

Tableau: Spence furious, ready to kick ass; Halliday wide-eyed, stunned into silence by Spence's move; Rosetti with blood on his mouth and his hand on his gun.

JACKSON

(to Rosetti; cocking
her gun)

Try it.

Hicks breaks the spell:

HICKS

(drill sergeant bellow)
Two minute fuse! Hall ass people!

The Lab Tech grabs Halliday, throws her over his shoulder, and runs. The others scramble after him, including Rosetti, whose drive to self-preservation is paramount. Hicks and Spence take up the rear.

Hicks shoots her a grin as they run.

LONG SHOT down the aisle of aeroponic greenery, high-tech Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the lifeboat party approaching. Behind them, the hatch lifts off its hinges with the EXPLOSION, CRASHES back in a tangle of metal. Several of the party are thrown to the deck.

JACKSON

(quietly; urgently; as the
others pick themselves up)

Hicks!

HICKS

Yeah?

JACKSON

Look...

She points down another aisle of aeroponic structures.

JACKSON

(continuing)

What the hell's that?

Two of the Styrofoam structures have been overgrown with a grayish parody of vegetation, glistening vine-like structures and bulbous sacs the echo the Alien biomech motif. Patches of thick black mold spread to the styrofoam and the white deck.

HICKS

It was... cabbages or something...

TATSUMI

(with the others)

Come, please, Jackson! Which way?

JACKSON

(gripping Hicks' arm;
pulling him along)

Spence said it did her monkeys, too...

(raising her voice)

Third door to the right!

INT. TUNNEL NEAR FUSION PACKAGE

Bishop comes loping down the tunnel, a certain effortless regularity evident in his run. Makes a turn into the chamber that houses the fusion package, Anchorpoint's power source. The chamber is spotless, well lit; the only sign of the current disaster is the smoke. The fusion package itself is no bigger than a Volkswagen bus, but it's obviously Anchorpoint's heart. Bishop climbs a narrow metal stairway to an overhanging control booth resembling the inverted turrent of a streamlined tank. A mirrored disk is mounted on the face of the armored hatch, above a small slot.

SECURITY PROGRAM (V.O.)

(bland feminine synthi-voice)

Please identify yourself.

Bishop removes his dogtags. As he inserts one in the slot, he presses the palm on his other hand against the mirrored surface.

BISHOP

Bishop, Science Officer, Hyperdyne A-slash-5,
Mark 3, serial number PL3358172438. Permission
to inspect software safety protocols.

SECURITY PROGRAM (V.O.)

Permission denied. Inadequate rank. Please
refer request to your immediate supervisor.

The slot tries to reject his tag. He shove it back in.

BISHOP

Emergency protocols. Code Theta Five Three.
Authority Rosetti comma Shuman.

SECURITY PROGRAM (V.O.)
Permission denied. Inadequate rank. Please
refer request to your immediate supervisor.

It ejects his tag. He drops his hand from the disk, stares at his reflection
in the mirrored surface. Blinks. Re-inserts dog tags, palm on disk again.

BISHOP
Emergency protocols. Code Theta Five Three.
Authority Welles comma Fox.

The door HISSES open instantly. He climbs in.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH

Surgically clean, unused -- Jackson ordinarily runs the show from Operations.
Bishop settles into the operator's chair, facing three blank monitors.

BISHOP
Protocols, safety.

The central screen displays an elaborate menu.

BISHOP
(continuing)
Overload failsafes.

The left screen displays a shorter menu.

BISHOP
(continuing)
Bypass overload failsafes.

A red light begins to flash.

SECURITY PROGRAM (V.O.)
Permission denied. Inadequate rank. Please
refer --

BISHOP
Cancel request. Request display overload
failsafe software.

SECURITY PROGRAM (V.O.)
Permission denied. Inadequate rank. Please
refer --

BISHOP
Authority Welles comma Fox --

The right screen displays an animated diagram, thousands of interweaving lines
and symbols, moving ceaselessly, hypnotically. Bishop studies the screen with
Zen calm, his hands poised like a pianist's above the keyboard.

And makes his move, a cybernetic reprise of the knife sequence that introduced
him in "ALIENS." His fingers blur across the board with inhuman speed and
accuracy as he races the fusion softwares's security system.

The lines on the screen squirm and shift, A "window" begins to open...

Faster.

Done.

Bishop gazes at the screen with might be the android equivalent of postcoital satisfaction, eyes bright. The screen displays a message:

"OVERLOAD OPTION RESET"

He beings to reprogram the overload options.

INT. RESIDENTIAL (MARRIED CREW QUARTERS)

A maze of walls, doors (most of them open). Lights are on, but the smoke is thicker. Coughing, choking, Jackson shoves past the others into a large communal kitchen. On an electric range, smoke pours from a pot. She grabs an extinguisher and blasts the pot's blackened contents, turns off the element. Smoke abates slightly.

The quarters have an eerie Marie Celeste quality: food and drink on the table, a pack of cigarettes beside an ashtray. Spence pockets the cigarettes as she passes; Hicks opens a large white thermos: steam. He sloshes coffee into a cup and drinks.

In the next room, a communal lounge, Spence leads Halliday to a couch and sinks down beside her, head in hands. Rosetti leans against an entertainment console, face blank, gingerly rubbing his split lip.

SPENCE

(head down)

It's funny, but I had to win a contest to go through this. A science fair in Omaha, first in biology for all of Nebraska. Monoclonal antibodies...

(she looks up at Rosetti)

Then I got into Cornell. Another contest. It wasn't easy, getting out here. We all must've wanted it so bad, a whole generation, or anyway the ones like me.

ROSETTI

(looks at her wearily)

Idealists.

SPENCE

Yeah. I guess so. Build a new world, find ways to live in it... But it wasn't supposed to be like this. And it might've worked. It almost did. Now look at it. Ending...

She sits up and hugs Halliday, whose eyes are shut tight.

SPENCE

(continuing)

What I want to know, mister, is why we had to bring you?

ROSETTI

(massages his temples, then
looks at her levelly)

Funding.

SPENCE

Yeah. I guess you're right. You paid for it,
I guess you get to fuck it up.

HICKS

(tossing her an apple)
C'mon, time to move. Get her up?

SPENCE

Sure.

She gets Halliday unsteadily to her feet.

They move out in a tight group, Jackson leading, Hicks taking up the rear,
Spence biting resolutely into her apple.

ANGLE THROUGH A DOORWAY -- REACTION SHOT

as Halliday's eyes fill with a new and deep horror.

ANGLE -- THE ROOM

is a preschool, a cr_che, scattered with toys, the walls tapes with children's
paintings.

HALLIDAY

O God...

Spence and the Lab Tech hurry her on, out of the cr_che. Halliday snatches a
ragdoll from a shelf as they pass...

INT. TUNNEL AWAY FROM FUSION PACKAGE

Bishop heads for the elevator shaft at his usual steady pace. Approaches the
open doors cautiously. Listens. Nothing. He edges in. Empty. The circuit
fire has died down; melted insulation still SPUTTERS. He looks up the shaft.
A long climb. He can make out the bottom of the elevator. He reaches up,
grabs a rung, sets his left boot on another, straightens up -- and drives the
jagged and of his broken knee joint through the side of his leg and the fabric
of his fatigues in a gout of milky android blood. Hits the floor hard, the
broken leg splayed at the hideous angle, the white fluid a widening pool.

Struggles to brace his shoulders against the wall. And reaches out to touch
the ragged edge of artificial bone.

BISHOP

(a scientific observation)
Polycarbon...

INT. ENTRANCE TO FOOT OF MAINFRAME SERVICE SHAFT

leaving residential. Hicks and Jackson chivvy the party through a low, floor-
level service hatch.

INT. SERVICE SHAFT

Party's POV, looking up: ladders, platforms, catwalks, bundles of fiberoptic
lines linking the components of Achorpoint's computer mainframe, drifting
smoke. The bundles loops of fiberoptics have a faint, pearlescent glow.
Hicks, as usual is last up the ladder.

INT. LADDERS IN SERVICE SHAFT -- VARIOUS ANGLES

The party, climbing. Halliday still has the ragdoll. Hicks up last.

INT. PLATFORM IN SERVICE SHAFT

The Marine guard from Ops emerges through a narrow opening, Spence and Halliday follow -- and an Alien strikes from the shadows, ripping out his throat. Spence drives for his rifle as it skids across the platform. Screams from the ladder below. The gun slips through her fingers, over the edge -- gone. Halliday cringes in a corner, cradling the ragdoll in her arms, as the Alien butchers the dead Marine, slashing the corpse to ribbons with its tail. It HISSES, turns its head. Spence freezes.

INT. LADDER IN SERVICE SHAFT

Hicks is desperately trying to fight his way past the others, climbing over them --

INT. PLATFORM IN SERVICE SHAFT

Spence snatches a drum of cable from a service cart and hurls it at the Alien, distracting it from Halliday.

The beast springs toward Spence, but she's already scrambling out along a fragile-looking catwalk that quakes with her passage. The Alien pursues her into the forest of cables with a hideous agility. Hicks clambers up through the opening, too late. Spence and the Alien are out of sight.

INT. FIBEROPTIC FOREST

Spence flattened against the mainframe, heart thumping, terrified. Takes a breath, look out between two glowing trunks of cable. Sees the Alien's back, fifteen feet away. She bites her lip and slips out, runs. It SCREECHES behind her. She blunders into another wall. A ladder. Up the rungs, fast. Into a short narrow space lit by a single blue emergency light. No way out. She moves forward, hands sliding over a jumble of containers. SOUND of the beast swarming up the ladder. She's below the blue bulb now, looks down at her hand on a flat plastic case stenciled "COLONIAL TRANS AP-49 FLARE SIGNAL OXY-ATMOSPHERIC 20MM." She tears at the catches --

The beast is almost on her.

She turns, bringing up the huge flare-pistol, and FIRES. The beast is blown backwards, off its feet, the igniting magnesium flare a white-hot chemical star burning in its guts as it flips back over the edge.

INT. PLATFORM IN SERVICE SHAFT

Hicks and the Lab Three see the burning Alien's fall as a weird pulse of light through the translucent cables.

LAB TECH

What -- ?

HICKS

(yells)

Spence! Yo! Spence!

Hicks crosses the catwalk, followed by the Lab Tech.

Halliday stares after them over the head of her ragdoll.

INT. PLATFORM IN SERVICE SHAFT

The others have climbed up now. They watch Hicks, the Lab Tech, and Spence recross the catwalk. Spence has the flare-pistol around her neck on a lanyard.

JACKSON

(checks her watch)

Okay, people! Gotta move it now. Start climbing!

HICKS

Halliday!

She rushes to the spot where we last saw Halliday. The ragdoll lies on the deck. Spence grabs it up, flings it instantly away at the touch of slime.

SPENCE

(screaming)

No! No!

Hicks pulls an olive-drab aerosol unit from his medical pack and drenches her hand with spray.

HICKS

Jackson's right. We gotta move.

Rosetti is already starting up the ladder.

INT. ELEVATOR SHAFT

Bishop, climbing. He has his web belt cinched tight around his left thigh. The splintered bone is out of sight; the leg of his fatigues, below the belt, is soaked with fluid. He uses his arms and right leg to climb, the left leg swaying free -- grotesquely, in too many directions, like the limb of a broken puppet.

He shows signs of stress. The right knee might break at the next rung... He places it carefully, taking up most of his weight on his arms.

He checks his watch.

EXTREME CLOSEUP: 2140 HOURS.

BISHOP'S POV -- UP THE SHAFT

It looks like forever.

INT. SERVICE SHAFT

Jackson uses a pistol-grip power-driver to unscrew a ventilator grill. Hicks shines his light into the opening, then crawls in. Jackson follows, then Rosetti...

INT. DUCT

Hands and knees, single file and barely room for that. Hicks has his flashlight clipped bayonet-style to his rifle. Jackson behind him, her cap reversed.

HICKS

How we doin'?

Jackson stops crawling; flips open her map, her features visible in the glow

of the tiny screen.

JACKSON

Looks like another ten meters. Then we're into K-58-A and straight to the boat bays.

ROSETTI (V.O.)

(hollow echo)

Move! Hurry!

HICKS

Yes, sir.

They move forward.

INT. CORRIDOR -- DUCT EXIT

Hicks and Jackson prepare to pull the others one at a time from the waist-high opening. It's evident that the duct, at this point, slants sharply down from the opening; it's round and smooth and difficult to climb.

INT. DUCT

From below, members of the party wedge their way up with knees and elbows.

INT. CORRIDOR -- DUCT EXIT

Hicks and Jackson pull Rosetti from the duct, both his hands locked around his pulse-rifle; then the Lab Tech; then Spence; they reach the Tatsumi...

SCREAMS and frenzied BANGING from the duct. Tatsumi's eyes pop wide open and he screams. Hicks braces his boot against the wall and hauls him out -- with the jaws of a freshly-transformed new beast locked on his leg. Hicks whirls his rifle like an axe, the butt slamming into the thing's head. It HISSES and twists back into the duct.

INT. DUCT -- POV OF THE TRAPPED FIVE

as the beast slides toward them down smooth steel.

INT. CORRIDOR -- DUCT EXIT

Rosetti thrusts the barrel out of his pulse-rifle past Hicks, into the duct, and FIRES on full auto, emptying his magazine. Jackson drives for the gun as Hicks snaps him off his feet with a roundhouse punch. The back of Rosetti's head slams against the opposite wall and he slides to the deck.

Jackson's on him before he can recover, practically jamming the muzzle of the pulse-rifle down his throat.

JACKSON

Y'know, always been part of me wanted to kill one of you motherfuckers...

Rosetti looks up at her.

ROSETTI

Go ahead.

Very quiet. No sound at all from the duct. Tatsumi whimpers between clenched teeth as a wisp of acid smoke rises from his torn trouser leg. Hicks shines his light down into the duct.

HICKS

Oh man... Forget it, Jackson. Anyway, it's empty.

He tosses her a fresh magazine.

SPENCE

Hicks! The light!

She and the Lab Tech are crouching beside Tatsumi, slitting his pantleg with a knife, exposing the wound.

SPENCE

(continuing)

Watch out, it's on the cloth...

The Lab Tech yelps as a droplet of acid touches his hand. Hicks unclips his light and passes it to Spence.

SPENCE

(continuing)

On my God...

The Alien has taken a bite the size of a small grapefruit out of Tatsumi's calf; flesh and muscle are blackened, charred by the acid.

HICKS

(unclipping a flat plastic
kit from his harness)

What's his name?

JACKSON

Tatsumi...

HICKS

Cocktail for ya, Tatsumi.

He opens the kit, takes out a gun-shaped hypo with a pressure tank.

HICKS

(continuing)

Can't get this on the Ginza, fella. Six times stronger than heroin, about eight other things in there to keep you up an' rockin'...

He jabs the needle through Tatsumi's pantleg; the unit HISSES.

HICKS

(continuing)

Get a Marine a year in the brig, playin' R&R with one of these...

Tatsumi moan softly as the shot hits him. Very clearly, in Japanese, he asks if it's time to go back on duty.

LAB TECH

Wha'd he say?

SPENCE

I don't know...

HICKS

We'll have to carry him.
(passes Spence a sterile
dressing pack from his
harness)
Think you can get a dressing on that? Not
bleeding much. Like it's cauterized.
(to Rosetti)
Get up, we're moving.
(to Jackson)
Think you better hang on to the Colonel's rifle.

INT. MALL -- ENTERANCE TO FREIGHT ELEVATOR

The doors look as though someone's gone after them with a giant can opener; they're ragged, gaping. Bishop's hands suddenly appear in the opening in the floor, grip the edge; he hauls himself up, arms quivering with strain. Last thing through is the useless leg; he has to pull it up with both hands.

He looks anxiously out into the mall. Nothing moving, no Aliens in sight. The queen's attack has torn loose a strip of alloy trim. Bishop bends it double for strength and begins to work it beneath the belt around his thigh, still keeping an eye on the mall.

INT. CORRIDOR TO ASSEMBLY POINT -- LIFEBOAT BAY

Hicks and Jackson slogging along, dragging Tatsumi between them, Spence with the flare pistol, then Rosetti and the Lab Tech. Smoke hangs in strata. Spence coughs. They're all feeling Anchorpoint's fire-depleted oxygen-level. Tatsumi looks terrible: flushed, eyes glazed, but he's feeling no pain. He weakly attempts to sing a snatch of a Japanese pop song. CLOSEUP on his bandaged leg leaving a trail of yellow drops...

LAB TECH

That's right, man. Not long now.

HICKS

Hey, Jackson -- Goddamn, you were right.

He's pointing his pulse-rifle at a plastic sign mounted on the corridor wall:

LIFEBOAT BAY 20 METERS

JACKSON

(grins)

Sure. Hadda map, didn't I?

They round a corner. Ahead is one of the blue lights and another sign:

LIFEBOAT LAUNCH ASSEMBLY POINT

SPENCE

The others groups... Where's everybody else?

HICKS

Hell, they coulda launched already...

JACKSON

No.

She's looking at a wall panel with LEDs that indicate launch status of the lifeboats.

JACKSON

(continuing)

The boats are all here.

LAB TECH

Then nobody else made it...

Rosetti ignores them, keeps walking.

JACKSON

(looking after Rosetti)

I shoulda greased him.

HICKS

Shit. What's the point?

JACKSON

The point? The point's he let 'em run their fucking experiments! He coulda stopped 'em! But he didn't! You tried, man, you and Bishop... He let 'em do it!

HICKS

Shit no. He's just brass. He's just like you an' me, to the people who brought this down. Wouldn't do any good to grease them either.

JACKSON

Bullshit! What not?

HICKS

Because what you wanna grease is the company...

Rosetti breaks into a stumbling run as he nears the portal at the end of the corridor, the entrance to the lifeboat bays.

CLOSEUP -- ROSETTI

frantically punching a combination. Wants that door to open. Gets it: slides back smooth as silk, revealing a brightly lit room filled with pristine space gear and an indeterminate number of Aliens, their appendages tangled black and shiny as a fresh catch of eels.

ROSETTI

No! Goddamn it! No!

ANGLE

The Aliens stir as he throws himself back down the corridor toward the others. Hicks drops Tatsumi, who sags into Jackson's arms, and raises his rifle. FIRES a bolt past Rosetti, into the heart of the mass. Rosetti claws his way by as Spence lets loose with the flare-pistol. All the ammo she has but it's a big red distress flare straight through the portal; it bursts, crimson lightning, scattering the Aliens. Now everyone is backing down the corridor, the way they came, Jackson burdened with Tatsumi. Rosetti fumbles with the combination on another door. Hicks is SHOOTING as he retreats. Aliens come darting out past the dying cherry brilliance of the flare, SCREAMING down the corridor... The second door open for Rosetti -- he's through, the second Lab Tech on his heels.

INT. AN OFFICE

Dark -- only light from the corridor, even less are Rosetti immediately tries to slam and lock the door in Spence's face -- but the Lab Tech yanks him out of the way. The others tumble in, Jackson with Tatsumi in a fireman's carry. Hicks kicks the door shut and locks it -- as something SLAMS into it, hard. Jackson lowers Tatsumi to the carpeted floor.

Hicks CLICKS the light on. Swings the muzzle of his gun around the room, circle of light jumping from one thing to the next. An office, larger than Rosetti's. 21st-century stylistics and a basic bureaucratic banality: fake teak, imitation leather. Framed portraits of beaming Weyland Yutani bigshots. Spence brushes a square object of a shelf -- the base of a small hologram-projector. A glowing DNA helix springs up.

HICKS

Don't touch anything...

LAB TECH

(to Jackson, pointing
at Rosetti)

He tried to lock the door, lock us out...

JACKSON

(pulling the automatic
from her jacket)

Rosetti...

HICKS

Forget it. That's what he wants. You really
wanna do 'im the favor?

JACKSON

Waddya mean it's what he wants?

HICKS

I've seen it before. In combat.

Rosetti backs away from them.

SPENCE (V.O.)

Hick, come here... I think it's Trent...

He finds her around the corner of a padded partition that screens a desk-console from the rest of the room. His light finds the lab-coated corpse sprawled in the chair behind the desk, a quarter of its skull blown away, dried blood spattered across the bulkhead, a service automatic locked in rigid fingers.

HICKS

(shrugs)

Did himself. Hey, Rosetti! C'mere!

Rosetti looks around the edge of the partition, sees Trent.

HICKS

(continuing)

That's it, man. That's what it looks like.
You don't chill out quick, somebody'll do the
same for you.

ROSETTI

(stares at the corpse)

Brilliant man. Company man. Very... ambitious.

Hicks takes the light off the corpse, plays it around the cubicle. A shredder, empty file folders, a bulging plastic sack of shredded documents.

HICKS

Yeah...

Hicks swings the light across the wall behind Trent's desk.

SPENCE

The wall, Hicks!

She's spooked him; the safety's off the pulse-rifle. But there's nothing on the wall, only framed diplomas, and between them a few stenciled letters...

SPENCE

(continuing)

Jesus Christ! It's a lock, Hicks! Airlock!

She clambers over the desk console, shoves the corpse out the way, and tears the diplomas from the wall, revealing the outline of a hatch and the stenciled notice:

EMERGENCY AIRLOCK - EXIT TO HULL-SECTOR 308

A CRASH from the corridor as Alien hurls itself against the door.

SPENCE

(continuing)

It's a chance! The only chance we've got! We get out on the hull, cross to the boats. We can try to get into one that way, from outside...

Hicks looks down at his watch. 2146 HOURS. If Bishop's managed to set the fusion package to blow at 2200 hours -- they don't have a hope in hell.

But why spoil it for Spence?

HICKS

Let's go for it.

Spence hauls on the red airline-style inset handle of the emergency airlock. The handle flips down and the hatch pivots smoothly open, a light inside goes on, and the eternal synthi-voice announces:

ANNOUNCEMENT

This is a five-man emergency atmosphere lock, exit to Hull Sector Three-oh-eight, equipped with five Mark Twelve emergency suits. Each Mark Twelve suit is charged with a two-hour air supply and is equipped with automatic radar beacon, inter-suit radio, and magnetic sole plates. If you should experience difficulty with either the O-rings of the velcro strips, please activate the secondary program for additional advice.

JACKSON

There's six of us...

Space suits swing from a rack, each helmet a different color. Rosetti's pressed up close behind her, eyes fixed on the suits.

JACKSON

(continuing)

Fuck off, Rosetti; anybody stays, it's you

LAB TECH (O.S.)

Light, quick! Something's...

The Lab Tech is backing away from Tatsumi, who lies on his back on the carpeted deck, mouth gaping, eyes showing whites. A tearing SOUND as Hicks spotlights Tatsumi's bandaged leg -- where the dressing is bulging, moving, seeping yellow fluid. A new-model chest-burster flails its way out of the wound and shuttles into the shadows beneath a chair. Twin red spots appear on Tatsumi's white shirt; two more of the things rip their way out through his stomach as he arches backwards, groaning -- the groan cut off as a fourth chest-burster pops from his mouth...

Jackson brings her pistol up with both hands, arms locked, and SHOOTs Tatsumi in the head.

HICKS

Get in the lock! Suit up!

INT. EMERGENCY LOCK

Hicks pulls the inner door shut. The lock is white, bright, a very tight fit for the five of them. The Lab Tech reaches for one of the hanging suits, yells as a blood-slick chest-burster loses its grip and tumbles out of the suit's open front.

LAB TECH

Aaaaah!

Hicks shoulders the door -- just a crack; it doesn't want to open -- as Rosetti grabs a helmet and swings it underhand, knocking the little horror out of the lock. Hicks gets the door shut again.

Spence is shuddering. Rosetti is putting the helmet on, reaching for his suit.

SPENCE

J-jesus, Rosetti... How'd you do that?

ROSETTI

(beat)

I used to be a soldier

They hurriedly strip to their underwear and struggle into space suits. Rosetti has the yellow helmet, Hicks red, Spence blue, Jackson green, and Lab Tech orange.

Spence is sealing up her space suit over freckles and a military-issue bra; Hicks sealing his over dog tags and his acid-scarred chest.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Please be seated. Fasten lapbelts.

Narrow ledges on either side of the lock. The five sit, step in. Spence and the Lab Tech closest to the outer door. Hicks and Jackson are opposite them.

ROSETTI

(filter; suit radio; turning

his helmet to face Spence)
You're right, Spence. I should have tried to
stop them. It would have done no good, of
course, but I should have tried...

SPENCE

(filter; suit radio)

When we get back, there'll be a board of inquiry.
You can tell them, Colonel, tell them what
happened. Help them find the ones who were
responsible...

ANNOUNCEMENT

Ten-second warning. Activating outer hatch.

Rosetti's helmet turns slowly toward her. Through his faceplate bubble, the
canceled eyes and blood-streaked drool of the Change...

JACKSON

(filter; suit radio)

He gone! Jeeees-us!

As blood wells up into Rosetti's helmet, filling it completely, and something
dark begins to strike the inner surface of his faceplate, violently, again and
again. The space suit hunches through inhuman postures --

As the outer hatch pivots out on hydraulics, the vacuum sucking small loose
objects out into the void.

The new beast in Rosetti's suit snaps the heavy nylon lapbelt and lunges at
Spence.

HER POV

as the blood-bubble strikes her faceplate, the fanged tongue working like a
piledriver, starting to split the tough plastic of Rosetti's faceplate -- tiny
bubbles of blood along the first hairline crack.

ANGLE

The Lab Tech unfastens his lapbelt and grapples with the suited beast, pulling
it off Spence.

Hicks is wrestling with his pulse-rifle, pinned to the bench by the struggle.

The suit radios are filled with the beast's thick gurgling ROAR. As it turns
on the Lab Tech, flings him out through the open hatch, and bounds after him.

EXT. HULL -- AIRLOCK

Vacuum. Zero gravity.

The thing in Rosetti's suit catches the Lab Tech in mid-tumble, its gloved
hands spread like talons, grips the Lab Tech's helmet and collar-joint in
either hand, and rips his helmet off. Air explodes from the neck of his suit,
lifting his air in a three-second gale that freezes instantly, becoming a
small cloud of ice crystal. The Lab Tech's eyes are frozen marbles. He goes
cartwheeling slowly across the hull as the beast grabs a protruding strut and
spins to dace the airlock with a terrible balletic grace.

Hicks is in the hatchway. He raises. the pulse-rifle, pulls the trigger. The
ammo-counter flashes 00, empty. Jackson reaches past him with a fresh

magazine. Hicks slaps it into the gun as the beast launches itself toward him from the strut. He FIRES. The space suit EXPLODES in a cloud of blood and acid.

Hicks bounces awkwardly out over the rim of the hatch, followed by Jackson and Spence.

Beat. Anchorpoint's hull stretches away to its own horizon, a flat gray expanse of broken by various structures. The body of the Lab Tech is tumbling slowly out into space.

SPENCE

(filter; suit radio; looking
after the vanishing Lab Tech)

I never even knew his name... Hicks... Hicks,
are we gonna make it?

Hick's gloved hands is closed around something small. He open it, looks down. His watch. 2159 HOURS.

Hicks looks into her eyes as if he sees her for the first time.

HICKS

(filter; suit radio)

Make it? Yeah... Sure we make it.

He gives her a desperate grin.

His gloved hand, still holding the watch, takes her.

SOUND of the watch's alarm: 2200 HOURS.

Hicks' eyes are shut tight.

Nothing happens.

SPENCE

(filter; suit radio)

Hicks? Hicks, are you okay? What is it?

He opens his eyes. Looks at her. Releases her hand.

EXTREME CLOSEUP ON WATCH

2201 HOURS

ANGLE

SPENCE

(filter; suit radio)

You okay?

Hicks flings with watch away. It tumbles out slowly, level with the deck, keeps tumbling...

HICKS

(filter; suit radio)

Okay, Ops, which way to the boats?

JACKSON

(filter; suit radio)

Got me, man. The map was just for the inside...

HICKS
(filter; suit radio)
See that radio mast? Let's try that way.

They set out in single-file across the hull, Hicks leading, Jackson bringing up the rear. The radio mast, visible above the horizon, is the tallest structure in sight, a steel thorn slanted toward the stars.

Behind them, the airlock remain open, spilling light...

EXT. HULL -- LONG SHOT

Three tiny figures, their helmets bright dots of color against the monotone hull-plain: red, blue, green.

VOICE OVER: Steady rasp of human breath.

EXT. HULL -- ANOTHER ANGLE -- LONG

Shadows tangle in the light from the lock. Moving. Black talons slip over the hatch rim, followed by an eyeless Alien mask. Then another. The creatures are entirely unaffected by cold, by vacuum...

EXT. HULL -- APPROACH TO LIFEBOAT BAYS

Hicks, Spence, Jackson. Hicks gestures with his rifle: the prows of the boats.

HICKS
(filter; suit radio)
There you go, Ops.

JACKSON
(filter; suit radio)
Good navigating...

HICKS
(filter; suit radio)
Good guessing. Still have to get into one of the damn things...

Spence loses her footing as she climbs down a ledge, goes into a slow-motion, zero-g roll; Jackson grabs her.

EXT. HULL -- SHOT FROM UNLIT LIFEBOAT INTERIOR THROUGH A PORTHOLE

Hicks is approaching. Closer. His gloves on the porthole. His helmet-bubble CLICKS against it. The beam of his light stabs in, swings from side to side, blinks out.

EXT. HULL -- LIFEBOAT BAYS

Hicks straightens up from the porthole.

HICKS
(filter; suit radio)
Looks good. Good as it gets. How the hell we get in?

JACKSON
(filter; suit radio)
I can run a bypass on the hatch latches, but I need a hotwire...

SPENCE
(filter; suit radio; starting
to climb up the side of the boat)
I can strip some cable off the solar cells...

HICKS
(filter; suit radio)
Open it that way and we lose the air.

JACKSON
(filter; suit radio)
We'll have to draw the backup off the tanks.
Won't matter once we're in hypersleep. No
other way...

EXT. TOP OF LIFEBOAT

Spence's POV for helmet as she crouches over a flat, rectangular solar cells and tugs with her gloves tips at a small access port. She keeps losing her grip; the space suit's gloves aren't designed for fine work.

SPENCE
(filter; suit radio; talking to
keep her head together)
Like the science fair. I had to scrounge
everything... Spent a month desoldering a TV I
got out of my uncle's basement...

She manages to get the cover off -- it tumbles backward -- upward -- with the momentum on its removal. Spence peers at a densely packed mass of color-coded wiring.

SPENCE
(continuing; filter;
suit radio)
Hey, Jackson, you want anything in particular?

JACKSON
(filter; suit radio)
How about twenty centimeters of the red and
green stuff?

Spence begins to fumble with the wiring.

SPENCE
(filter; suit radio)
Right. Want anything else while I'm here?

JACKSON
(filter; suit radio)
Coffee and a danish. Black, one sugar.

EXT. HULL -- LIFEBOAT

Hicks and Jackson are trying to open the larger accessport, this one beside a porthole set into a rectangular hatch in the bow of the lifeboat. It isn't easy. Hicks manages to hook the pulse-rifle's buttplate under the edge of the cover. He uses the barrel as a lever. The buttplate slips.

HICKS
(filter; suit radio)

Shit.

He tries again. The cover pops open: move wiring, hydraulics. Jackson begins to paw at the wiring.

EXT. TOP OF LIFEBOAT

Spence's POV as she looks down at her prize, a length of red and green wire.

SPENCE

(filter; suit radio)

They're out of coffee, but I got you hotwire...

Spence's POV as she glances up, across the hull -- and sees a dozen advancing Aliens.

SPENCE

(continuing; filter;
suit radio)

Hicks! They're coming! They don't need suits!

EXT. HULL -- LIFEBOAT

Hicks whirls around with the rifle, too quick a move for zero-g; momentum spins him around and he rolls, out past the prow, but manages to come up SHOOTING. Take out the two foremost Aliens at about twenty yards. The rest scuttle for cover.

EXTREME CLOSEUP

on ammo readout: 09.

ANGLE

Hicks gets to his feet, take a step back, and nearly tumbles again; he's bumped into another emergency airlock, this one still sealed. He climbs back across it and crouches against the raised housing, using it to steady his aim. The Aliens charge again. Five SHOTS, five Aliens blown apart. The rest get out of sight.

EXTREME CLOSEUP

on ammo readout: 04.

ANGLE

Six inches from Hick's faceplate, on the airlock hatch, a red light blinks on. The lock starts to open. Hicks scrambles back, the rifle ready at his hip, as the hatch opens -- and a space-suited figure straightens up, a yellow helmet...

CLOSEUP -- HICKS -- REACTION SHOT

HICKS

(filter; suit radio; an
instant of profound confusion)

Rosett...?

ANGLE

The Aliens charge. The figure turns, bringing up a pulse-rifle.

CLOSEUP ON BISHOP -- THROUGH FACEPLATE

as he hoses a full clip in to the Aliens, killing them all.

BISHOP
(filter; suit radio)
Hicks, help me out of the lock...

ANGLE

Hicks takes Bishop's arm and hauls him over the rim; the android's left leg is braced with the length of metal from the elevator, strapped to the space suit with heavy silver tape.

HICKS
(filter; suit radio)
What happened? You didn't blow the fusion back at twenty-two hundred,

Bishop passes him a fresh clip of ammunition.

BISHOP
(filter; suit radio)
Two overload is scheduled for twenty-two-thirty.

HICKS
(filter; suit radio)
Why?

BISHOP
(filter; suit radio)
I thought you might need the time.

JACKSON
(filter; suit radio)
Bishop? Hick! Come on, we gotta get his happening!

Hicks help Bishop across the hull.

EXT. HULL -- LIFEBOAT

CLOSEUP on Spence and Jackson crouching by the open service port. They've made a rainbow spaghetti out of the port's wiring, but Jackson holds one raw end of the hotwire. Spence looks up as Hicks and Bishop arrive.

SPENCE
(filter; suit radio)
What happened to you leg?

BISHOP
(filter; suit radio)
Molecular fatigue.

HICKS
(filter; suit radio)
Bishop says we gotta go now.

JACKSON
(filter; suit radio)
No shit... Well...

She thrusts the hotwire against a contact, producing a burst of sparks.

Nothing happens.

Tries again.

Nothing.

JACKSON

(continuing; filter;
suit radio)

Third time's a charm.

A bigger burst of sparks. The hatch suddenly pops open with a rush of escaping AIR.

JACKSON

(continuing; filter;
suit radio)

How damn! Okay!

Jackson ducks, wedges helmet and shoulder through the opening -- and a queen-sized stinger erupts through the back of her neck, slicing the suit's alloy collar ring like butter. Brief but horrible SOUND on radio.

SPENCE

(filter; suit radio)

Jackson!

Jackson's being drawn into the opening by the unseen queen. Spence clutches furiously at Jackson's suit, trying to pull her back...

HICKS

(filter; suit radio)

Forget it! She's gone!

BISHOP

(filter; suit radio)

Hicks!

Hicks and Spence turn. REACTION SHOT. What they see makes her forget trying to save Jackson's body.

The boots of Jackson's space suit vanishes through the lifeboat hatch.

A queen, her crest rising against the stars, leads the swarm against them in a solid wave...

Hicks pumps the pulse-rifle's grenade launcher, sheer reflex, no consideration for the effect of recoil in zero-g (pulse-charges have been assumed to be recoilless). The recoil kick him back against the lifeboat as the BLAST takes out five of the charging Aliens; sharp CLANG of his helmet against the boat's hull.

CLOSE THROUGH FACEPLACE

Hicks losing consciousness.

ANGLE

Bishop stands alone against the advancing swarm, the boot of his locked suitleg wedge into a narrow channel in the hull. He FIRES with a robotic

accuracy, the rifle pivoting like the barrel of an automated gun turret.

CLOSE ON BISHOP'S EXPRESSION

No anger, no fear -- just total absorption in the task at hand.

ANGLE

Spence had Hicks' gun, is dragging him to his feet.

EXTREME CLOSEUP

on Bishop's ammo readout: working down to 01, steady as seconds on a stopwatch --

ANGLE

His last round is for the towering queen -- Android's don't miss. Straight into the jaws. Her head explodes.

But the headless body doesn't stop. It stumbles, tumbling forward, flips over, the vast abdomen with its lashing stinger outlined against the stars...

As Bishop tugs his wedged foot free and rolls, as the stinger whips down to gouge a chunk of bright steel from the hull. The carcass smashed into the lifeboat.

The swarm twitches, hesitates. With the loss of the queen's unifying intelligence, the Aliens are reduced to their usual level of instinctual action.

HICKS

(filter; suit radio)

Bishop! Come on!

Hicks, with Spence, is fleeing across the hull, taking long zero-g leaps -- one more worries about drifting away!

SPENCE

(filter; suit radio)

The mast, Bishop! The Radio mast!

Bishop starts after them, abandoning his empty pulse-rifle, trying to bound along on his good leg, the stiff one obviously in his way, three Aliens rapidly gaining on him. He loses his balance...

Hicks and Spence have almost reached the foot of the radio mast. Handholds lead out to the tip.

Hicks sees Bishop struggling to right himself, the Aliens closing in. Snatches the rifle from Spence.

HICKS

(filter; suit radio;
to Spence)

Go on! Get out there!

Hicks recrosses the hull to Bishop. SHOOTS the nearest Alien, gets a grip on Bishop's suit, pulls him up, tries for the second Alien but misses. They start for the mast, Hicks FIRING back at the swarm.

Spence is a third of the way out on the mast, body drifting in space, clinging to a handhold.

Hick and Bishop haul themselves hand-over-hand along the mast.

BISHOP
(filter; suit radio)
The fusion package, Hicks... Overload...

HICKS
(filter; suit radio)
Yeah... But it means we win... Come on.

The swarm closes around the foot of the mast in a single writhing mass. One spring onto the handholds and scuttles out along the mast like a spider.

Hicks BLOWS it off.

EXTREME CLOSEUP

on ammo readout: 04.

BISHOP
(filter; suit radio)
Four minutes to overload.

ANGLE

Hicks blasts another Alien -- as a deafening SQUAWK of feedback rattles the suit radios, followed by a waves of STATIC.

EXT. SPACE

The U.P.P. interceptor, pitted and scorched by the nuking of Rodina, settles toward Anchorpoint on steering jets.

CLOSEUP ON A GUNPORT

sliding smoothly open, reveal the vicious-looking snout of a Gatling-style pulse-cannon.

EXT. MAST -- FROM HICKS' POV

as a stream of withering fire cuts a swathe thorough the swarming Aliens.

VIETNAMESE COMMANDO (V.O.)
(filter; over static and
screaming harmonics)
Come! You come!

Followed by a frantic burst in her own language.

EXT. SPACE -- FROM MAST

Spence's POV as the interceptor nears the mast tip, the cannon still pumping. The airlock in the interceptor's lower surface slides open. Light from inside.

Spence kicks off from the mast, manages to grab the rim of the interceptor's airlock.

Hicks FIRES his last round into an Alien on the mast.

The interceptor still coming down, crumpling the tip of the mast in a burst of sparks as Hicks and Bishop kick off. Hicks grabs Spence's free hand;

Bishop grabs Hick's ankle. Spence hauls them all into the cramped space of the airlock. The lock closes as an Alien launches itself from the mast...

INT. INTERCEPTOR AIRLOCK

SOUND of the Alien as it slams into the lock. Hicks, Bishop, Spence are crammed in like sardines.

EXT. INTERCEPTOR LOCK

The Alien scrabbling furiously for a hold...

INT. INTERCEPTOR

As the inner lock opens and the commando plunges her tattooed arms in to yank Spence free. Spence fumbles with her helmet and snaps it off. Bishop pulls himself from the lock; in spite of his leg, he dives for the ship's controls. His hands dart from one switchboard to the next. Nothing happens. He look up through his faceplate at the commando.

BISHOP

(voice muffled by his helmet)

Go!

She looks at him impassively. Beat. Then reaches past to press a sequence of three buttons.

EXT. SPACE

The interceptor. The Aliens cluster like aphids along the mast. The interceptor's ENGINES erupt in a gout of flame.

EXT. SPACE -- ANOTHER ANGLE

The Alien on the airlock loses its grip, tumbles into the rocket blast.

EXT. ANCHORPOINT -- INTERCEPTOR'S POV

The station is receding

The fusion package goes overload.

WHITEOUT. Beat.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

A SINGLE STAR

Then another star. Then the interceptor, adrift, showing no lights.

EXT. INTERCEPTOR -- ANOTHER ANGLE

Additional damage visible from the Anchorpoint blast.

INT. INTERCEPTOR

Dim light. The commando is slumped against a wall of dead switches, watching Bishop. Hick, Spence, and Bishop wear their space suits, minus helmets and air tanks. Bishop is bending over a panel of exposed circuitry, working with a delicate probe. His suit is open to the waist; he wears a miniature worklight on a band across his forehead. Spence is asleep, her head on Hicks'

lap.

HICKS

Bishop...

Bishop looks up, the beam of the worklight glaring in Hicks' eyes.

BISHOP

Yes?

HICKS

Bishop, are Spence and I... I mean... Are we infected, man?

A small steady tone SOUNDS, muffled inside Bishop's suit. He puts the probe down and reaches into his suit, bringing out his wristwatch.

He looks at the time. The tone stops. He puts the watch down and looks at Hicks. Beat.

BISHOP

No, you aren't. I obtained solid parameters on the incubation period... Neither of you is a carrier. Neither is she.

(glancing toward
the commando)

Although I couldn't be certain until...

HICKS

Your watch? Until you watch went off?

BISHOP

Yes.

Bishop reaches into his suit again and brings out a service automatic.

The commando says something angrily, wearily, in her own language.

Bishop hands her the gun. She tosses it aside with evident disgust, curls up, eyes closed.

HICKS

That was for us? If we were...

BISHOP

Yes.

(he looks at the
commando again)

She's dying, Hicks. Radiation poisoning...

HICKS

Can we do anything?

BISHOP

No.

Spence groans in her sleep. Hicks absently smooths her hair back from her eyes.

BISHOP

You're a species again, Hicks. United against a common enemy...

Hicks moves Spence's head, pillows her on a folded jacket, swings his way over to the commando, offers her water from a plastic bottle. She refuses it.

HICKS

Yeah?

BISHOP

The source, Hicks. You'll have to trace them back, find the point of origin. The first source. And destroy it.

HICKS

I dunno, Bishop. Maybe we just oughta stay out of their way...

BISHOP

You can't, Hicks. This goes far beyond mere interspecies competition. These creatures are to biological life what antimatter is to matter.

HICKS

How do you mean?

BISHOP

There isn't room for the both of you, Hicks, not in this universe.

HICKS

That's crazy, Bishop...

BISHOP

No. You're already at war, Hicks. War to extermination. The alien knows no other mode.

HICKS

Hell, man, we been at war all my life. Near enough, anyway. With her.

(he looks down at
the commando)

With all her brothers and sisters. That's what got us into this shit in the first place!

BISHOP

But now you've seen the enemy, Hicks. So has she. She's not it. Neither are you. This is a Darwinian universe, Hicks. Will the alien be the ultimate survivor?

Hicks doesn't answer. He just looks at Bishop. Bishop goes back to his circuitry.

CLOSE on Spence's sleeping face, and the face of the dying commando.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SPACE

Approach of a large ship.

The PING of homing radar.

ANGLE ON THE HULL

As it slides past, enormous letters: KANSAS CITY.

EXT. SPACE - ANGLE UP

From below Kansas City as a wide bay opens.

The interceptor comes INTO FRAME and is drawn up into the brightly-lit hold.

The bay closes.

EXT. SPACE

Kansas City. Receding. Gone.

The stars.

FADE OUT.

THE END