

**R I F T**

by

Ronnie Christensen

October 2, 2008

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST RIDGE - DAWN

Steam and dust roils through the purple air. Shapes appear, slowly getting closer, gaining definition...

ANOTHER ANGLE

SCIENTISTS in biosafety suits move up a ridge like astronauts.

DR. JONAS GUILLEMOT, 50s, leads the group, features sober through his Plexiglas face-shield as they arrive at a military barricade. SOLDIERS in biosafety suits block with automatic weapons. Guillemot raises his credentials.

GUILLEMOT

Hello, I'm Dr. Jonas Guillemot. From the International Intelligence Committee.

A black female officer, LIEUTENANT COMMANDER JILL NEALY, 30s, appears behind the line of soldiers. She's a head shorter than everyone around her, but has the presence and command of a giant. Her eyes tell the soldiers to stand down.

NEALY

Dr. Guillemot, we've been expecting you.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The team follows Nealy up the ridge --

NEALY

I apologize for all the security. But as you know, this area has been blocked off until we have secure intel on the matter.

GUILLEMOT

We were told an explosion was documented at four forty-one this morning. Do you know what caused it?

NEALY

We have a pretty good idea.

They crest the ridge. Guillemot pauses. His eyes fill with awe.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

Through the rolling bed of steam, a breathtaking sight...

A one hundred yard radius of giant redwoods are laying on their sides, pointing outward in every direction like a wagon-wheel.

At the epicenter of the carnage, something dark and metallic is buried beneath the branches. The tip of a very large iceberg...

EXT. FOREST CLEARING - DAWN

The scientists spread out, mingling with the SOLDIERS. They move carefully among the fallen giants, approaching the buried metallic object. There's frost everywhere, covering everything. They talk over each other in excitement.

SCIENTIST #1

I'm not picking up any radiation.  
Check your equipment.

SCIENTIST #2

(overlapping)  
Where did it come from? GPS should  
have picked this up, right?

SOLDIER #1

Negative. We've checked all the sat  
eyes on these coordinates. This came  
out of nowhere.

SCIENTIST #2

What do you mean it came out of  
nowhere? Are you telling us it just  
appeared out of thin air?

As they continue talking and taking readings --

CLOSE ON GUILLEMOT

gaping as he moves into the shadows of the dark metallic object. It's the hull of a vessel the size of a small ferry. One thing is for certain: it's not of this world.

GUILLEMOT

This isn't ours.

NEALY

No, it's not.

Guillemot is overcome with emotion. He's been waiting for this moment his entire life. He moves into the hull's shadow, savoring every detail. On its surface, a rough layer of frost. Cold steam still drifts from it.

GUILLEMOT

That's frost?

NEALY

Correct.

GUILLEMOT

But I was told this was an explosion?

NEALY

It was. Big enough to wipe out three city blocks.

Guillemot studies the metallic surface.

GUILLEMOT

What is this metal? That's not titanium.

NEALY

We were hoping you and your team could help us with that.

Guillemot considers the possibilities, then --

GUILLEMOT

Does anyone else know?

NEALY

My superiors. My team. And now yours.

Suddenly, the vessel GROANS. It's deep and reverberating.

Every Soldier in the area trains their weapon on the vessel, ready to open fire.

Nealy signals for everyone to hold. She gestures for two soldiers to flank the edges of the hull. They scramble into position.

CRASH! The massive trunk of a redwood tumbles aside, hitting the ground in a plume of dirt and leaves, revealing...

A door on the side of the vessel.

CLOSE ON THE DOOR

as it slowly begins to open...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ALLEY - ANBAR PROVINCE - DAY

Urban scrawl. Black smoke tumbles into the sky. The light is different. Grainy and orange.

As an M1A1 ABRAMS TANK grinds into FRAME, we hear Metallica's "RIDE THE LIGHTNING."

INT. M1A1 ABRAMS TANK - DAY

The music PULSES through an MP3 player. The driver, SETH WARD, 30s, clean-cut, cocky and confident, expertly guides them through the alley. Taped on the controls, a photo of his four year-old son, NOAH.

Behind Seth, his team mans their positions, amped, ready for anything.

SOLDIER #1

Captain Ward, how many tours this make for you?

SETH

Two. Including Afghanistan.

SOLDIER #1

Damn... someone needs to get a damn life.

SETH

I got a life. Right here --

He taps the photo of his son.

SETH

It's why I'm here. Fighting for our future.

A terrified YOUNG SOLDIER wipes his lips, on the verge of vomiting.

YOUNG SOLDIER

I'm gonna puke.

SETH

Hang in there, Private. After this, it's blue mountain time.

SOLDIER #1

Word on that.

SOLDIER #2

Uh-uh. I can't drink that Coors shit.

SETH

That's right, you're a micro-brew boy, aren't you, Private?

SOLDIER #2  
I'm a connoisseur of the finer things  
in life. Like a nice Hoegaarden.

SOLDIER #1  
(laughing)  
Ho-what? You serious? You like that  
German crap, man?

SOLDIER #2  
It's not German. It's Belgium --

Suddenly, the RADIO SPITS:

RADIO (VO)  
(filtered)  
We're receiving heavy fire! Unknown  
positions! Request back-up ASAP!

Seth kicks into action. Fun and games are over.

SETH  
(into radio)  
Back-up's en route. We're coming in at  
your six, ETA thirty.

The Young Soldier looks around, panicking.

YOUNG SOLDIER  
Captain, I gotta bad feeling about  
this.

SETH  
We all get bad feelings. I need eyes  
on the roof-tops.

YOUNG SOLDIER  
It's suicide. This is suicide.

SETH  
Can that pep-talk, Private.

SOLDIER #2  
I can't die here. Not like this.

EXT. ALLEY - ANBAR PROVINCE - NIGHT

OVERHEAD ANGLE

A heavy FIRE-FIGHT between U.S. MILITARY and INSURGENTS is  
underway as Seth's tank rumbles through the war-ravaged alley  
beneath us.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

An INSURGENT is aiming a grenade-launcher at the incoming tank. It's hooked up to video equipment. The Insurgent looks to another as he squares it up on video.

INSURGENT #1

(in Iraqi)  
Is it recording?

INSURGENT #2

(in Iraqi)  
We need bodies. The more the better.

INSURGENT CAMERA POV

As he records the tank passing in the alley beneath them, CAMERA ZOOMS in on the tank --

INT. SETH'S TANK - DAY

Seth drives. Everyone holds their position. Suddenly --

KABOOM! They're hit from outside. The concussion throws everyone forward.

YOUNG SOLDIER

Oh God! Oh shit! We've been hit!

SETH

We're okay. We're good.

Seth checks a monitor, finds the INSURGENT on the roof-top above them.

SETH

(into radio)  
Three o'clock from our position.  
Ground to air rocket-launcher. Read  
them their rights.

Soldier #1 returns MACHINE GUN FIRE on the roof-top.

YOUNG SOLDIER

I gotta get out of here.

SETH

Private, get back to your station.

The Young Soldier opens the roof hatch.

SETH

Private, close the hatch! That's an  
order!



INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

The TV is on in the other room:

TV (VO)

(filtered)

*...we're taking Social Security away from our children. We're leaving them with an impossible mountain of debt, a failing economy, cutting funding for education, and let's not forget global warming...*

Seth steps into FRAME, wipes the steam away from the mirror. He stares at his own hollowed-out visage for a moment. The confidence and cockiness is gone. It takes every ounce of will for him to raise a razor and...

...shave away his beard...

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A bulldozer ROARS through FRAME. CONSTRUCTION WORKERS in hard-hats work on a building.

Seth walks with the construction boss, OWEN, 40s, heavy-set, bearded, and too busy for everyone.

OWEN

I'm sorry, Seth. I got too many hands already.

SETH

Owen, I'm not asking for my old job. I'll take anything you have.

OWEN

If I had something for you, believe me, I'd toss you a hat. A lot's happened since you left, buddy. I gotta full crew of assholes now. I got assholes up to here. I got assholes coming outta my ears.

Seth knows when to leave it alone.

SETH

Alright, alright...

OWEN

As soon as I have something, you're my first call.

Seth manages a stoic smile and walks away. Owen feels bad.

OWEN

Hey...

Seth turns.

OWEN

Welcome home, buddy.

INT. DINER - LATER

Seth sits in a booth by himself with a cup of coffee. He's on his cell as he finishes wrapping up a present.

SETH

(into cell)

Seth Ward. W-A-R-D. We were best friends. We went to school together. He knows me.

(listening)

Alright, when he returns can you have him call my cell? Thanks.

He hangs up, catching some looks around the diner. Their full of curiosity, pity. People recognize him, but no one has the courage to approach him. He's a leper in his own hometown.

SETH

Hey, Jim.

A father (JIM) in a nearby booth acknowledges with a quick, awkward smile and returns to his family.

EXT. UPSCALE SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Nice houses. Manicured lawns. Doctors and Lawyers live here.

A beat-up red Dodge truck pulls up into the driveway of a three-story home.

INT. SETH'S TRUCK - DAY

Seth sits inside, letting it idle as he gathers his courage. He pulls the wrapped present out of the backseat. He checks it. Checks the ribbon. Tightens it. Making it perfect.

SETH

(to himself)

You can do this...

EXT. ALI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Seth approaches the front door with the present. He holds his head high. He takes a deep breath and...

KNOCKS.

A beat. Seth stands there, at attention, giving his best.

The front door opens on --

ALI MILLER, late 20s, put together nicely, too nicely, trying to get comfortable in a life she's not comfortable in. Behind her, her son NOAH, now five.

Seth stops breathing, present in hand. He's utterly stunned at the sight of them. They watch Seth with the same amount of shock and curiosity.

SETH  
Sorry, I'm late...

ALI  
No, you're early.

She can't take her eyes off of him. Noah hides behind his mother, watching the stranger. Seth grins down at him in amazement.

SETH  
Hi, Noah.

He hands Noah the present. The boy takes it, tentative.

NOAH  
What is it?

SETH  
It's a birthday present.

NOAH  
It's not my birthday.

SETH  
I know. I figured I'd start making up for the ones I've missed...

Noah studies the present, trying to figure it out.

ALI  
You want to come inside?

Seth looks up at the nice house, awkwardly.

SETH  
I don't know...

ALI  
C'mon, I'll put some coffee on.

INT. KITCHEN - ALI'S HOUSE - DAY

PAN ACROSS PHOTOS of Ali and her fiance, DAVID, 40s, a Polo-wearing doctor with all the right genes.

SETH

sits at a large kitchen island, taking them in. Ali hustles nervously around the kitchen, making coffee, searching for non-fat creamer in the fridge, opening drawers for utensils.

ALI

Creamer, right? Two sugars?

SETH

Black's fine.

ALI

Black it is.

Noah unwraps the present.

NOAH

Wow, legos... Boba Fett's ship...

SETH

You like it?

NOAH

This is so cool!

ALI

Ages 7 to 11?

SETH

Is it?

Quickly checking the box --

SETH

I can take it back. It's not a problem.

NOAH

Can I keep it, Mom? Please?

ALI

As long as I don't find any more pieces in my vacuum...

Noah takes it into the other room and begins to disassemble everything on the floor.

ALI  
(calling after him)  
I'm serious, Noah!

NOAH  
Okay, Mom!

Ali sits on a stool across from Seth, scoots him a cup of coffee.

SETH  
You have your law degree yet?

ALI  
No. No, I uh, dropped out.

Seth is stunned to hear this.

ALI  
I'm doing the mom-thing now. Getting involved. Soccer. PTA. You know...

ALI  
What? Why are you looking at me like that?

SETH  
You've wanted to be a lawyer since we were kids. I just never thought I'd hear this...

ALI  
Yeah, well... things change. Life changes. Gotta roll with it, right?  
(shrugging)  
Greg thinks I should go back when Noah's a little older.

Awkward silence. Ali stirs her coffee, cutting to the chase.

ALI  
So, where did you go?

Seth is taken aback by her bluntness.

ALI  
It's been nine months. We were worried about you. No one could find you. You just disappeared.

SETH  
You were worried?

ALI  
I'm just trying to fill in the blanks,  
Seth. You left me with a lot of them.

Seth glances down at her enormous engagement ring.

SETH  
You left me with a few yourself.

ALI  
Seth, I know it's hard for you to  
believe, but I care about you.

Seth looks across at the photos of her fiancée, David.

SETH  
Are you happy?

Ticking silence. The tension in the air is palpable.

ALI  
We're comfortable.

SETH  
Then that's all that matters.

Seth checks his watch, glances across at Noah in the other room.

SETH  
We should probably get going, huh?

EXT. DRIVEWAY - LATER

Seth and Ali come down the driveway. Noah follows behind,  
trying to button his coat.

SETH  
I'll have him back by five.

ALI  
Take your time.

Seth opens the passenger's side. Noah climbs in.

SETH  
Does he need a car-seat?

ALI  
He outgrew it last year.

She reaches over, buckling Noah in.

SETH  
Is there anything else I should I know?

ALI

Like, is there a manual?

SETH

Is there? I couldn't find it on-line.

ALI

If you can drive a tank, you can handle a five year-old for one afternoon.

INT. SETH'S TRUCK - DAY

Seth drives. Noah sits next to him in the passengers seat, staring at him like an alien. Seth smiles across at Noah.

SETH

So, I hear you're starting kindergarten?

NOAH

Yeah, I'm five. Charlie's going to be there too.

SETH

Charlie's your friend?

NOAH

She's sort of mean to me. She likes to boss me around.

SETH

Well, you can't let that happen.

NOAH

Yes, I can. She's bigger than me.

Noah watches him, grinning.

NOAH

Mom says you got to drive a tank. Was it fun?

Seth stares ahead, awkwardly.

SETH

I wouldn't call it fun.

NOAH

Did you kill a lot of bad guys?

Seth turns on the radio. Noah reaches over, turning it down.

Checkmate. Seth smiles awkwardly, it's going to be a long afternoon.

As TWO HELICOPTERS BUZZ overhead, vanishing over the tree-line...

CUT TO:

EXT. RANCH - DUSK

A fiery red sun sinks behind the trees. Dust plumes as the military convoy rolls through the entrance.

EXT. RANCH - DUSK

Guillemot and Nealy walk with a SOLDIER. Tendrils of frosty air rise around them. The fence has been disintegrated from an explosion. The frozen corpses of dead livestock and birds litter the field around them.

ANOTHER ANGLE

A MILITARY DOCTOR checks an old Hispanic Woman (ILSA) on her front porch. She stares ahead, almost catatonic.

SOLDIER

She says there was a big explosion. A "machine" came out of it and took her husband.

NEALY

How many are missing now?

SOLDIER

This makes four.

Guillemot approaches the old woman, who barely acknowledges his presence.

GUILLEMOT

Hi, I'm Dr. Guillemot. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?

The Old Woman doesn't respond. She just stares into the distance.

GUILLEMOT

We want to help you find your husband. Please, can you describe this machine?

ILSA

Gran maquina...

She looks up at him, eyes flooding with terror. Guillemot kneels at her level, puts a consoling hand on her shoulder.

GUILLEMOT

It's okay. Take your time. Can someone get her a glass of water?

Anticipation is high as a soldier vanishes into the house, returns with some water. Ilsa drinks it with both trembling hands, like she's been in the desert for days.

GUILLEMOT

Better? Okay now?

The Old Woman breathes deeply, trying to keep it under control.

GUILLEMOT

Did you see which direction it went?

Ilsa mumbles something barely audible. Guillemot gives her a curious look.

NEALY

What did she say?

GUILLEMOT

She says it vanished in the light...

EXT. PARK - DAY

Seth watches Noah play on the jungle gym with several other KIDS. Seth isn't sure what to do with himself. He looks around awkwardly, out of his element. He steals a glance at his watch. Feels bad for doing it.

NOAH

(to kid)

That's my Dad. Over there. He fought in Iraq. He killed a lot of bad guys.

Seth realizes everyone on the playground has heard this. He avoids the incoming stares.

EXT. ICE-CREAM SHOP - DAY

CLOSE ON AN ICE-CREAM CONE

slowly melting in Seth's hand.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Seth and Noah sit on a park bench outside of an ice-cream store.

NOAH

Dad? Your ice-cream...

Noah gestures to Seth's ice-cream cone.

NOAH  
You have to eat it before it melts.

SETH  
Oh, is that how it works?

He grins and take a bite for his son.

NOAH  
How long are you gonna stay?

SETH  
I don't know.

NOAH  
Maybe you could help me build the Boba Fett ship?

SETH  
I'd love to.

NOAH  
David threw away my other Legos because I left them on the floor.

SETH  
He did?

NOAH  
Mom says he's just stressed.

SETH  
Well, if he does that again let me know.

NOAH  
Why? Are you gonna kill him?

SETH  
(taken aback)  
No, Noah. Nobody's killing anybody. Killing bad guys is not something to be proud of.

NOAH  
Why not?

SETH  
Because it's not right to take another life. It doesn't matter what they've done.

NOAH

But you could kill David if you wanted to, right?

SETH

I think we need to change the subject now.

Noah smiles at his Dad, thankful to have an ally.

SETH

I'm glad you're my Dad.

Seth smiles back, touched. Not sure how to be a Dad. Not sure how to respond.

Suddenly, two TWO ARMY TRUCKS roll down the street. DOZENS of soldiers inside.

Seth watches them, alarmed.

INT. SETH'S TRUCK - LATER

Seth drives, distracted as military helicopters THUNDER overhead, heading north over the tree-line. He pulls out his cell and dials. Gets an answering machine. He hangs up, thinking. Turns on the radio, flips through stations.

NOAH

Why are we going home early?

SETH

Noah, not now.

He reaches a station.

RADIO STATION (VO)

(filtered)

...the second explosion happened in a rural area seven miles north of Eureka, California. Air space over the site has been restricted. They're warning locals to keep clear of the area until they can confirm it's safety.

He knits his brow, seeing something up ahead --

A military blockade. SOLDIERS divert traffic. A NEWS VAN is parked on the shoulder. A local FEMALE REPORTER is trying to get answers from a SOLDIER with her CAMERAMAN.

Seth comes to a stop, rolls down his window. A SOLDIER quickly approaches.

SETH  
What happened?

SOLDIER  
This road is off-limits.

SETH  
I have to get my son home.

SOLDIER  
I'm sorry, sir, you're going to have to  
take the detour.

The Female Reporter and her Cameraman argue with another Soldier  
across the street.

FEMALE REPORTER  
Why can't you just answer the question?  
Was this explosion an attack or not?

SOLDIER #2  
I'm not authorized to answer any  
questions right now. Please keep  
moving.

As Seth pulls forward --

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DUSK

Thick with giant redwoods. Seth's truck rumbles by.

INT. SETH'S TRUCK - DUSK

Seth drives, frowning, mind ticking away all the possibilities.  
Noah watches him.

NOAH  
This isn't the way Mom takes me home.

SETH  
(distracted)  
No, it's not. It's a detour.

NOAH  
What's a detour?

SETH  
It's another way home.

NOAH  
Are you mad at me?

SETH  
What? No. No, of course not.

NOAH  
Then why are we going home early?

SETH  
Because... because we are.

NOAH  
Because of the helicopters?

SETH  
(flustered)  
I don't know, maybe. It's complicated.

NOAH  
Is that why we're going the other way home?

SETH  
I... I can't answer all of these questions. I need you to be quiet for a little while. I need to think, okay?

NOAH  
What's a detour?

SETH  
Noah -- stop! Please. Just stop!

Noah blinks, stunned at this outburst. Now Seth feels even worse.

SETH  
I didn't mean to yell. I'm sorry.

Noah doesn't answer.

SETH  
(to himself)  
I'm not cut out for this.

NOAH  
Does this mean you're going away again?

Seth is silent. At this point, he doesn't know...

NOAH  
It's okay, you can go. I have another dad.

Seth glances across at him, hurt. He's about to respond when his eyes swell with horror...

HIS POV

*A BLINDING WHITE LIGHT EXPLODES THROUGH THE TREES.*

Followed by...

KABOOM! A concussion SHATTERS out all the windows in the truck, flipping it over like a small toy.

ANOTHER ANGLE

CRASH! CRASH! CRASH! Seth throws himself over his son, protecting him as the truck rolls over in a dizzying blur. Dirt, leaves and twigs EXPLODE all around them.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Metal GROANS as the truck rolls onto its roof.

A blanket of frost billows over them, as if someone just opened the door to a very large freezer.

Seth GROANS, disoriented. He's upside down, still holding Noah tightly.

SETH

Noah?

Noah doesn't move. Seth shakes him harder.

SETH

Noah!

Noah stirs in his arms, looks around, scared.

NOAH

Dad...?! DAD?!

SETH

Are you hurt?

Seth checks him over. Noah's not hurt, he's shaken.

SETH

It's okay. We're okay.

NOAH

We crashed the truck!

He starts CRYING.

NOAH

Dad, we crashed the truck!

SETH  
No, no -- hey. Hey, buddy, we're okay.

Seth uses his free-hand to release his seat-belt.

SETH  
Look. See? We're okay.

He edges himself to the ground with Noah.

There's a loud CRACKING sound right outside of the truck and --

CRASH! A gigantic frost-covered redwood falls next to them, shaking the ground, sending a plume of leaves and branches everywhere. It missed them by a few yards.

A beat. Another loud CRACKING sound...

Seth's eyes widen. They have to get out of here. Now.

NOAH  
Dad?

CRASH! Another giant falls behind them. This one is closer. Missing them by only a few feet.

Noah cries harder.

SETH  
Shhhh. Close your eyes.

Noah closes his eyes. Seth kicks out the rest of the broken windshield.

SETH  
Alright. Here.

He removes his coat and wraps it around Noah, protecting him from the broken glass.

SETH  
Ready?

Noah nods through his tears.

SETH  
Okay. Here we go.

EXT. REDWOOD FOREST - DUSK

CLOSE ON SETH

grimacing with determination as he scoots out of the broken windshield with his son.

He looks up, his face engulfed in spreading shadow. His eyes register a millisecond of panic before he rolls aside with Noah and --

ANOTHER ANGLE

CRASH! The earth trembles as a massive frost-covered tree flattens the upturned truck, folding its chassis in half like a taco, sending a tire hurtling off into space.

CUT TO:

EXT. RANCH - NIGHT

The sun has gone down. SCIENTISTS in biosafety suits are everywhere, taking samples and measurements. Helicopters land, kicking up dust, unloading more soldiers and scientists. Ilsa looks around, confused, guided to an awaiting helicopter.

GUILLEMOT

It's okay. You will be taken care of.

ILSA

Where are you taking me?

GUILLEMOT

Don't worry. You'll be safe.

ILSA

Why won't you let me call my family?

Nealy's radio SQUAWKS.

SOLDIER (VO)

(filtered)

Ma'am, we've just received reports of another event. Four miles southwest of your location...

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - DUSK

Seth holds Noah, crouching beneath the tiny space of a fallen tree. They're both reeling from what has just happened.

NOAH

(shivering)

It's cold...

Seth examines the tree they're under. It's covered in a layer of frost. It's just one of many that have tumbled to the ground from the blast. They're all covered in frost, pointing in the same direction, like a single spoke on a giant wagon-wheel.

We've seen this before...

Noah begins to speak when Seth clamps his hand over his mouth.

SETH

Shhh.

An incandescent light appears behind them, illuminating the purple night as if it were noon.

It's followed by the WHIRRING of an engine (OS). WHOOSH... WHOOSH... WHOOSH...

The white light begins to turn colors, running through the spectrum. The entire area becomes yellow, orange, red, blue...

Noah is trembling in Seth's arms.

NOAH

What is it?

Seth just shakes his head, overwhelmed.

NOAH

(whispering)

I want to go home.

Seth motions for silence. He peeks out between the branches of the fallen tree. It's coming closer.

As the RUMBLING draws nearer, they're consumed by a large shadow.

Seth shields his eyes with an arm, looking up at the dark metallic underside of a vessel as it hovers over them. It's too close to define its massive shape. The lights are too bright to see any detail.

As it slowly glides past, into the darkness...

Seth breathes again. He rifles through the pockets of his coat, now on Noah. Finds his cell. He tries to dial but...

SETH

Shit.

It's dead.

EXT. NIGHT SKY - SAME TIME

One by one, helicopters take off, arcing into the night sky like fireflies.

INT. HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Nealy speaks into her head-set. Guillemot stares out the window at the trees below.

NEALY  
 (into head-set)  
 I need GPS visibility, a damage report,  
 and exact coordinates. Be prepared for  
 anything...

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

It's an eerie sight. Clouds of frost drift everywhere as Seth and Noah appear like ghosts. They run through the forest, negotiating the wagon-wheel of fallen giants, climbing over branches, sliding between trunks, CRUNCHING through twigs and leaves.

Up ahead, the road is covered with trees. Seth looks around, flustered. The destruction just goes on and on...

NOAH  
 (gasping)  
 Dad...tired... feet hurt...

SETH  
 Okay.

He picks his son up, puts him on his back.

SETH  
 Better?

Noah closes his eyes and nods, resting his head on his father's back.

SETH  
 We need to keep moving.

As Seth piggy-backs him through the branches --

The RUMBLING returns behind them (OS). Seth turns, lips parting in terror.

Dancing rays of light bounce through the web of branches behind them, strobing his features.

NOAH  
 It's coming back!

The vessel is coming back their way.

Seth charges forward with Noah, blasting through the branches in front of them.

ANOTHER ANGLE

They make it across the road.

NOAH

Hurry!

Seth looks around, surveying the area for a place to hide.

HIS POV

On the other side of the road, a darkened house.

EXT. DARKENED HOUSE - NIGHT

Seth carries Noah across the yard as the forest lights up behind them, growing brighter and brighter. He sets Noah down, tries the door. It's locked. Noah looks back...

The outline of the giant vessel hovers over the trees. It's still too bright to determine it's shape.

Noah stands there on the porch, face scrunching up. He starts CRYING.

NOAH

(nyperventilating)

Mom... Mom... Mom... I want Mom...

CRASH! Seth throws his shoulder into the front door, blasting it open and --

INT. LIVING ROOM - DARKENED HOUSE - NIGHT

Shifting shadows everywhere. There's nobody home. Seth stumbles in with Noah as the WHIRRING grows louder, the lights flaring through the window, throwing their shadows against the wall. He closes the door behind them.

SETH

Phone...

He finds a land-line phone. Picks it up to dial.

It's dead. No signal whatsoever.

Seth frowns in confusion. He searches for another phone, entering --

## THE KITCHEN

where he finds one on the counter. He picks it up. Listens.

SETH

Dead...

NOAH

Dad, it's outside!

As the RUMBLING grows louder, Seth searches the counter. Finds a set of KEYS.

He grabs Noah's hand, leading him back through --

## THE HALLWAY

which is illuminated from the vessel outside. He opens doors with his free hand... a bedroom... a bathroom... the garage.

Bingo.

## INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Lights flare through the windows, scattering rays everywhere like a disco ball. Seth and Noah enter to find a small Honda Civic.

Seth and Noah climb in and --

## INT. HONDA CIVIC - NIGHT

Seth inserts the key into the ignition and turns.

Nothing. It doesn't roll over at all. He tries again and again.

SETH

Damnit!

He slaps the steering-wheel in frustration.

Noah sees something behind them. His eyes saucer with horror.

NOAH

(whispering)

Monster...

SETH

What?

NOAH

Monster!

Seth whirls around, looking out the garage window as --

The silhouette of a hunched humanoid skirts past.

It happens in the blink of an eye.

Seth just stares, not sure what he just saw.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Helicopter lights appear like stars, coming closer...

INT. HELICOPTER - SAME TIME

Guillemot stares down at the ground below. In the distance, the fallen trees are beginning to become visible. Smoke billows into the air.

NEALY

There.

She points to a pulsing glow through the trees on the other side of the road.

As it vanishes...

INT. HONDA CIVIC - DARKENED HOUSE - NIGHT

Seth and Noah stare back through the rear-windshield as the light disappears. The RUMBLING is gone.

NOAH

Is it gone?

In the distance, the sound of approaching helicopters (OS).

NOAH

Where'd it go?

SETH

Stay here.

NOAH

Don't leave me, okay? Dad, please?

SETH

I'm going to protect you. No matter what happens. I'm not going to let anyone hurt you. Understand?

NOAH

Promise?

SETH

I promise.

He pushes out of the car and --

INT. GARAGE - DARKENED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Seth moves through the garage, summoning up the courage to look out through the garage window.

SETH'S POV

The yard is black. Helicopter lights approach in the distance.

SETH

exhales slowly, relieved.

SETH

We're saved...

WHOOSH! The vessel lights up directly overhead, blinding him.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The Honda Civic CREAKS, begins rolling back toward the garage door, pulled by an inexplicable force.

NOAH

(from inside car)

Dad?!

Seth runs to the rolling car, struggles to reach inside for his son.

SETH

Grab my hand!

The car RATTLES violently, its tires lifting up off the concrete.

NOAH

Dad, help me! Help!

SETH

Grab my hand! C'mon!

CLOSE ON HIS HAND

stretching for Noah's fingertips, touching them --

SETH (OS)

I gotcha --

WIDER

CRASH! The Honda is sucked out of the garage door, like lint in a vacuum cleaner. The force rockets Seth back into a wall of shelves, hard. He's buried under an avalanche of supplies.

The remains of the garage door float and whirl weightlessly in the air as the car spins up into the light.

SETH'S POV

The world is blurry, and getting blurrier...

Like distorted images in fun-house mirrors, hunched humanoids shift and weave in our view, back-lit by the brilliant incandescence. It's too blurry to make out any more detail.

They take us in a moment, slowly converging. One of them raises its hand at us and...

WHOOSH! A colorful spectrum sprays out of it, blinding us. Suddenly, it switches off.

The humanoid shapes turn their heads at the approaching helicopter lights...

CUT TO:

INT. HELICOPTER - SAME TIME

Guillemot and Nealy lean forward, peering through the window as the vessel illuminates beneath them like a bottom-lit swimming pool.

NEALY

(into head-set)

I need video on this. Someone better be recording this.

Suddenly, the vessel makes a WHINING SOUND and --

WHOOSH! The vessel sends out blinding concentric circles of light.

Everything goes dark. The power goes out in the helicopter.

GUILLEMOT

What's happening?!

PILOT

Lost power!

Guillemot looks out at the other helicopters. They're dark as well, dropping like flies. They've all lost power.

NEALY

Auxiliary!

The Pilot flips to auxiliary power. It's not working.

PILOT

Brace yourselves!

Guillemot and Nealy brace themselves. Outside the window, the ground comes up to meet them. We can see the illuminated vessel in our periphery. One second it's there, the next --

KABOOM! The vessel vanishes in a white cloud, leveling everything around it. It blows out all the windows of the house, collapsing the side facing it like matchsticks.

They're about to hit the ground when --

The auxiliary kicks in. Lights and instrumentation come back on.

The Pilot veers up at the last second, bouncing and SKIDDING to a stop in the yard.

Everyone exchanges bewildered looks. That was too close.

GUILLEMOT

It's gone.

The vessel has vanished.

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

Helicopters land, kicking up dust. Nealy and Guillemot approach the collapsed section of house in awe. There's a ragged layer of frost leftover from the explosion.

SOLDIER (OS)

Found someone!

ANOTHER ANGLE

Guillemot and Nealy approach the disintegrated garage door. The Soldier kneels over Seth's unconscious form, checking his pulse.

SOLDIER

He's alive.

CUT TO:

INT. ALI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Ali paces frantically back and forth. Her fiance, DAVID, 40s, is on the phone, speaking slowly and deliberately, almost like Mr. Rogers.

DAVID

(into phone)

Yes, that's right. Phenergan with codeine. Don't take any alcohol with that. And prepare to be drowsy.

Ali stares at him, incredulous and impatient. He catches the look and gives her a helpless shrug. She sighs, exasperated.

DAVID

(into phone)

If that doesn't work, I can refer you to an ear, nose and throat specialist.

ALI

David -- ?!

David hangs up, flustered.

DAVID

What?

ALI

Did it beep the background?

DAVID

No --

She takes the phone and checks for herself. No beep.

ALI

I don't get it. He would've called by now.

DAVID

It's only nine o'clock. Maybe he forgot?

ALI

That's not Seth. He doesn't forget. Not something like this.

DAVID

Ali, you need to calm down, breathe... pour yourself a nice glass of wine and breathe. Here, I'll even do it for you.

Ali sits, trying to stay calm as he pours her a glass of wine. Pours one for himself. He smiles.

DAVID

Everything's going to be fine. There's no reason to be worried right now --

WHOOSH! TWO HELICOPTERS zoom overhead, their xenon lights bouncing across the neighborhood street.

As they exchange disturbed looks --

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

A SOLDIER briefs Guillemot and Nealy as they approach an awaiting helivac in their biosafety suits.

SOLDIER

(reading a fax)

Seth Ward. Twenty-six. He's a captain in the army. Won a purple heart for saving three soldiers in an insurgent attack. He took some shrapnel in his shoulder. Came close to amputating his left arm. He's suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. He was honorably discharged after several months of psychiatric evaluation.

GUILLEMOT

What's his blood type?

SOLDIER

(checking fax)

Got it right here... AB.

Guillemot and Nealy exchange knowing looks. This means something to them.

GUILLEMOT

AB? Are you sure?

INT. HELIVAC - NIGHT

Seth is handcuffed to a gurney inside. A MILITARY DOCTOR in a biosafety suit checks him over.

Guillemot and Nealy sit across from him, watching him intently through their masks. Outside, soldiers and scientists swarm the house and yard.

SETH

Why am I hand-cuffed? Why are you wearing those masks?

GUILLEMOT  
Hello, I'm Dr. Guillemot, we need to  
ask you a few questions.

SETH  
I did nothing wrong. What's going on  
here?

GUILLEMOT  
Can you tell us what happened?

SETH  
(disoriented)  
They took my son...

Guillemot and Nealy exchange looks.

GUILLEMOT  
You saw them?

SETH  
Yes...

GUILLEMOT  
Can you describe them?

SETH  
It was dark.

GUILLEMOT  
Did you come into physical contact with  
them?

SETH  
No.  
(flustered)  
I'm not sure. Maybe... They shined  
this colorful light on me. I don't  
know.

Guillemot is very interested now.

GUILLEMOT  
Did your son have any medical  
conditions? Did he have any allergies?

SETH  
What?!

GUILLEMOT  
Was he sick in the last year?

SETH

(flustered)  
I don't know!

GUILLEMOT

He was your son. You must know something.

Insult to injury. Seth doesn't know anything about his son.

SETH

What does that have to do with anything?!

GUILLEMOT

Do you know your son's blood type?

Seth is losing it, fast.

SETH

Why are you asking me these questions?  
Do you know what these things are?  
Answer me! What do you know that  
you're not telling me!

They stare back at him, waiting. Seth blows.

SETH

My son is out there and he needs me! I  
can't be here. I have to find him. Do  
you understand? I have to find him.

Nealy exchanges a tacit look with Guillemot. Without another word, they get up and quietly climb out of the helivac.

SETH

Where are you going?

Nealy confers with a Soldier who nods and shuts the door.

SETH

Damnit!

Seth thrashes in the gurney, trying to get out of his cuffs.

EXT. YARD - NIGHT

Nealy and Guillemot stand outside of the helivac as its ROTORS begin spinning.

NEALY

(to Soldier)  
Begin a mandatory evacuation. Twenty  
mile square radius.

SOLDIER

The entire town?

NEALY

Everyone. And restrict all air-space.  
As of now this is a no fly zone.

As the helivac lifts into the air...

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS - EUREKA, CALIFORNIA - NIGHT

The sleepy town is now a congested mess. A convoy of MILITARY TRUCKS rolls through the streets. SOLDIERS divert defiant CITIZENS into the backs of trucks. Both lanes in the road are heading one direction, out of town. Everything else is blocked off.

A SOLDIER with a megaphone calls out to an undulating CROWD.

SOLDIER

(through megaphone)

*THIS IS A MANDATORY EVACUATION. PLEASE  
TAKE ONLY WHAT YOU CAN CARRY. IF YOU  
DO NOT LEAVE ON YOUR OWN VOLITION, YOU  
WILL BE FORCED TO LEAVE. I REPEAT: YOU  
NEED TO EVACUATE THIS AREA RIGHT NOW...*

CITIZEN #1

What's happening?! Why are we  
evacuating?!

TWO SOLDIERS forcefully remove an enraged WOMAN in an apron from her restaurant.

WOMAN

Get your hands off of me!

As they drag her into the back of a military truck with other disoriented CITIZENS --

CUT TO:

INT. QUARANTINE TENT - NIGHT

We can't see outside the tent. We have no idea where we are. Outside, the BUZZ of helicopters competes with HUMMING generators (OS).

Like an emergency room, the tent is partitioned with curtains. A MEDICAL STAFF moves from each one like astronauts. FIND Seth strapped down to a table as a Military Doctor draws his blood.

Another Doctor monitors his EKG and EEG BLIPS on nearby terminals.

SETH

There's nothing wrong with me.

The Doctors don't respond as they continue to work.

SETH

I need to make a phone call. I need to call my son's mom.

The Doctors confer quietly, ignoring him.

SETH

Hey, are you listening to me? I don't have time for this! I need to make a call right now!

The Medical Staff watches him through their Plexiglas face shields, their eyes betraying nothing.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Blindfolded and cuffed, Seth is led inside a sealed plastic dome by an armed soldier. His hand-cuffs are removed. His blindfold removed.

He squints to see as the soldier leaves, sealing the dome behind him. ARMED SOLDIERS man the perimeter. SCIENTISTS and TECHNICIANS in biosafety suits study him as if he had the ebola virus.

MIKE (OS)

Hey, looks like we gotta another lotto winner.

Seth glances across at three other witnesses, MIKE, overweight, 20s; GARY, mid-30s, white collar; and ILSA, the old Hispanic Woman from the ranch.

Seth ignores him, scanning the area outside the dome.

MIKE

You saw one too, right?

Seth glances across at him. Mike stares at him, waiting impatiently.

MIKE

You see a space ship? You see a flying saucer?

GARY  
It wasn't a flying saucer. Flying  
saucer's are round.

MIKE  
Chill on the semantics, dude.

GARY  
I'm just saying --

MIKE  
Was I talking to you, Gary? Was I?  
No. So do us all a favor and STFU.

GARY  
What the hell is STFU?!

Mike waves Gary away, paces around Seth, working himself up.

MIKE  
You saw one of them, didn't you? Huh?  
Don't just stand there, say something.  
What happened with you? What did you  
see?

GARY  
Leave him alone.

MIKE  
Ass. Hole.

Mike backs off, irritated, redirecting his frustration at the  
Technicians on the other side of the dome.

MIKE  
I want my iPhone back! Hear me?! I  
want to talk to my lawyer. This is  
bullshit. You can't keep us here.

GARY  
Yes, they can. Who knows what we're  
infected with.

SETH  
We're not infected.

GARY  
How do you know?

SETH  
Are you experiencing any symptoms?

GARY

No, but that doesn't mean anything.  
Maybe it's dormant or something.

MIKE

Look, dude, this is basic cable.  
They're keeping us out of the  
population because they don't want us  
telling the world what we saw.

GARY

I didn't see shit.

MIKE

Well, two seconds ago you just fact-  
checked my ass on the flying saucer, so  
that tells me you have.

GARY

I could've been wrong. I saw some  
lights. Big deal.

Mike laughs.

MIKE

Lights? Lights?! What's that smell?  
Denial?

Gary looks away, silent.

MIKE

Well, I saw something, and it scared  
the living shit out of me.

GARY

Lemme guess: was it little and green?

MIKE

No. Not little and green. Thin and  
pale... like, white pale... you could  
see their bones. Had these tiny little  
black eyes. Like some sort of ghoul.

GARY

Bullshit.

ILSA

(broken English)  
He is right.

She has everyone's attention now. Her eyes are moist with fear.

ILSA

Macabro. They take my husband away.

GARY  
They took my girlfriend...

MIKE  
My Mom.

All eyes on Seth.

MIKE  
How about you?

Seth scans the tent, studying the exits.

SETH  
They took my son.

MIKE  
Great.

Mike claps his hands together.

MIKE  
Now we have more in common. Now we're  
getting somewhere.

EXT. ALI'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

HELICOPTERS fly overhead. MILITARY TRUCKS roll through.  
Hastily-dressed CITIZENS emerge from their homes with suitcases  
and duffel bags, waiting in lines to board trucks.

INT. ALI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON A TV SCREEN

A LOCAL REPORTER speaks into camera:

LOCAL REPORTER (VO)  
(filtered)  
*Heavy winds are threatening to carry  
the deadly toxins into the neighboring  
town of Eureka. Authorities have  
invoked a mandatory evacuation, asking  
that everyone clear a twenty mile  
square radius of the accident site.*

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ali stands by the window, peering through the curtains as  
SOLDIERS guide people out of their homes, loading them into  
evacuation trucks. David comes down the stairs with a packed  
duffel bag.

DAVID

What are you doing? We need to leave.

ALI

What if he comes back, David? How is my son going to find me?

DAVID

He's with Seth. He's going to be fine.

ALI

How can you be so relaxed about this?

DAVID

Ali... you heard them. The winds are blowing that stuff in this direction. If we stay here, we're going to die.

The doorbell RINGS.

ALI

Don't answer it.

DAVID

I know you're upset, but think for a second. More than likely, Seth and Noah have been evacuated as well. Right? So they're probably waiting for us.

David goes to answer:

ALI

(warning)  
David.

David answers. TWO SOLDIERS are on their doorstep.

SOLDIER

Ma'am? Sir? You need to come with us right now.

Ali stares back at them, conflicted.

INT. QUARANTINE TENT - NIGHT

Seth paces like a trapped lion, mind clicking away.

SETH

We're getting out of here.

MIKE

How? You think they're just gonna let us walk out of here?

SETH

No. They're not going to let us walk out of here.

Seth grabs him by the collar.

MIKE

Whoa, hey -- what's with the aggro?

SETH

This isn't personal.

CRACK! Seth punches him in the face, sending him sprawling on the ground. Startled SCIENTISTS and TECHNICIANS back away.

MIKE

(holding blood nose)  
What the hell, dude?! Are you out of your mind!

A Soldier enters the plastic dome, grabs Seth.

Seth is a blur of movement, spinning behind him, ripping off his protective hood, grabbing his gun and pointing it back at him. It happens in the blink of an eye.

Fearing contamination, the Soldier backs away, trying to get out.

SETH

I'm leaving.

He turns to the other witnesses, who are in shock.

SETH

Who's coming with me?

Everyone stands. Everyone except Ilsa. She looks down, defeated, and just shakes her head 'no.'

EXT. QUARANTINE TENT - NIGHT

Seth, Mike and Gary burst out of the tent and freeze:

MIKE

Where the hell are we?

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

They're in a massive military command post. It's been set up at the original crash site. We recognize the original wagon-wheel of fallen redwoods as bulldozers and cranes remove debris.

Makeshift tents surround the area. Generators HUM as SCIENTISTS take samples from the soil and fallen trees.

As a military helicopter lands in the distance, disgorging a small contingent of SOLDIERS and SCIENTISTS --

EXT. MILITARY COMMAND POST - NIGHT

FOLLOW Seth, Mike and Gary, zigzagging across the grounds, pushing through terrified scientists and technicians in biosafety suits.

MIKE  
(holding his nose)  
Did you have to hit me so hard?

SETH  
That wasn't hard.

GARY  
Hey guys, we gotta plan of escape here?

SETH  
I'm working on it.

They come around the corner and stop dead in their tracks.

MIKE  
Gary, you were right...

BEFORE THEM

A massive tent has been constructed around the original vessel, obscuring everything we want to see. Through flapping curtains, we catch brief glimpses of the corrugated hull... maybe its down-turned wings. But we're never really quite sure. The floodlights on the inside of the tent silhouette scientists and technicians moving in and out of it like bees in a hive.

MIKE  
...That ain't no flying saucer...

SOLDIER (OS)  
Stop right there!

Soldiers approach behind them, bringing the guys out of their awestruck daze.

SETH  
Keep moving.

ANOTHER ANGLE

A Worker climbs out of an idling truck. Seth grabs him, throwing him aside and --

INT. MILITARY TRUCK - NIGHT

Seth climbs in, gets behind the wheel. Mike and Gary enter behind him.

Soldiers rush at them with automatic weapons.

SOLDIER #1

Get out of the truck! Hands in the air!

MIKE

Not feeling this guys...

Seth shifts into gear and launches forward.

EXT. MILITARY COMMAND POST - NIGHT

Guillemot emerges from the tent in time to see --

CRASH! Seth driving the truck through a barricade. Soldiers leap to get out of his way.

As it vanishes down the dirt road, trailing a cloud of dust...

CUT TO:

EXT. ALI'S HOUSE

The evacuation is still under way. RESIDENTS are corralled into a queue of military trucks. They wait their turn, one by one, pulling away.

INT. MILITARY TRUCK - NIGHT

Ali sits in the back with David, waiting for their turn to leave. She takes in all the apprehensive faces around them. David smiles, recognizing another white-collar neighbor, LARRY.

DAVID

Hey, Larry.

Larry smiles tightly, terrified.

LARRY

What's taking so long? Thought the winds were blowing it this way?

DAVID  
They're going to take care of us. We  
just need to remain calm.

As he says this, the ENGINES start and the truck starts forward,  
following another truck in front of it.

DAVID  
See? There we go.

Larry sits back, relieved.

CLOSE ON ALI

She stares out the back of the truck, at her receding  
neighborhood. She glances across at David -- calm as a  
cucumber.

As they pick up speed, rounding a corner --

ALI  
This isn't right.

DAVID  
(squeezing her hand)  
It's okay, honey.

ALI  
Something's wrong here.

She stands. Alarmed looks from the other neighbors.

DAVID  
Ali, sit down.

Ali makes her way to the back of the truck.

ALI  
I'm sorry, David. I know how  
embarrassing this must be for you.  
Excuse me, Mrs. Tierney --

She steps around an OLD LADY, using her hands to balance herself  
against the walls the truck.

DAVID  
Ali, don't do this.

He tries to get up, but there are so many people in the way.

DAVID  
Ali!

As the truck slows for a stop sign, she glances back at him one more time and --

EXT. ALI'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Ali leaps out of the truck as it comes to a halt at the stop sign. As it moves forward again, she looks back at the receding truck... at David's helpless features. He can't jump now. The truck is going too fast.

She turns away, only one thing on her mind now.

EXT. ALI'S NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

The evacuation is still under way. A military truck pulls to a stop. Seth climbs out, starts walking down the sidewalk.

MIKE

Hey.

Seth turns.

MIKE

Sorry about your boy.

Mike climbs behind the wheel and drives away.

EXT. ALI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Seth rushes up Ali's driveway, reaching the front door. He KNOCKS.

No answer.

He looks out at the emptying neighborhood, gets that sinking feeling. Maybe he missed her?

SETH

C'mon, Ali, be home...

He KNOCKS again.

A beat. Seth turns away, frustrated. He starts to walk away when --

Ali appears behind him, breathless, coming up the driveway. She stops and stares at him in horror. Her son is not with him.

Her lips part in disbelief. The air is not coming out. Finally:

ALI

Where's Noah?

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Seth and Ali pace around each other, amped and flustered. He's just told her everything.

ALI  
Aliens...? Aliens, Seth?! You can't be serious.

SETH  
Look outside. That's not a plane crash. You know that.

ALI  
But they're evacuating. They said the wind's blowing that stuff our way...

SETH  
I just came from there. I'm alive. Look at me. Ali, look.

Ali glances across at him, fighting emotion, staying on track.

ALI  
Why would they lie?

SETH  
Because for some reason they don't want anyone finding out what about this.

ALI  
Why?

SETH  
I don't know! Ask them!

ALI  
Don't yell at me, Seth.

They both take a step back, trying to be calm.

ALI  
Where was the last place you saw him?

SETH  
The ridge.

ALI  
Where? Which road?

SETH  
We were on Ridgetop Loop when it happened.

ALI

What were you doing up there?

SETH

I was taking a detour. They had all the roads blocked off.

ALI

So, these "aliens"... You wouldn't happen to know why they took Noah?

SETH

No.

ALI

That's not good enough, Seth. Talk to me. You were there. You saw it happen. You saw them take my son.

SETH

I don't know. I don't know!  
(pacing, thinking)  
But I think these people do.

ALI

Why?

SETH

They were asking me about my blood type. About Noah's medical records. That's gotta mean something, right?

Ali looks out the window as soldiers evacuate the last of the residents.

SETH

Ali, they have one of the ships. They're studying it.

ALI

What?

SETH

I saw it on the way out.

Ali starts to respond, reconsiders and -- grabs her keys.

SETH

Where are you going?

ALI

Where are we going? You're going to show me this place.

SETH  
 He's gone, Ali. I watched them take  
 him. And these scientists? I promise  
 you they're not gonna tell us anything.

ALI  
 (walking away)  
 Are you coming or not?

ON Seth's exasperated look...

INT. ALI'S SUV - NIGHT

Ali backs down the driveway. Seth's in the passenger's seat.  
 Outside, road-blocks and military trucks everywhere.

SETH  
 The road's are closed. You're not  
 gonna get past them.

ALI  
 There you go. Back-seat driver again.

SETH  
 I know you're freaking out. But if you  
 stop and think --

She shifts gears, speeding across the neighbors lawn and --

SETH  
 Ali!

CRASH! She blows through the fence, 4x4ing between the houses.

SOLDIER (OS)  
 Hey!

As nearby Soldiers chase after them --

Seth glances across at Ali, amazed. He's never seen this side  
 to her before.

INT. COMMAND TENT - NIGHT

Guillemot follows Nealy through the clotted mess of scientists  
 and technicians at their stations. Sleeves are rolled up, empty  
 coffee cups sit next to terminals, this is an all-nighter.

GUILLEMOT  
 We need to study the vessel further.  
 We need more information.

NEALY

What are you suggesting? That we wait for them to attack again? Take more innocent people?

GUILLEMOT

That's vessel's engines are at fifty percent capacity. Even if we were to get it up and running, that environment is hostile. It's suicide.

NEALY

We're out of time. They know we have their technology. I can promise you the next time they return, it won't be a few missing people. They're going to take us out of commission.

GUILLEMOT

We're throwing everything away. There's so much we can still learn.

NEALY

Doctor Guillemot, if we don't do something now, we are forfeiting the option of protection. We are at the mercy of an unseen enemy that can attack us on their own time-table. If we're going to win this war, we have to fight it on their turf. Not ours.

Nealy turns to a nearby Scientist.

NEALY

Prepare for launch.

INT. ALI'S SUV - NIGHT

Ali drives off-road, CRASHING through some trees, shifting into a lower-gear, and plowing up onto...

...an empty dirt road. As they climb up onto it --

ALI

Which way?

Seth glances across at her, overwhelmed, still trying to figure her out. He points.

SETH

Over there.

As she speeds down the dirt road --

SETH  
You should slow down.

ALI  
Are you driving? No, you're sitting in  
the passenger's seat, and I'm driving.

SETH  
You're gonna kill us.

ALI  
Do you always have to have the last  
word?

SETH  
Ali -- ?!

He braces himself as she careens around a corner, showering  
gravel into the darkness.

ALI  
How much further?

SETH  
We're close.

ALI  
How close? Details.

SETH  
Gimme a second to think!

As he says this, a BRILLIANT LIGHT appears through the trees.  
Seth knows what this means. He loses the blood in his face.

SETH  
Pull over.

ALI  
What? What is it?

SETH  
Pull over, now!

WHOOSH! The brilliant light comes around the corner.

Ali swerves and --

ALI  
Oh my God...

SETH  
Turn around!

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Ali fishtails, running off the road, bouncing down the shoulder.

INT. ALI'S SUV - NIGHT

Seth shields his eyes as the bright lights approach them.

SETH

Hurry!

Ali struggles with the gears, getting nowhere.

SETH

Ali?!

ALI

I'm trying!

EXT. ALI'S SUV - NIGHT

CLOSE ON THE TIRES

Spinning in wet mud. Zero traction.

INT. ALI'S SUV - NIGHT

The bright lights stop directly in front of them.

Seth blinks, squinting, letting his eyes focus to find --

WOMAN (OS)

Everybody okay in there?

The local female reporter we saw earlier.

HANNAH, 20s, watches them concerned. Her news van's headlights shine brightly behind her.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Ali's SUV is back on the shoulder. Seth and Ali walk with Hannah to the back of her van.

HANNAH

You're not driving anywhere near that area. Believe me. We've tried everything. Whatever they're up to, it's big. Huge. I've never seen this much activity in my life. And the whole toxic plane crash bullshit?

(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Sell that to the next guy. This is a cover-up.

SETH

I know --

HANNAH

(talking over him)

Have you checked your cell-phone lately? No signal. We can't even get a feed out of here. They're blocking all reception. Nothing gets in or out of this area.

Her cameraman, KYLE, 20s, the bearded, spectacled Berkeley type, runs through digital video caught earlier.

KYLE

You guys see that chopper party? What's that, huh? It's like they're setting up some sort of secret base.

SETH

They are.

Everyone slowly turns and looks at him.

HANNAH

How do you know?

SETH

Because I've been there.

Hannah stops dead in her tracks.

HANNAH

Really? Get out here. Really?  
(slapping Kyle's shoulder)  
Kyle, you hearing this?

Kyle looks up at Seth, skeptical.

KYLE

I'm hearing it.  
(then, cautiously)  
You wouldn't happen to know why?

SETH

No. But they have an alien ship.

Hannah and Kyle exchange tentative looks. Not another local conspiracy nut.

HANNAH

Alien... ship... like space ship?

SETH

That's right. I saw it with my own eyes.

HANNAH

I'm sorry, could we go back for one second? Where do you fit into all of this?

SETH

They took my son.

HANNAH

The scientists?

SETH

The aliens.

Awkward pause. This is getting harder and harder to swallow. Kyle looks away, fighting a smirk.

KYLE

(under his breath)  
Nice...

HANNAH

Well... maybe could you show us?

KYLE

Oh God, Hannah, c'mon!

HANNAH

Shut up, Kyle.

KYLE

I gotta get home for the game.

HANNAH

Then go. Think you're not expendable? I'll have Zach here in two seconds.

KYLE

How? You can't call him.

HANNAH

You wanna dance with me, Kyle? You really wanna do that right now?

Kyle sees that Hannah means business.

KYLE

You're mental sick, okay? Life is not all this. You need a relationship.

HANNAH

Now you're a life coach. Shut up and grab the camera.

Kyle storms off to grab the camera.

SETH

You said we couldn't get anywhere near the area.

HANNAH

I said drive. I didn't say anything about walking.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Flashlight beams crisscross through the trees. The group takes shape, walking quickly through the giant redwoods, talking excitedly over each other.

HANNAH

Alright, go back to the part where they sucked the car out of the garage. Was it like, what, levitation or...?

SETH

No, it was probably magnetic pull.

HANNAH

This is so freaking cool.

ALI

Excuse me -- ?! This is my son you're talking about!

HANNAH

I didn't mean it that way.

ALI

Do you have a kid?

HANNAH

No, I -- I --

ALI

No, you don't. I didn't think so. So you don't know what it's like to lose one.

HANNAH

I apologize.

ALI

Keep it to yourself. I don't wanna hear it --

Ali stumbles on a root. Seth reaches down to help her up. She swats his hand away.

ALI

Don't touch me. Don't ever touch me again. Understand?

She helps herself to her feet, wiping herself off. As they keep walking --

ALI

You're the reason he's gone. You lost him, Seth. You lost our son.

SETH

I tried everything I could. It wasn't my fault.

ALI

Oh please. You've been ducking out of Dad mode his entire life. You're not fooling anyone here.

Hannah and Kyle exchange looks as they walk: uh oh. Here comes the fireworks. They give themselves a little more berth between the arguing couple.

SETH

I had responsibilities!

ALI

You'd rather go fight a war somewhere else, than face your own son.

SETH

That's bullshit.

ALI

Yeah? Is it? Then why did you take that second tour?

SETH

Because my country needed me.

ALI

Your family needed you!

SETH

Yeah, I can see that. That's why you said 'yes' to David. I bet he really had to twist your arm to get that rock on your finger.

ALI

Well, I didn't see one coming from you.

SETH

I was waiting for the right time.

ALI

I thought I was never going to see you again.

SETH

What's done is done. Can't change the past.

ALI

(incredulous)  
 "What's done is done?" That's your response? Maybe you should have stayed over there.

SETH

You know what, Ali. You're right. Maybe I should have. I spent five years over there fighting that war, only to come home and find myself fighting in this war. I can't get a job. I can't get a loan. I can't even get my own family and friends to call me back. I'm tired of fighting! I just want it to be over!

ALI

Oh, you don't have to worry about that one, Seth. It's over --

A helicopter's XENON LIGHT lights up the forest floor around them.

Hannah and Kyle hide beneath a fallen log.

Seth pulls Ali into himself, hiding beneath the cover of some branches. Her flashlight tumbles to the forest floor.

HANNAH

(hissing)  
 Flashlight!

CLOSE ON THE FLASHLIGHT

Its beam giving away their location.

ANOTHER ANGLE

As the helicopter circles around again, coming closer --

Seth leaps out, grabbing it, turning it off, and rolling back into place just as --

WHOOSH! The searchlight hits the area he was just standing in. It hovers there a moment...

KYLE

They know we're here.

Hannah signals for silence.

The helicopter circles around one more time, its searchlight bouncing along the forest floor...

It shines right on top of the branches protecting Seth and Ali.

CLOSE ON SETH AND ALI

He's holding her beneath the web of knotted branches. They both become self-conscious. She wants to peel herself away from him. But she can't. The light is hovering right over them. They can't move a muscle.

ANOTHER ANGLE

As the searchlight moves away, and the helicopter continues its search...

Ali yanks herself away from Seth then... snatches her flashlight out of his hand. She puts some distance between them, so angry she can't even look at him.

Everyone comes out of hiding, relieved at this close call.

SETH

We better keep moving.

INT. MEDICAL TENT - NIGHT

Guillemot and Nealy observe as SIX SOLDIERS are given last minute physical exams.

GUILLEMOT

Are they ready?

NEALY

They've been in intense training for a week. They know the fundamentals.

GUILLEMOT

That's not enough time.

NEALY

It's going to have to be.

As Nealy leaves, Guillemot assesses the young Soldiers, fearing the worst.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Seth leads the exhausted group through the trees. They quickly take cover as --

TWO MORE MILITARY HELICOPTERS fly overhead, confirming they are heading in the right direction.

Kyle sits on a stump, setting his camera down, out of breath.

KYLE

One sec. Just need a second here.

He pulls out a cigarette, lights it.

Everyone stops, watching him cough and smoke.

HANNAH

Kyle?

KYLE

(spreading his arms wide)  
What are we doing, huh? We're following this dude around in the forest, at night, for what? Because he said he saw "aliens?" Aliens, Hannah? I'll take a plane crash over that shit any day.

He shakes his head, COUGHS some more.

KYLE

No... I'm gonna sit here on this stump and have this goddamn cigarette.

SETH

Enjoy your cigarette. We'll send you a post-card.

KYLE

Ha-ha, yeah, very witty. You do that.  
 (under his breath)  
 Freaks.

Seth and Ali continue walking. Hannah's eyes bounce between the now-leaving couple, and Kyle, sitting on his ass with the cigarette.

HANNAH

Get your ass up right now.

KYLE

(slapping the trunk)  
 My ass is happy right here, thank you very much.

HANNAH

Alright, let me rephrase that: move your ass, or find another job.

Seth and Ali are almost out of sight.

HANNAH

Push me, Kyle!

KYLE

Fine! Got it!  
 (getting up)  
 Didn't mean to cross your little line there.

He grabs his camera.

KYLE

I better be getting over-time for this.

EXT. FOREST RIDGE - NIGHT

Seth leads the group up the ridge, careful to take cover in the trees as passing helicopters ROAR overhead.

He stops at the top, eyes filling with recognition.

SETH

There.

Ali comes up behind him, winded. Her eyes grow big as she sees what he sees.

Hannah and Kyle pull up the rear. Their jaws drop.

HANNAH

Kyle?

Kyle raises his camera.

KYLE

Yeah. Yeah, I'm seeing it.

BENEATH THEM IN THE CLEARING

The brightly lit military command post. The fallen redwoods patterned like a wagon-wheel. Tents are everywhere. Scientists and Technicians move around the area like astronauts. At the center of all the commotion...

The Vessel.

The tent has been removed. Floodlights shine against its dark metal surface. Now, for the first time, we finally get a good look at it.

Its triangular in shape, like a stealth bomber, but the size of a small ferry. Its wings are serrated, and bent under like jagged fishhooks. Its hull blunted like the head of a great white shark.

Ali is stammering, too much energy, too much information, not enough time to process:

ALI

UFO... spaceship... What the hell is that?!

SETH

I was trying to tell you...

ALI

Yeah, I know. But what the hell is that?!

They watch as a forklift loads several boxes of explosives.

HANNAH

Hold on, hold on -- now what are they doing? What are they loading there?

KYLE'S CAMERA POV

SHAKY CAM showing a crew loading a large crate onto the vessel.

Suddenly, the SHAKY CAM swings over to find --

KYLE (OS)

Oh, look at that.

SIX SOLDIERS in biosafety suits queue up. The leatherneck pilot, REYNOLDS, 30s, leads his crew aboard like astronauts and...

ANOTHER ANGLE

Seth watches the Soldiers board the vessel.

A beat.

The vessel's door slowly closes.

KYLE

We gotta get closer. I need a better shot.

SETH

That's a bad idea.

ALI

Seth, these people know where our son is.

SETH

Maybe, maybe not. Even if they did, do you really think they're going to tell us?

ALI

So, what are we supposed to do? Sit back and watch? I can't do that.

She starts down the other side of the ridge, moving closer to the command post. Hannah and Kyle are right behind her.

CLOSE ON SETH

Staring at the vessel below them. He has a bad feeling...

INT. COMMAND TENT - NIGHT

Mission Control. Techs talk over each other in excitement. Nealy speaks into a head-set, pacing before LARGE SCREENS showing various angles of the Soldiers' HELMET CAMS as they board the vessel.

ON THE SCREENS, the HELMET POVs pan around, giving us brief glimpses of the vessel's interior. From what we can make out, it's stark and minimalist. High ceilings. Jagged walls. Seats surround a round table that pulses with colored crystals.

TECHNICIAN (VO)

(over speakers)

Team One, prepare for launch.

All eyes on the screens showing the HELMET CAMS. Guillemot appears near the back, arms folded, tight with apprehension.

TECHNICIAN (VO)  
(over speakers)  
Engines.

ON THE MONITORS

HELMET CAMS show various angles of Reynolds and his Team.

REYNOLDS (VO)  
(filtered)  
Check.

He places his bare hands over the pulsing crystals on the navigation table and --

EXT. FOREST RIDGE - NIGHT

The group huddles behind a giant boulder, watching below as --

The vessel begins to WHIR, its brilliant lights flashing on all at once.

Kyle keeps his camera steady, recording everything.

INT. COMMAND TENT

Everyone watches with rapt attention as the various screens show the interior and exterior angles of the vessel.

TECHNICIAN (VO)  
(over speakers)  
Team One, proceed.

REYNOLDS (VO)  
(filtered)  
Beginning initiating sequence.

ON THE MONITORS

Different angles as the obscure HELMET CAMS show hands coursing over the pulsing crystals on the round table.

TECHNICIAN (VO)  
(over speakers)  
All clear.

EXT. FOREST RIDGE - NIGHT

Seth, Ali, Hannah and Kyle watch as the remaining Technicians and Scientists clear the area around the vessel. As soon as they are far enough away, we hear:

TECHNICIAN (VO)  
 (over speakers)  
 T-minus 10... 9... 8...

INT. COMMAND TENT - NIGHT

Nealy paces before the screens. She looks back at Guillemot, catches his apprehensive look, chooses to ignore it.

TECHNICIAN (VO)  
 (over speakers)  
 ...7...6...5...4...

EXT. FOREST RIDGE - NIGHT

The group takes cover behind the boulder, watching in bewilderment as --

The vessel pulses with light, growing brighter and brighter.

TECHNICIAN (VO)  
 (over speakers)  
 ...3... 2... 1...  
 (beat)  
 Team One, you are go for launch. I  
 repeat: you are go for launch.

The vessel WHIRS loudly, begins to ascend.

The group watches, utterly stunned...

KYLE  
 OH. MY. GOD.

INT. COMMAND TENT - NIGHT

Nealy intently watches the vessel ascend into the sky on a monitor, almost willing it to happen.

NEALY  
 (under his breath)  
 Here we go.

EXT. FOREST RIDGE - NIGHT

The group watches in speechless amazement as...

The vessel rises over the tree-tops, lighting the forest floor beneath it. It ascends even higher, past their position on the ridge... even higher... and then...

...stops and hovers in the darkness like a pulsing star.

A beat.

Ali unconsciously grabs Seth's hand as the vessel hangs there in this magic moment. He notices, conflicted with confusion and happier memories. Under different circumstances, they would have been perfect for each other.

The vessel glows brighter, pulsing over the tree-tops before them.

Another moment, and then --

KABOOM! It explodes in a ball of white light. Shockwaves ripple outwards through the darkness in concentric circles.

Seth throws himself on top of Ali as a WALL OF DUST, TWIGS AND BRANCHES engulfs them.

ANOTHER ANGLE

They sit up, recovering in shock.

As the light slowly dissipates, we realize a layer of frost has covered everything in the area.

ALI

C-cold... freezing...

Seth recognizes the frost from before.

Kyle uses his sleeve to wipe off his lens.

KYLE

What just happened? Somebody explain what just happened, because I'm really starting to freak out right now.

HANNAH

Where did it go?

She moves forward, her breath clouding in front of her.

HANNAH

Where the hell did it go?!

The vessel is gone. It was there a second ago, now it's not.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND TENT - NIGHT

ON THE MONITORS

The HELMET CAM SCREENS turn to snow and static.

TECHNICIAN (VO)  
(over speakers)  
Stand by.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Everyone in the room is silent. They're all watching the blank screens with abated breath.

Suddenly, the static clears on the MONITORS and we get fuzzy images from the HELMET CAMS, picking up the disoriented faces of Reynolds and his team on the vessel. It's like someone just dumped ice-water on them. They look around themselves, trembling, reeling. One of them leans forward and vomits.

Nealy moves to a screen, speaking into a head-set.

NEALY  
(into head-set)  
Team One, status?

ON THE HELMET CAM, Reynolds looks out the window, overwhelmed.

REYNOLDS (VO)  
(filtered; gasping)  
We're here... I... I believe we've  
arrived. All systems are operational.

Nealy breathes a sigh of relief.

NEALY  
(into head-set)  
You're clear to proceed to coordinates.

A MONITOR

shows a HELMET CAM looking out the window of the vessel. Through all the blur of movement, we catch brief glimpses of the world beyond...

From what we can tell, it's night, almost pitch black. It's barren and windswept. Visibility is almost non-existent, like we're on the bottom of the ocean.

Powerful GUSTS HOWL and SHRIEK, rocking the vessel back and forth as it begins moving forward.

EXT. FOREST RIDGE - NIGHT

A helicopter's SEARCHLIGHT passes over the area. As darkness returns...

Seth, Ali, Hannah and Kyle emerge from their hiding spaces.

HANNAH  
Why is it all quiet?

KYLE  
Maybe it blew up?

HANNAH  
Then where's the wreckage? I don't see  
any wreckage. Do you?

SETH  
It's how they travel.

All eyes on Seth.

SETH  
Right before they took my son, it just  
appeared out of nowhere. Without  
warning.

KYLE  
So, they teleport or... or what?

SETH  
I'm just telling you what I saw.

HANNAH  
Well, I say we go down there right now  
and get us some damn answers.

SETH  
They'll just quarantine you.

ALI  
Do you have a better plan, Seth?  
Because right now, I'm not hearing it.

SETH'S POV

He studies the scientists and technicians in biosafety suits  
beneath them.

INT. COMMAND TENT - NIGHT

Nealy watches the monitors.

NEALY  
(into head-set)  
Do you have a visual on the facility  
yet?

REYNOLDS (VO)  
(filtered)  
Negative. We can't see anything.  
(then)  
Hold on...

ON THE MONITOR

THE HELMET CAM looks out the window at the ravaged world  
outside. Through the wind and sheets of sand, we make out a  
dark shape.

As we get closer, we realize it's a structure of weathered  
metallic domes connected by tubes. They're barely visible in  
the shifting sand, resembling the skeletal spine of a giant  
snake.

REYNOLDS (VO)  
(filtered)  
That's an affirmative. We have  
visibility on the structure.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Excited looks from everyone in the room.

NEALY  
(into head-set)  
Stay on course.

EXT. FOREST RIDGE - NIGHT

The group huddles in the shadows.

ALI  
I want to go with you.

SETH  
If we all go down there, we're gonna  
get caught. I've been there. I have a  
lay of the land.

KYLE  
The dude seems to know what he's  
talking about. Let him do this thing.

HANNAH  
So we're just supposed to hang around  
and hope you don't get found out?

SETH

You want answers? This is how it's gonna happen.

HANNAH

Alright. But we're not waiting around forever.

Seth starts to leave.

SETH

I'll be back.

ALI

Seth...

Seth turns. Ali wanted to say something personal. But she can't say it now. She becomes self-conscious.

ALI

Hurry.

INT. COMMAND TENT - NIGHT

ON THE MONITORS

Various HELMET CAMS showing shaky images of the Soldiers inside the vessel. They're anxious, on edge as they slowly approach the metallic domes.

REYNOLDS (VO)

(filtered)  
Heading toward coordinates.

As the structure grows on the screen, gaining definition...

NEALY

(into head-set)  
Lights out. We're going in low and slow.

REYNOLDS (VO)

(filtered)  
Lights out. Check.

The lights go out inside the vessel.

Nealy finds Guillemot's scared look.

NEALY

Dr. Guillemot?

GUILLEMOT

It's too easy. Something's wrong.

CLOSE ON THE MONITOR

HELMET CAM showing the domed structure growing bigger and bigger...

EXT. FOREST RIDGE - NIGHT

Seth slides down the steep decline of the ridge, catches himself on a tree... slides down a little further... catches himself again...

EXT. MILITARY COMMAND POST - NIGHT

Seth reaches the outskirts of the camp. He takes cover behind a tree as TWO PATROLLING HELICOPTERS circle overhead.

He looks around himself, thinking.

HIS POV

His gaze settling on a nearby Technician in a biosafety suit. He's taking a soil sample from the area.

EXT. MILITARY COMMAND POST - MOMENTS LATER

Seth is now wearing that Technician's biosafety suit. He moves through the camp, passing similarly dressed soldiers and scientists, all preoccupied with their work.

As he approaches a central cluster of tents --

SCIENTIST #1 (OS)  
This area is off limits.

The Scientist looks at Seth, checking the badge on his suit.

SCIENTIST #1  
You're not authorized to be in here.

SETH  
(leaving)  
Sorry, I... uh... lost...

SCIENTIST #1  
Hey, come back here. Who are you?

ANOTHER ANGLE

Seth walks quickly, searching for a place to hide. The Scientist pushes through the crowd behind him.

SCIENTIST #1  
Hey! We have a breach!

Seth turns a corner, and --

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

-- finds himself facing more soldiers. He looks back at the approaching Scientist, trapped.

He slips into the nearest tent and --

INT. TENT - NIGHT

Dimly-lit. Seth enters, letting his eyes adjust to the darkness. As they do, his lips part in awe. He's unable to wrap his mind around what he's looking at.

BEFORE HIM

Two tables with two autopsied corpses.

Their bodies are long and white, albino white. Tiny black eyes stare lifelessly from wide, swollen faces. Their skin is marbled with grotesque lesions. Their mouths agape, showing razor sharp teeth. Their arms and legs still wear titanium exoskeletal armor. It's been cut off of their torsos, which are clamped open for the autopsy.

An exhausted DOCTOR looks up from his terminal as he inputs data. He's wired from being up all night.

DOCTOR

Can I help you?

Seth glances back outside. Everyone is gathering, searching for him right now. Seth has to think of something fast.

SETH

Dr. Guillemot sent me here for the test results.

The Doctor gives him a quizzical look. And then...

DOCTOR

The results for the blood tests were sent over an hour ago. How many times do I have to tell him? They expired from a blood-borne disease.

SETH

From our environment?

DOCTOR

No, theirs. Why do you think they're taking our people?

CLOSE ON SETH

Eyes widening as he puts it together.

INT. COMMAND TENT - NIGHT

ON THE MONITORS

The SOLDIERS HELMET CAMS shake wildly in the shadows, giving us brief glimpses of the domed structure beneath us as we glide over it, lights out.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Nealy watches with Guillemot and the rest of the team.

NEALY

(into head-set)

Do you have a visual on the target?

REYNOLDS (VO)

(filtered)

Not yet. We should be coming upon it anytime now.

SOLDIER #1 (VO)

(filtered)

What's that over there?

SOLDIER #2 (VO)

(filtered)

Where?

The HELMET CAM POVs wave around wildly with movement, searching, finding...

Something coming out of the darkness, slowly approaching them.

At first, it's a pulsing light in the pitch. But as it comes closer, its shape gains definition... like a shark coming out of dark waters.

It's a vessel, exactly like their own.

SOLDIER #1 (VO)

(filtered)

Oh no...

NEALY

(into mic)

Cloak.

REYNOLDS (VO)

(filtered)  
It's not working... It's still coming.  
It saw us.

NEALY

(into mic)  
Calm down. Concentrate.

REYNOLDS (VO)

(filtered)  
We need to rush the target.

NEALY

(into mic)  
No. We don't know what we're up  
against. Hold your position and cloak.  
That's an order.

REYNOLDS (VO)

(filtered)  
It's too late. They've locked on us.  
We either make our move, or we don't.

NEALY

(into mic)  
If you don't keep your cool and listen  
to me, you are going to die. Do you  
understand me, Sergeant? Now activate  
your cloaking device. Now!

REYNOLDS (VO)

(filtered)  
Engines at max capacity. Everybody  
grab onto something. We're going in  
fast.

The vessel begins to accelerate over the structure, moving  
faster and faster.

NEALY

(into head-set)  
Sergeant?

REYNOLDS (VO)

(filtered)  
Target is in sight.

A shaky HELMET CAM gives us a brief glimpse of something bright  
and colorful in the darkness ahead of us. It's not like  
anything we've ever seen before.

SOLDIER #1 (VO)  
 (filtered)  
 What's happening? What's it doing?

SOLDIER #2  
 (filtered)  
 What's that light?

NEALY  
 (into head-set)  
 Sergeant?

The crystals light up on the table behind them.

A shrill ALARM erupts from the interior of the vessel. The soldiers cover their ears in pain.

SOLDIER #3 (VO)  
 (filtered)  
 Turn it off! Make it stop!

REYNOLDS (VO)  
 (filtered)  
 I can't!

Another HELMET CAM looks outside window as the vessel approaches them. It lights up like a Christmas tree. Pulsing brilliantly.

SOLDIER #3 (VO)  
 (filtered)  
 Turn around! Get us out of here!

REYNOLDS (VO)  
 (filtered)  
 The system's shutting down!

SOLDIER #1  
 (filtered)  
 How is that possible?!

REYNOLDS (VO)  
 (filtered)  
 What happened to my engines?!

ON THE MONITORS, HELMET CAMS show their scared faces, bottom-lit by the pulsing crystals in the table.

SOLDIER #1 (VO)  
 (whispering)  
 Oh God...

A HELMET CAM whirls around, finding the vessel outside. It's right on top of them now and it's WHITE HOT.

A beat as it hovers over us. And then --  
 WHOOSH! It sprays us with multicolored beams.  
 SCREAMS erupt over the speakers and --  
 THE MONITORS BECOME STATIC.  
 PULL BACK TO REVEAL  
 Everyone watching the monitors in disbelief.

NEALY  
 (into head-set)  
 Team One, confirm status?  
 (beat)  
 Sergeant Reynolds...?

STATIC. The connection is lost.  
 Guillemot lowers his eyes, fearing what's about to come next.

CUT TO:

EXT. AUTOPSY TENT - NIGHT

Seth looks outside. The coast is clear.  
 He exits and starts walking across the grounds when --

SOLDIER (OS)  
 Hands in the air!

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

TWO SOLDIERS pointing their weapons at him. As Seth slowly raises his hands in surrender...

EXT. FOREST RIDGE - NIGHT

Ali paces back and forth, anxiously chewing the back of her thumb.

ALI  
 He's taking too long. I don't like  
 this.

As she says this --

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK!

Everyone turns around slowly, very slowly to find --

SOLDIERS pointing weapons back at them.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND TENT - NIGHT

A defeated pall has descended over the room. Everyone works in silence, trying to retrieve a signal, or any confirmation that the team is still alive.

Guillemot confers quietly with Nealy.

GUILLEMOT  
There will be repercussions.

NEALY  
We'll be ready for them.

GUILLEMOT  
It's only going to get worse from here.  
I'd feel better if we sought outside  
help.

NEALY  
You, of all people, know that's a risk  
we can't take. If this information  
falls in the wrong hands...

Guillemot understands. Nealy doesn't need to say anymore.

A Scientist approaches --

SCIENTIST #1  
Dr. Guillemot, you're needed in  
Quarantine.

INT. QUARANTINE TENT - NIGHT

Seth, Ali, Hannah, and Kyle sit inside the quarantine dome, observed by the scientists. Across from them, patiently abiding her time, Ilsa (the old Hispanic woman who refused to leave with Seth before).

ALI  
Where's my son? Where did they take  
him? I demand answers!

KYLE  
Yeah, and -- and I want my goddamn  
camera back!

Seth is weary. He's been here before. He glances across at Ilsa, who has all but given up.

SETH

Ali... you're wasting your breath.

Guillemot appears in a biosafety suit, his eyes register recognition upon seeing Seth.

GUILLEMOT

You came back.

ALI

Who are you? Who is this guy?

Seth gestures for Ali to let him handle this.

SETH

We just want to find our son.

GUILLEMOT

I wish I could help you.

SETH

But you know where he is?

GUILLEMOT

Yes.

SETH

Then why won't you tell us?

GUILLEMOT

It's better if you don't know.

ALI

(sarcastic)

Why, because if you tell us you'll have to kill us? C'mon, what is that?!

SETH

Ali, will you let me handle this?

ALI

(jabbing a finger at Guillemot)

This guy knows. He's screwing with us.

GUILLEMOT

I understand you're very upset. I have a daughter. I would probably react the same way in your shoes. But you have to trust me right now. We're doing everything we can right now.

ALI

I'm going to ask you one more time before I lose my shit.

(MORE)

ALI (CONT'D)

(succintly)  
Where did they take him?

Guillemot is silent.

ALI

(losing her shit)  
Where the hell did they take my son?!

HANNAH

Oh c'mon! Cat's out of the bag... we know what's going on. We saw the space ship. We saw it explode. We know about the aliens. What's the harm in telling us where they went?

GUILLEMOT

There's much you don't understand. Much I want to tell you. But to do so now would jeopardize everything.

SETH

They took my son for his blood, right? Just tell me that much.

GUILLEMOT

Where are you getting that information?

SETH

I know they're dying from a blood-borne disease. That's why they're taking our people. They need our blood.

He gives Seth and Ali an emphatic look. He feels their pain.

GUILLEMOT

I am truly sorry you had to go through this.

As he walks away, Ali throws herself at the bubble, pounding on it with her fists --

ALI

Wait! Stop! Don't go! Please, don't go!

But Guillemot is gone.

ALI

(crumbling)  
Don't go...

EXT. MILITARY COMMAND POST - DAWN

The sun rises over the tree-tops, throwing light over the camp.

INT. QUARANTINE TENT - DAWN

Seth sits with Ali, demoralized. Kyle snores across from them. Hannah just watches the Scientists watching them.

ALI

He asked about you all the time.

Seth glances across at her.

ALI

He wanted to know what his Dad was doing. I used to make things up. "Your Dad's eating breakfast right now. He's having bacon and eggs and orange juice, just like us."

Ali smiles at the memory. She's unconsciously twisting Greg's engagement ring on her finger.

ALI

When I put him to bed at night, "He's reading Cat in the Hat. Just like us."

SETH

Ali, you can't do this right now.

ALI

It made him feel good. It made me feel good. In those moments, you were with us. And then we didn't hear from you anymore, I started thinking... this is it. Here comes that call. The doorbell's going to ring, and they're going to be standing there to deliver the news. The worst part about it all was telling him. Because after that, we couldn't have bacon and eggs and orange juice with you anymore. We couldn't read bed-time stories...

Seth is guilt-ridden.

SETH

I thought I was doing the right thing. I thought I was fighting for our future.

ALI

Noah was our future.

SETH  
If I could go back...

ALI  
You can't. It's like you said: what's  
done is done.

Her gaze is distant and lost. She realizes she's been twisting the engagement ring and stops, resigning herself to their situation.

ALI  
You would've been a great dad, Seth.

EXT. MILITARY HELICOPTER - DAWN

Patrolling the purple skies...

INT. MILITARY HELICOPTER - DAWN

The Pilot scans the dark trees below.

Suddenly, in the distance --

KABOOM! A white globe of light appears in the trees, leveling everything within a hundred square yards of it.

The PILOT veers away as the radio fills with PANICKY CHATTER.

SOLDIER (VO)  
(filtered)  
Explosion... 11 o'clock!

PILOT #1 (VO)  
(filtered)  
We've been hit! We're going down!

The Pilot looks out the window as a helicopter CRASHES in the distance.

EXT. MILITARY COMMAND POST - DAWN

Everybody rushes into action, boarding helicopters which arc into the skies.

Nealy bee-lines to the command tent. Guillemot catches up with her.

NEALY  
We're under attack.

INT. COMMAND TENT - DAWN

Nealy watches the BANK OF MONITORS showing various POVs as the helicopters descend upon the vessel.

NEALY  
 (into head-set)  
 Keep your distance. Where's my ground support?

PILOT #2 (VO)  
 (filtered)  
 It's circling back toward us. What's that light?

A SCREAM is drowned in WHITE NOISE.

PILOT #3 (VO)  
 (filtered)  
 I've lost power. I'm losing altitude.

WHITE NOISE.

ON A MONITOR

A bright incandescent light ILLUMINATES the sky in front of us. The Pilot's face becomes ashen.

PILOT (VO)  
 (filtered)  
 It's right under us.

NEALY  
 (into head-set)  
 Pull back!

KABOOM! The darkness explodes beneath them, a wave of light rising INTO FRAME, BLINDING US and --

CUT TO:

INT. QUARANTINE TENT - DAWN

Seth and Ali look up at the sound of EXPLOSIONS overhead (OS). Kyle startles awake. Hannah is already standing, trying to make sense of it. Ilsa makes the cross as she prays.

Terrified Scientists and Technicians abandon their posts to see what is happening outside.

HANNAH  
 Hey, where are you going?! Let us out of here!

INT. COMMAND TENT - DAWN

ON THE MONITORS

Showing various angles of the approaching vessel as it shoots down helicopter after helicopter.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Nealy is trying very hard to keep her cool.

NEALY

I need my air support right now!

RADIO (VO)

(filtered)

They're inside the perimeter.

CLOSE ON GUILLEMOT

His worst dreams coming true. Everything is crashing down...

INT. QUARANTINE TENT - DAWN

All but abandoned. EXPLOSIONS THUNDER outside. Seth moves to the door, his fingers probing its transparent surface, trying to find a way to open it.

KABOOM! Another EXPLOSION, followed by SCREAMS (OS). Equipment CRASHES off a nearby table, showering sparks.

KYLE

Great, they forgot about us!

HANNAH

Shut up, Kyle!

KABOOM! Another EXPLOSION, this one is closer. It sends a bank of computer terminals into the RUMBLING GENERATOR and --

WHOOSH! It ignites into flames.

SETH

Get back!

He ushers everyone to the far side of the dome. They shield themselves as --

KABOOM! The generator EXPLODES, ripping the dome open.

SETH

Go! Go! Go!

Seth ushers them through the flames and --

EXT. MILITARY COMMAND POST - DAWN

The disoriented group emerges from the Quarantine Tent to find --  
 Burning helicopter wreckage everywhere. The remains of an F-18  
 is spread through the camp. SOLDIERS on the ground fire rocket  
 launchers at --

The Vessel.

It moves through the command post, a massive juggernaut, hitting  
 the tents with multi-colored beams, disintegrating helicopters.

From high above, the HOWLING WHISTLE OF TWO F-18's.

Seth looks up as they arc out of the sky, staying clear of the  
 vessel's radius. They send a VOLLEY OF MISSILES at it and --

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! EXPLOSIONS BLOSSOM on the vessel's surface.

The vessel rotates around, returning fire. As the purple sky  
 lights up like the 4th of July --

KABOOM! A missile hits its surface. It wobbles and GROANS.

KABOOM! It's hit again. The vessel's light surges brightly as  
 it sends off another electromagnetic pulse. But the F-18s are  
 out of its range.

SETH

Keep moving.

Another F-18 swoops down. But this time it's not so lucky.  
 It's hit by a beam and --

KABOOM! It explodes, spiraling over the trees in a bolus of  
 FLAMES.

ANOTHER ANGLE

As they push through the pandemonium, Seth's eyes fill with  
 horror.

The Command Tent has been destroyed. Flames engulf its  
 features. Whatever answers it contained are now gone.

SETH

Oh no...

Seth stares at the approaching vessel, getting an idea. He  
 starts toward it.

ALI

What are you doing?

SETH  
I'm going to get Noah back.

ALI  
They'll kill you.

SETH  
No, they won't. I have what they want.

ALI  
What are you talking about -- ?!

SETH  
I have the same blood type as Noah.  
Think about it.

Seth sees the anxiety in her eyes. Despite everything, she still cares about him. Seth is touched.

ALI  
Don't do it, Seth. I mean it. I know  
that look in your eyes and it's pissing  
me off.

Seth gives her an apologetic look. He kisses her good-bye.

SETH  
Keep moving! Go!

ANOTHER ANGLE

Seth runs toward the vessel, waving his hands at it, trying to get its attention.

SETH  
Hey! Over here!

ANOTHER ANGLE

Hannah and Kyle pull Ali away as she struggles.

ALI  
Seth!

HANNAH  
What the hell is he doing?!

KYLE  
Dude's completely lost his shit!

ANOTHER ANGLE

Seth is a tiny speck beneath the enormous vessel. As it eclipses his form...

ANOTHER ANGLE

Seth waves his arms at it.

SETH

Right here! There you go! C'mon!  
What are you waiting for?

WHOOSH! Beams spray out of the vessel like rays from a disco ball. But they don't destroy Seth, they dance over him, assessing him, studying him.

Seth looks back at Ali in the distance.

CLOSE ON ALI

She shakes her head 'no,' terrified.

ALI

No...

CLOSE ON SETH

He musters the courage to smile. It's sad and full of regret.

KABOOM! He vanishes in cloud of white light.

CLOSE ON ALI

Concentric circles of white light spread across the command post, covering it in frost.

As the light dissipates, she looks back where Seth was.

The Vessel is gone. And Seth with it...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOLDING ROOM

Very dim light. Metallic walls. Like the inside of a submarine. A long window on the far wall shows the alien windswept world outside. Jagged rocks compete with shifting dunes. There is no sun, moon, or stars. It's just a sheet of pitch black.

Seth stirs on the floor. His arms are wrapped in a transparent viscous material. From the puncture wounds, we can tell blood has been taken from him recently. He touches the material. It seems to move and shift around his finger, as if it's alive.

A VOICE (OS)

I've dreamed of this moment my entire  
life. Since I was a child...

Seth squints in the shadows to find...

Guillemot, curled in a ball on the floor, burns covering most of his body. He COUGHS weakly. About a dozen other wounded SOLDIERS are scattered around the room.

GUILLEMOT

Intelligent life other than our own...

He laughs bitterly to himself.

GUILLEMOT

Instead of looking up at the skies, we should have been looking at our own children...

SETH

You're not making any sense.

GUILLEMOT

They're dying. Our children our dying...

Guillemot coughs quietly, and is silent.

Seth shakes him.

SETH

Hey! HEY! What's going on here? Talk to me! Where are we?

The man's eyes stare up at the ceiling, glazed and lifeless.

It's too late. Guillemot is gone.

Seth looks at the other captured soldiers and technicians, strewn along the wall. We recognize a few of them from the first mission. Others were taken in the attack.

SETH

(scared)  
Where are we?

MAN'S VOICE (OS)

Not where are we.

We recognize the pilot from the first mission, REYNOLDS, as he surfaces from the shadows, eyes sharp with anger and revenge. There's a large burn running from his right eye to the base of his neck.

REYNOLDS

When are we.

Seth watches Reynolds, confused.

REYNOLDS  
C'mon, you don't know? Where did you  
think we were? Another planet?

Seth looks outside at the alien wasteland, at a loss.

REYNOLDS  
Welcome to our future. Not so bright,  
is it?

SETH  
Our future?

REYNOLDS  
Take a good look outside. That's the  
Redwood forest. Beautiful, isn't it?  
(checking his watch)  
And look it's not even 10 am.

Seth stares out at the pitch black world of windswept rock.

REYNOLDS  
That's right. No sun. Ever.

SETH  
I saw the aliens with my own eyes.

REYNOLDS  
They're not aliens.  
(beat)  
They're us.

SETH  
They don't look human.

REYNOLDS  
We don't look too much like  
Neanderthals either.

SETH  
That was forty thousand years of years  
of evolution.

REYNOLDS  
We don't know how far in the future we  
are. Could be a couple hundred years.  
Could be a couple thousand. However  
long it was, this environment changed  
them. It molded them.

He points outside at the wasteland.

REYNOLDS

We shit on it, and it shits right back  
on us. Ain't karma grand?

Suddenly, there's a loud CLANKING in the corridor beyond.

REYNOLDS

Roaches are coming. Guess you passed  
your blood test. AB, right?

He gestures to the viscous material on Seth's arms.

REYNOLDS

AB is gold to them. They're coming to  
cocoon you.

Reynolds slowly vanishes in the shadows as he retreats to his  
spot on the wall.

Seth backs away as the door slides open and two humanoids in  
metallic exoskeletal armor appear. Their latticed armor gives  
them a hunched appearance, like roaches. Its hard to make out  
any other details in the darkness, but their lithe, albino-white  
bodies, which seem almost too weak to support the power armor.

They shine a light through the room... it bounces off the  
soldiers along the wall... all appearing to be sleeping...  
landing on Seth, who keeps his eyes closed...

One of them approaches his still form, shining the light on the  
strange viscous material on his arms. It reaches down, grabbing  
Seth's legs. It begins to drag him out of the room when --

The other one utters a GUTTURAL noise. It's standing over  
Guillemot's corpse.

The humanoid drops Seth and helps the other one pull Guillemot's  
body out of the room. As the door slides shut behind them --

Reynolds is up.

REYNOLDS

Alright, who's still with us?

A half dozen people in the room signal that they are.

REYNOLDS

Alright, this is gonna happen fast. So  
everybody keep up.

SETH

What are we doing?

REYNOLDS

What we came here to do in the first place. Excuse me.

Reynolds moves to the door, stares out in the corridor beyond.

SETH

Somebody wanna talk to me here?

REYNOLDS

Hey buddy, school's out. You're either onboard or you're not.

SETH

Onboard with what?

REYNOLDS

Somebody wanna help me with this guy?

Another soldier, YOUNG, appears behind them.

YOUNG

We're shutting the door.

SETH

What's that mean?

YOUNG

You know how we got here, right?

(off Seth's lost look)

You know about wormholes and shit?

Yeah, well, we're linked by one.

There's one connecting our present with theirs. Somehow they discovered it and exploited it with their technology.

We're closing the door here, so they can't come back there. Got it?

SETH

You have no intention of going back?

YOUNG

No.

SETH

My son's here.

REYNOLDS

That's too bad. This isn't a rescue mission.

SETH

What's to stop them from going back further in time?

YOUNG

It's not like that. This wormhole is specific. On one end is our present, on the other is theirs. The path is set, you know, like train tracks.

Reynolds sees something in the corridor beyond.

REYNOLDS

(hissing)

Here we go! Everybody get ready!

The soldiers slide against the wall. Seth moves with them. The metallic CLANKING of exoskeletal armor draws nearer.

REYNOLDS

(whispering)

Alright, remember the plan?

Nods from the survivors.

REYNOLDS

They got our ship about two hundred paces west of here. We take out everything between here and there, we take it back, and we ram that fucker into the crystal.

SETH

What crystal?

REYNOLDS

The one that's powering this place.

SETH

How do you know where it is?

REYNOLDS

Because they told us.

Reynolds scoots past him. Young catches Seth's lost look.

YOUNG

We had a little "Q & A" with a couple of them before we came over.

REYNOLDS

"Q & A," I like that Young.

The CLANKING comes closer, stopping outside of the room.

REYNOLDS

(whispering to Seth)

Let us handle this.

## ANOTHER ANGLE

The door opens and a single humanoid enters, shining its light down on Seth's inert form. He leans down over Seth. Something resembling a hypodermic needle juts out of the armor around its hand.

## CLOSE ON THE NEEDLE

Slowing descending toward Seth's neck. About to puncture his skin when --

REYNOLDS (OS)

Now!

## ANOTHER ANGLE

Reynolds, Young and the other Soldiers jump on top of it.

CRASH! CRASH! CRASH! The humanoid spins around like a mechanical bull, SMASHING them all into the wall. But Reynolds is a pitbull. He lunges his hand through the latticed neck of the suit, grabbing the creatures frail white neck. He SNARLS, vicing down hard.

REYNOLDS

Choke on this you sonuvabitch!

The humanoid chokes, unable to breath... and then collapses into a heap.

Reynolds stands, wiping his hand off on his pants in disgust.

He circles around the dead humanoid, finding its right arm. Attached to the metallic exoskeletal arm is a cylindrical handheld weapon.

CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! He slams the heel of his boot into the creature's elbow, again and again, breaking it off at the joint. He removes the severed arm inside like crab-meat and slides his own hand into the exoskeletal armor, examining it.

He points it down at the body and --

WHOOSH! He shoots a beam into its back, searing a smoking hole in its flesh.

REYNOLDS

Let's roll.

## INT. CORRIDOR - STRUCTURE

FOLLOW Seth struggling to keep up with Reynolds and the other soldiers as they navigate a dimly-lit labyrinth of corridors.

Its ceilings are high. Its walls sparse and utilitarian. Its floors are steel grating. This is survival at its grimmest.

SOLDIER #1

(disgusted)  
God, what's that smell?

SOLDIER #2

I don't wanna know.

YOUNG

The moisture's insane in here. You guys feel that?

REYNOLDS

Keep it down.

They reach a crossroads.

REYNOLDS

Left. Keep moving.

They take the left tunnel, hurrying forward, feeding off of each other's adrenaline.

Suddenly, two humanoids in armor appear. Reynolds BLASTS the first one, dropping it before it knew what hit it.

The other fires back, hitting a young soldier (ADKINS). He SCREAMS, the beam burning a hole right through his thigh.

Reynolds FIRES again, hitting the last humanoid. It hits the ground, tries to crawl away and... Reynolds fires again, this time in the head. Killing it.

Two soldiers go to work on the smoking corpses, breaking off the arms at the elbows to use as weapons.

Reynolds looks down at Adkins' leg wound. He's just going to slow them all down.

REYNOLDS

Looks pretty bad.

ADKINS

Yeah.

REYNOLDS

You did good. You should be proud.

ADKINS

(wincing)  
Yeah, thanks.

REYNOLDS  
(to everyone else)  
Let's go.

Seth stares after Reynolds, at his cold-bloodedness. He doesn't want to be a part of this.

Reynolds glances back, sees that Seth hasn't moved.

REYNOLDS  
You coming?

SETH  
You're just going to leave him?

REYNOLDS  
He's gonna slow us down.

SETH  
I'm not leaving him.

REYNOLDS  
Guess it doesn't really matter. In a few minutes, we'll all be in the same place anyway.

With that, Reynolds leads his men around the corner and vanishes...

Seth rips his shirt, makes a tourniquet for the young soldier.

ADKINS  
It's burning bad. Hurts like hell.

SETH  
I'm sorry. I'm gonna try to stop the bleeding here.

Adkins watches Seth work. He winces in pain.

ADKINS  
You've done this before?

SETH  
A few times.

Adkins watches him another moment, deliberating.

ADKINS  
You said you got a son here?

SETH  
Yeah.

ADKINS

I -- I think I might know where he is.

INT. ANOTHER CORRIDOR

Reynolds leads the charge, dropping another humanoid. A SHRILL ALARM fills the corridors.

They come around the corner to find --

A massive docking bay filled with vessels. It's like a great cathedral. Ceilings stretch beyond visibility. Multi-colored glowing crystals adorn its walls, pulsing together like one collective heart-beat.

PAN ACROSS THE VESSELS to find one crippled and scored from heavy fire. It's the one Reynolds piloted in earlier.

INT. CORRIDOR - STRUCTURE

Seth holds Adkins up, guiding him down the corridor. The ALARM can be heard in the distance. Seth moves Adkins into the shadows as two humanoids race past, heading towards the commotion caused by Reynold's crew.

ADKINS

Right up here.

SETH

How do you know all this?

ADKINS

Each of us had to memorize the blue-prints of the facility as part of our preparation. The roaches were very "forthcoming" during the interrogation.

SETH

We tortured them?

ADKINS

That's a nicer way of putting it. They told us everything we wanted to know. How to operate the vessel. The lay-out of the place. Everything short of their mother's maiden name.

SETH

You said you can fly one of these ships?

ADKINS  
Yeah. We all can.  
(pointing)  
Left up here.

As they take the left passage --

INT. DOCKING BAY - STRUCTURE

A FIRE-FIGHT is underway. Reynold's crew is slowly gaining ground on their vessel. They're severely outnumbered, but fighting viciously, hitting below the belt.

They take cover beneath the hull of the vessel, grabbing weapons from fallen corpses, which continue to fuel their fight.

INT. CORRIDOR - STRUCTURE

Seth and Adkins come around the corner, reaching a nondescript metal door with no handle on it.

ADKINS  
This is it.

SETH  
How does it open?

Adkins puts his hand on it, closes his eyes, concentrating.

A beat.

ADKINS  
Sorry, gotta clear my mind. Leg's  
killing me.

He closes his eyes again, exhales slowly and...

The door slides open. Seth stares back at Adkins, amazed.

ADKINS  
Most of their technology is thought-  
based. It's very intuitive.

INT. MEDICAL FACILITY - STRUCTURE - NIGHT

The ALARM continues in the corridor behind them as they enter, bewildered. The room is lit with a spectrum of crystals, like the navigation table, only they're all over the walls, floor and ceiling. Pulsing, strobing...

A humanoid looks up from its post. Its a smaller female. Terrified, she utters something GUTTURAL.

Seth raises his hands, meaning no harm.

SETH

We're not going to hurt you.

The humanoid backs against the wall, sliding along it to the door where she quickly flees.

ADKINS

We better hurry.

Seth steps forward, his eyes adjusting to the darkness. He's not sure how to process what's in front of them.

SETH

Oh my God...

REVERSE ANGLE

Cocoons float weightlessly in the middle of an enormous room. Only they're not cocoons, they're bodies covered in a transparent, cellophane-type material. It's organic, gelatinous, like a thin layer of skin. Just like the stuff on Seth's arms.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Seth reaches a floating cocoon. Inside the transparent skin, the distorted features of an OLD HISPANIC MAN (Ilsa's husband), arms crossing his chest like a mummy.

Seth touches him gently. His cocoon drifts weightlessly in the other direction.

SETH

Why are they like this?

ADKINS

These are the AB's. They're being preserved until they find a cure.

As Seth moves forward, earnestly searching the floating cocoons...

ADKINS

This disease is making them extinct. Why do you think they have to wear these exoskeletons? They're so weak their bones can't support their own weight. Without this support, they'd collapse like jello.

Seth stops. He finds a smaller cocoon, gently orbiting the far perimeter of the room.

SETH  
 (whispering)  
 Noah...

It's Noah.

The boy's arms are crossed across his chest. His eyes are closed. The viscous cellophane material pressing against his skin, distorting his peaceful features.

Seth grabs his son's floating form, gently pulling him down to the ground. He tears the transparent skin off of Noah.

A beat. Nothing happens. Noah is not breathing.

SETH  
 Noah...

Another agonizing moment. Seth shakes him, hard.

SETH  
 Noah!

The boy GASPS suddenly, sucking at air. His eyes snap open, searching for a point of reference.

SETH  
 (quietly)  
 Hey, buddy.

NOAH  
 Dad?!

SETH  
 It's okay. I'm here.

Noah's huge eyes take in the room, the floating bodies. He panics, hyperventilating.

SETH  
 Where am I -- ?

SETH  
 Calm down, it's okay.

Seth embraces the boy, hugging him tightly.

SETH  
 We're going home.  
 (to Adkins)  
 Help me take them down.

INT. DOCKING BAY - SAME TIME

Reynolds BLASTS a humanoid, dropping it into a heap. Behind him, Young enters the open hull to their charred vessel.

REYNOLDS

Everybody in!

The remaining soldiers file in behind Young. Reynolds is the last to enter.

INT. VESSEL

The entrance is tall, metallic and stark. Zero creature comforts. Reynolds waits for the door to close.

REYNOLDS

How are we looking on the fireworks?

Young and the soldiers remove secret panels in the floor, revealing the large crate they loaded earlier. Inside, is a nuclear warhead.

YOUNG

We got enough to party.

REYNOLDS

Alright, let's move!

INT. MEDICAL FACILITY - STRUCTURE

Seth rips the material off the old Hispanic Man...

ANOTHER ANGLE

Adkins rips the viscous wrapping off of a middle-aged woman in her 50s...

ANOTHER ANGLE

Seth tears the material off a Japanese woman in her twenties...

ANOTHER ANGLE

The alarm is still going off. Seth holds Noah as the boy shivers violently.

SETH

You okay?

Noah gives him a feeble nod.

SETH  
(to Adkins)  
Know the way out?

Adkins gives him a defeated look. What's the point? They'll never make it in time. Seth meets his gaze. They have to try.

ADKINS  
Yeah. Yeah, I do.

INT. CORRIDOR - STRUCTURE

Seth and Adkins guide the disoriented victims out of the medical facility, and into the narrow corridor.

SETH  
Where did everybody go?

INT. DOCKING BAY - SAME TIME

Everybody is here, engaged in a massive fire-fight. The damaged vessel ascends, FIRING beams at everything around it.

INT. VESSEL

Reynolds sits before a round table with several chairs around it. The table pulses with various multi-colored crystals. Its the only light in the room.

Reynolds' hands move across the crystals instinctively, like a master pianist.

INT. CORRIDOR - STRUCTURE

FOLLOW SETH AND ADKINS, leading the disoriented group down the corridor.

They turn left... then right... heading down different dark corridors.

ANOTHER ANGLE

They arrive at the docking bay as --

KABOOM! Reynolds' vessel blasts its way out of the bay, letting in hurricane force winds. Humanoids raise their arms to shield their eyes as a wall of sand spirals through the bay.

INT. DOCKING BAY

The wind is DEAFENING in here. Sand swirls everywhere, decreasing visibility. Using the sudden pandemonium to their advantage, Seth carries his son, following Adkins to an awaiting vessel. The remaining victims are right behind him.

NOAH

Dad, I'm scared.

SETH

It's just a bad dream, buddy. Now close your eyes. Can you do that?

Noah nods. Seth shields Noah with his body, head down, pushing through hurricane force winds.

ANOTHER ANGLE

They reach the door to the vessel and enter, one by one as --

INT. VESSEL - NIGHT

Seth carries his son into the vessel, leading the other victims inside.

ADKINS

Strap yourselves in! We're leaving.

As the door closes behind them, everyone finds a seat around the table full of crystals. They climb into their harnesses.

ADKINS

Let's hope the Collapse Drives are still functional.

SETH

Collapse Drives?

ADKINS

You know how black holes are formed, right?

SETH

Collapsing stars.

ADKINS

Dark matter. Ninety percent of the fabric of this universe. This vessel has the capacity to harness that energy.

Seth gives him an overwhelmed look.

SETH

That's playing with fire.

ADKINS

That's what it takes to enter a worm-hole.

SETH  
How do you operate it?

ADKINS  
You don't.

Adkins quietly extends his hands like a grand pianist, letting them hover over the crystals. One by one, they light up. As they do, the lights in the cabin turn a soft amber hue...

ADKINS  
It operates you.

He stands, watching Seth's baffled expression.

ADKINS  
You think, and it responds. It's like mediation, or prayer. You just release everything and have faith. Everybody ready?

Seth double-checks Noah's harness.

SETH  
Comfortable?

Noah nods, scared. Seth comforts him with a smile only a Dad could give.

SETH  
Almost home, buddy.

EXT. STRUCTURE

Reynold's vessel lights up the sky as it speeds along the great spine of the structure. In the distance, more vessels appear.

INT. VESSEL

Reynolds navigates.

YOUNG  
They're closing on us.

REYNOLDS  
How much further to target?

YOUNG  
We should be coming up on it right now.

As he says this, they come upon...

A single pulsing crystal, the size of an apartment building. It floats above the ground, changing colors, touching nothing.

REYNOLDS  
Time to seal the deal.

YOUNG  
I'm on it.

Young moves to an LED display on the warhead. He punches in a code.

The warhead's timing sequence initiates: "00:02:00"...  
"00:01:99"...

INT. VESSEL - NIGHT

Everyone is strapped in. Adkins' hands run over the glowing crystals.

As the ENGINES WHIR...

INT. DOCKING BAY

The vessel ascends through the maelstrom of sand now swirling through the docking bay.

INT. VESSEL - NIGHT

Adkins' hands glide across the crystals on the navigation table, guiding the ship out of the docking bay... into the windy night beyond.

ADKINS  
Hang on. It's going to get bumpy --

BOOM! Adkins is shot in the chest. He slumps forward.

A humanoid stalks toward them in titanium exoskeletal armor, snarling, lesions covering his pale face. He raises his weapon to shoot Adkins again when --

CRACK! Seth slams a pipe into the back of his head. The humanoid pitches forward, dazed and --

BOOM! A smoking hole blossoms inches over Noah's head.

EXT. STRUCTURE - SAME TIME

A small fleet of vessels overtakes Reynolds' vessel, FIRING upon it as it pushes toward the giant crystal.

INT. REYNOLDS' VESSEL

Reynolds struggles to keep the vessel airborne. Everyone inside is jostled in their seats from the blasts.

YOUNG  
Pulse incoming!

REYNOLDS  
They're not shutting us down this time.

Reynolds veers straight up as --

EXT. STRUCTURE

Reynold's vessel slices up into the air as a nearby vessel sends out an electromagnetic pulse, concentric circles of brilliant white light. He just clears the field and then --

-- dives back toward the surface, zigzagging in and out of its metallic towers.

INT. REYNOLDS' VESSEL

Reynolds navigates, barely breaking a sweat.

REYNOLDS  
Time?

YOUNG  
Less than a minute!

CLOSE ON THE LED DISPLAY

"00:00:59"... "00:00:58"...

EXT. SETH'S VESSEL - SAME TIME

It skips along the sand, roostertailing to a dead stop.

INT. SETH'S VESSEL - SAME TIME

The humanoid picks himself up, moving through the darkness, tiny black eyes scanning the shadows, hunting. The victims stare back at him from their seats, too terrified to move.

He snarls, uttering something GUTTURAL and --

Seth grabs the humanoid, throwing him into --

THE VESSEL'S CORRIDOR

-- where he slides into the wall with a CRASH. The humanoid recovers, standing up.

Seth swings the pipe at him --

CRACK! The humanoid swats it out of his hands.

Seth dodges as the humanoid swings at him, the power of his exoskeletal arm denting the metal wall behind his head.

Seth clutches the titanium-latticed armor in the humanoid's back, swinging him into the adjacent wall. The humanoid staggers back to his feet, snarling.

Seth goes for the pipe. The humanoid grabs him from behind and throws him down the stairs with super-human force.

ANOTHER ANGLE

CRASH! Seth hits the lower level, bloody and dazed. The humanoid comes down the stairs for him.

Seth struggles to get up. The humanoid kicks him in the face, spinning him onto his back.

Seth GASPS, bleeding and dazed from the hit.

The humanoid reaches down, strangling him with his powerful exoskeletal fingers.

Seth's eyes flutter back in his head. He's losing consciousness.

HIS POV

The humanoid's pale face snarling back him from the recesses of his exoskeletal helmet. Its tiny black eyes narrowing.

CRACK! He's hit from behind by --

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ilsa's Husband. He's holding the pipe.

The humanoid slowly turns toward the old hispanic man, snarling with menace. Ilsa's Husband backs away, terrified.

The humanoid rips the pipe out of his trembling hand and throws it aside.

SETH (OS)

Hey...

Seth staggers to his feet.

SETH

We're not finished.

The humanoid turns toward Seth, furious. He throws himself at Seth.

Seth dodges aside. The humanoid hits the wall.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Seth jumps on his back. The humanoid tries to throw him off, but he hangs on like a bull rider.

SLAM! SLAM! SLAM! The humanoid smashes Seth up against the wall with superhuman force.

Seth slides to the floor, choking. He looks up, then rolls aside as the humanoid stomps down on the area where he just was.

Enraged, the humanoid throws himself at Seth, who quickly grabs the pipe and plants it in the steel grating --

THUD! The humanoid impales himself on the pipe. He gurgles, pitches forward, sliding down to the ground.

Seth moves away from the corpse, gasping, meeting Ilsa's Husband's stunned gaze.

SETH

Thanks.

INT. REYNOLDS' VESSEL - SAME TIME

CLOSE ON THE LED DISPLAY

"00:00:14"... "00:00:13"...

ANOTHER ANGLE

Reynolds struggles to keep the vessel airborne as they're hit by a volley of BLASTS.

He veers a hard right, just clearing --

-- the bright concentric circles of another electromagnetic pulse.

As he swings back onto course, steering the vessel right toward the crystal --

INT. SETH'S VESSEL

Seth enters to find Adkins, barely conscious. He checks the soldier's wound. Just missed his heart.

SETH

Think you can you get us out of here?

Adkins nods weakly. He places his trembling palms over the pulsing crystals, exhale slowly and...

The crystals light up under his hands. Everyone stares at him in amazement.

The engines WHIR and the vessel begins to ascend.

CLOSE ON ADKINS

He doesn't drive the ship. He lets it drive him.

ADKINS

(whispering)

There's no place like home...

The ENGINES become a SHRILL WHINE.

EXT. REYNOLDS' VESSEL - SAME TIME

FOLLOWING it as it veers right toward the pulsing crystal, hovering at the center of the structure. It's on a suicide path.

INT. REYNOLDS' VESSEL - SAME TIME

Reynolds glances across at Young and the others with fatal resignation.

REYNOLDS

Time to shut this door. Any last words?

YOUNG

It was a pleasure working with you, Sergeant.

REYNOLDS

Stop kissing my ass.

CLOSE ON THE LED DISPLAY

"00:00:03"... "00:00:02"...

INT. SETH'S VESSEL

Everyone braces themselves. Seth squeezes Noah's hand tightly as --

KABOOM! The cabin fills with incandescent light, blinding the SCREEN.

EXT. STRUCTURE

KABOOM! Reynolds' vessel hits the floating crystal, releasing its energy in a VIOLENT CHAIN REACTION.

The structure vanishes in a mushroom cloud, lighting up the night for miles.

The pursuing vessels disappears in a wave of debris, hitting the sand and EXPLODING... BLINDING SCREEN --

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MILITARY COMMAND POST - MORNING

The post has been obliterated from the dawn attack. Doctors care for the wounded. Workers pick up the debris.

Ali sits with Hannah, Kyle and Ilsa, covered in wool blankets. No one can talk. Ali quietly removes Greg's engagement ring. Let's it drop to the mud.

Nealy appears with several other soldiers.

NEALY

I'm sorry. I truly am.

Ali looks away. She doesn't want to believe Seth is gone.

Suddenly, from out of nowhere.

KABOOM! A blinding white ball of light appears a few hundred yards away.

Ali looks up, confused.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ali rides the curious crowd of people as they arrive at a clearing. In the middle of it...

EXT. VESSEL - MORNING

Frosty clouds of steam rise from its icy surface.

NEALY

Take your positions!

Soldiers take their positions, training their weapons on the steaming vessel.

Ali watches with the crowd, eyes huge, expecting anything. Hannah, Kyle and Ilsa are right behind her.

The door to the steaming hull begins to open, slowly...

A beat.

A figure emerges.

It's Seth. He's carrying Noah. Behind him, the remaining victims help Adkins.

Ali watches, tears in her eyes as the crowd CHEERS and APPLAUDS, welcoming them home.

KYLE

Maybe they'll let me have my camera  
back now?

HANNAH

I wouldn't count on it, Kyle.

CLOSE ON SETH

He approaches Ali with their child. Their future. They face each other in the crowd. No one can speak. Finally:

ALI

Welcome home.

As the family embraces...

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END