

AMARIS

by

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FADE IN:

SUPER:

*"According to His will, Amaris, a gift from God, will mark the end of this age".*

*- unaccredited translation from Hebrew*

EXT. SPACE - EARTH ORBIT - DAY

A glorious image of Earth. A thin blue haze. The cradle of all life.

The International Space Station glides by, a metallic insect-like marvel, buzzing with electronic chatter.

We drop out of orbit towards the surface. Rivulets of cloud drape over familiar, yet altered landmasses.

Coastlines are eroded and landscapes pockmarked like a global necrotic lesion. The polar caps have melted.

North American cities come into view. Each a throbbing pimple, encrusted by suburban sprawl.

A luxurious helicopter skirts decrepit, prefabricated housing. Opulence contrasted with poverty.

SUPER:

*"Fort Wayne, TX. Home of New Houston. 2045".*

INT. HELICOPTER - OVER GREATER FORT WAYNE - DAY

MICHAEL DIMON, White House Chief of Staff, 30s, handsome despite a weak chin, stares out the window at the filth below.

Next to him sits DARREN, his red-headed assistant, early 20s. He works on a laptop computer.

EXT. FORT WAYNE - DAY

The helicopter drops into diffuse light, scattered by thick smog. It weaves in and out of highrises.

Touchdown on a rooftop helipad. The engine whines as power is cut to the rotors.

INT. HELICOPTER.

Passengers and crew don discrete face-masks and pull heavy coats over their shoulders.

EXT. HELIPAD.

The air is thick and turbulent. Dimon and Darren disembark towards a waiting contingent of equally insulated INDIVIDUALS.

CHIEF BOB ENTEGA, 50s, holding on to his brawny physique, breaks the line and steps forward with an open palm. They have to speak up to be heard over the din.

DIMON  
Mike Dimon. White House Chief of Staff.

CHIEF  
Flight Chief Entega. Welcome to NASA.

Dimon grips his hand and is ushered into the building.

INT. NEW HOUSTON - NASA MISSION CONTROL - DAY

The group hustles through a sterile corridor lit by full-spectrum light. They remove the air-filters and unzip their overcoats.

CHIEF  
Thank you for coming. The others are still arriving.

DIMON  
Where is it now?

CHIEF  
It stopped.

Dimon glances back at Darren who returns his look.

DIMON  
Where?

CHIEF  
About a mile from the space station.

DIMON  
What's it doing?

CHIEF  
Nothing. As far as we can tell.

DIMON  
And the crew?

CHIEF  
We've lost contact.

The group hasten around a corner.

INT. NASA BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

They enter a room where lights are dimmed to highlight a large central holographic projection of the International Space Station orbiting Earth.

A group of SUITS and TECHNICIANS sit in tiers around the display.

An armed GUARD pulls the door shut.

CUT TO:

SUPER:

*Streets of Chicago.*

*Four weeks earlier.*

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - DUSK

A raging sea of masked PROTESTORS advance. The swell breaks upon rows of RIOT POLICE and military vehicles.

Pro-environmental, anti-government and anti-corporation protest signs flail and collide within the throng.

Smoke grenades and gas canisters fill the air. Individuals emerge from the fog bank to pitch the canisters back at the police.

EXT. STREETS OF CHICAGO - DUSK - EVOLVING

Indistinct streets are filled with SMOKE. Will-o'-the-wisps, small trash fires, pierce the gloom. People SHOUT and CHOKE.

Now a barrage of rubber bullets sends the crowd into a panic. The police charge. Chaos.

NATHAN 'NATE' BASSETT, 30s, athletic, runs in a skull mask. He sees a fellow PROTESTER, caught like a deer in headlights. Rubber bullet launchers trained upon him.

Nate breaks into a sprint. Tackles the protester into a side alley. They roll together behind a dumpster.

EXT. ALLEY - DUSK

PROTESTER  
(winded)  
Son of a bitch. Thanks, brother.

Nate removes his mask and sucks air. Light from nearby fires illuminates his face. He extends a hand.

NATE

Yeah, that got out of hand pretty  
damn quick.  
(beat)  
Nate.

PROTESTER

John.

The comrades clasp hands as a gas canister ricochets off a nearby wall and lands next to them.

Nate replaces his mask, grabs the canister and wheels around the corner to return the belching can. He comes face to face with a gas-masked FIGURE dressed in black Kevlar.

Caught off guard he freezes. The officer wields a large baton and clubs him on the side of head.

DISSOLVE TO WHITE:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - CHICAGO MERCY HOSPITAL - DAY

Nate wakes to find himself in bed. The hospital room is DRAB and BASIC.

He tries to sit up, but the pain in his head convinces him otherwise. A wall-mounted TV catches his attention.

ON SCREEN.

Voice of a REPORTER. Images of mobs, police, smoke and fire.

REPORTER (V.O)

As you can see, violence continues to escalate across the nation. Once passive, the anti-government sentiment has grown to include large corporations and their billionaire C.E.Os. Blame for the decline in the environment and a mounting flood refugee burden being placed squarely on their shoulders.

An intercom BUZZES.

NURSE (V.O.)

Welcome back. How are you feeling, sweetie?

Nate looks for the source of the voice. Realizes it's an intercom and rests his head back on the pillow.

Above, the white tiled ceiling has brown moisture stains. Leaks from concealed piping.

NATE  
(hoarse)  
I'm fine. Where am I?

The door opens and a NURSE enters. She turns the volume down on the TV and ritually tucks in his sheets and adjusts the pillow.

NURSE  
Chicago Mercy. The police brought you in last night. We have about twenty of you here. Protestors I mean. There's someone here to see you. Do you feel up for a visitor?

NATE  
Sure. Could I please have a glass of water?

The nurse turns to leave the room.

NURSE  
Of course, hun.

Nate reaches to his head. There's a good-sized welt. He rubs the side of his torso and winces.

The door opens again to an impressive sight. Commander JAMES HAMILTON, late 30s, handsome, angled features.

He's in full military uniform. Face stern.

NATE  
Jesus. What are you doing here?

JAMES  
I've just come to see what kind of mess you've made of yourself...I can't stay.

NATE  
I'm fine, no big deal. Just a few bruises and a hell of a hangover.

JAMES  
(sotto)  
What the hell were you thinking? Just a few bruises? A headache?

NATE  
Really, I'm fine.

JAMES

I've been on the phone all morning with command. They wanted to bump you.

The nurse returns to place two glasses of water on the side table next to a bed-pan. Nate sips the water.

JAMES (CONT'D)

They're going to give you a couple days to get your act together then they want a full health report filed. You're on thin ice, bud.

NATE

I said I'm fine.

James holds out rectangular box wrapped in golden paper.

JAMES

Here.

NATE

What's this?

JAMES

Sorry we missed your birthday. I've been holding onto this for you.

Nate unwraps the gift. A bottle of single malt scotch.

NATE

I can't accept this.

JAMES

It's from Jill and I. She sends her love.

Nate turns the bottle in his hand. Distant.

JAMES (CONT'D)

You should call. Or visit. She'd love to see you.

NATE

How is she?

JAMES

She's good. Misses her brother.

NATE

And the baby?

JAMES

Isabelle. Not so much a baby anymore. She's six. They're both at the lake house while I'm here. You remember where that is, right?

Nate deflects an uncomfortable confrontation --

NATE

Where did you get this scotch?

JAMES

I know some people.

NATE

Well thanks. I really appreciate it.

Nate pours the water from the glasses into the bed-pan. He pulls the cork and pours more than a few fingers into each glass.

NATE (CONT'D)

What shall we drink to?

JAMES

Your dad? The finest connoisseur of single malt this side of the highlands.

Nate pauses. A brief smile and he raises his glass.

NATE

Dad.

JAMES

Cheers.

James takes a small sip while Nate, after a long breath to savor the aroma, downs the contents of the glass.

JAMES (CONT'D)

I figured he'd be on your mind.

Nate nods. He turns the glass in his hand.

JAMES (CONT'D)

An amazing scientist.

NATE

Yeah, well, it's a shame no one would listen to him back then.

JAMES

Great men are doomed to failure when lesser men wield the power.

(MORE)



JAMES (cont'd)

Look, your new sensors have a lot of potential. He wanted to save the planet. Maybe it's not too late. You can finish what he started.

NATE

Maybe. If the sensors can give us a diagnosis.

Nate pours himself another, more reasonable glass. Now he sips and savors the flavor.

NATE (CONT'D)

Damn, that's good.

JAMES

I have to go. Spend the night here. I'll have someone pick you up in a couple days for the physical... and take it easy with the Scotch, in your condition.

He walks out. Nate calls after him.

NATE

I'm fine!

INT. NATE'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nate walks into the living room of a compact apartment he occupies alone. Three large cases sit by the door. One is emblazoned with the NASA logo.

It's rustic and homely. Shelves are packed with books. On a wall, a painting of a cabin, deep in the woods.

Scant photographs dot the apartment. A couple of vistas with Nate alone. One of Nate with James and his bride.

Another, more prominently placed, shows a six-year-old Nate with an adult male. Both wear baseball clothing, caps and big smiles.

On the dining table a fruit bowl, empty but for an old battered BASEBALL.

He picks it up and turns the soft, familiar leather in his hand. His thumb rubs over the rough strings.

INT. HOUSTON - NASA TRAINING FACILITY - LAB - DAY

Nate, face beaded with sweat, pants into a respirator. He's on a treadmill, hooked up to various types of equipment.

Numerous high-tech modules are monitored by TECHNICIANS in long white robes and white surgical bonnets.

TECHNICIAN

Three... two... one... Okay.

A tech halts the exercise. The treadmill WHINES to a slow stop.

TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)

Finger.

Nate presents his forefinger. The tech attaches a device. A BUZZ. A small spot of blood swells into a large drop. It's drawn into the device.

TECHNICIAN

Thank you, sir. You're all done.

Nate removes the respirator and pulls leads from his arms and neck.

He catches sight of Flight engineer SARAH BROCKWORTH, 40s, lean, brunette hair in a bun, entering the lab.

NATE

Sarah!

She walks over and they exchange a hug.

NATE

When did you get in?

SARAH

This morning. Just got out of a briefing.

NATE

Great to see you.

SARAH

You too. I heard you almost got yourself grounded.

NATE

Nah, just a rumor.

James appears outside the lab and raps on the window. He waves his hand to summon them.

INT. NASA - JAMES' OFFICE - DAY

Walls decorated with degrees. On a mahogany desk a computer and a portrait of James, Jill and their daughter.

James plops down a stack of manila folders. He half-sits on the corner as he addresses them.

JAMES

I've just been briefed that Simon Skaryota is our expedition benefactor.

NATE

Seriously? It's about time he took some damn responsibility. Made billions raping the planet, now he's finally grown a conscience?

James disregards.

JAMES

That's not all. He's coming.

NATE

Coming where?

JAMES

With us.

NATE

To the I.S.S.?

JAMES

Nate.

NATE

(standing)

No, no, no. James, the guy is a major asshole.

JAMES

(standing; confronting)

Hey, stow that shit.

NATE

He's a civilian. This is a critical environmental salvage mission.

JAMES

His condition for funding this expedition was to take the jump seat.

NATE

I was just at a freaking protest  
outside his offices.

JAMES

He doesn't need to know about  
that. This is some kind of  
bucket-list thing. It's  
happening. Okay. That's all.

Nate throws up his hands and walks out.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Nate!

He doesn't respond.

EXT. ISS FACILITY - COURTYARD - DAY

Several large SUVs slide to a stop on gravel.

SIMON SKARYOTA II, late 30s, handsome and sharply dressed,  
exits the car. He's followed by a full entourage - a  
security detail, several assistants and a number of TV  
crews.

Simon approaches the welcoming party including James,  
Nate, Sarah and Chief Entega. They are joined by mission  
commander TOM "SCOOTER" LEVISON, 50s, seasoned and rugged.

Simon salutes. He's greeted with outstretched palms.

CHIEF

On behalf of NASA and the  
engineers and crew of Expedition  
one-one-three it's my pleasure to  
welcome you to New Houston.

SCOOTER

Tom Levison, Mission commander.

SIMON

Nice one. Cheers. Thanks very  
much. I'm excited to get started.

SCOOTER

We were expecting you yesterday.  
I hope everything is okay.

SIMON

Yeah, well, business, you know? A  
few loose ends to tie up before  
the big trip.

Photographers eagerly record every moment.

CHIEF

Well, if you're ready we should go in. Launch is still on schedule.

SIMON

(to entourage)

Alright you lot. Shoo. Git. Git!

Simon turns to his assistant. He plants a deep kiss on her, his hand squeezes a butt cheek. Simon walks away, arms raised like a rock star.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Okay, let's do this.

Nate and Sarah exchange an exacerbated look.

NATE

(whispers)

I told you he's an asshole. How long we stuck with him?

SARAH

Six months -- I already want to slap him in that stupid grin.

JAMES

Knock it off. From now on you keep a tight lid on that.

Nate and Sarah point at each other like James is referring to the other. They follow the group.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE - DAY

Vast, endless space.

A small confined oasis, a Soyuz capsule, glides under momentum towards the ISS.

INT. SPACE - SOYUZ CAPSULE - DAY

JAMES

There she is.

NATE

That's no moon...

Sarah gives him a side glance and rolls her eyes.

In the distance the International Space Station floats serenely above the earth.

SARAH  
We're vectored and our approach  
is under guidance control. E.T.A.  
five minutes.

JAMES  
Roger, five minutes.

SIMON  
Is anyone else feeling a little  
uneasy with this?

JAMES  
With what?

Nate smiles, like he's about to drop a "bomb".

SARAH  
(to Nate)  
I swear, if you say "I have a bad  
feeling about this" I'm going to  
punch you in the balls.

SIMON  
Well, we're going to be sitting  
two hundred miles above the earth  
in a tin can half owned by the  
Russians.

NATE  
So?

SIMON  
Tensions on Earth are pretty  
high.

SARAH  
You worried the Russian science  
team left us some kind of  
surprise?

SIMON  
They're not all scientists,  
right? I mean, the Russians send  
military. Just like we do.

JAMES  
We've been tag-teaming like this  
for twenty years. The station is  
too important for anyone to screw  
it up.

SIMON  
So, it's safe?

The crew exchange a look of surprise at this admission of  
apprehension.

JAMES  
On final approach. Initiate  
docking sequence.

SARAH  
Initiating.

The capsule docks with the ISS.

The crew busy themselves with exit preparations.

INT. ISS - SCIENCE MODULE - DAY

The crew are changed into fatigues. They pour over logs  
and switch-over protocols.

This leaves Simon to float around the module as he adapts  
to zero-G.

JAMES  
Simon. Let me give you a tour of  
the station.

James and Simon leave Sarah and Nate to finish up  
initiating the American expedition protocols.

INT. ISS - COMMAND MODULE - LATER

James and Simon sit at a computer console. Their faces  
illuminated with the dim artificial light of the 3-D  
monitor.

Nate and Sarah pull themselves into the command module  
using manual maneuvering grips secured to the walls  
throughout the station.

NATE  
You two look cozy.

JAMES  
The Russians leave everything in  
order?

NATE  
Yep. A few more booby-traps than  
normal, but we're good.

Nate gives Simon a wink.

SARAH  
We're clear to log the exchange  
on your go.

JAMES  
(into comm)  
Houston, this is I.S.S. We're go  
for exchange.

HUSTON (V.O.)  
Affirmative I.S.S., Roscosoms has  
passed the baton. Mission is a  
"go".

JAMES  
(into comm)  
Roger.

JAMES  
Alright, we're in the driver's  
seat kids.

SIMON  
So, what happens now?

NATE  
I'll put the coffee on.

He pulls himself towards the exit.

JAMES  
Milk, three sugars.

SARAH  
Black.

INT. ISS - SCIENCE MODULE - DUSK

Nate is busy stowing his environmental sensors.

Sarah checks station vitals and runs diagnostics.

SARAH  
So what do you think?

NATE  
About what?

SARAH  
Space. The I.S.S. This is your  
first time. What do you think?

NATE  
Well, it smells like the inside  
of a goat's ass and unless my  
head stops spinning I might spend  
the next six months puking up my  
kidneys.

SARAH  
That smell is probably you and  
the spinning will stop in a few  
hours. Get some sleep. It'll  
help.



NATE

No, I'll be alright. The hum is soothing. And just being away from Earth is worth the nausea.

SARAH

What about Simon? You think you can cope with him?

NATE

Half of him thinks he's a big shot. But the other half is just one alarm from pissing in his pants.

SARAH

I guess we're in for an interesting few months.

NATE

Don't worry. I'm not going to blow him out the air lock or anything.

SARAH

Good to know.

Nate pauses.

NATE

It's like fifty-fifty.

SARAH

You know he has a T.V. interview arranged for tomorrow? We're all supposed to be there.

NATE

Yeah. I packed a pair of ass-less chaps, just for that.

INT. SPACE - ISS - NIGHT

The crew are in their respective berths. Each to their own nighttime rituals. Lights out on their first day.

INT. SPACE - ISS - REC MODULE - DAWN

Nate runs on a "Colbert" zero-G treadmill. James works out with resistance bungees. Sarah pops into the module.

SARAH

We have Simon's interview in thirty minutes. You might wanna clean up a little.

Both men exchange a look and Nate reluctantly brings the treadmill to a stop. Sarah notices his disdain.

SARAH (CONT'D)  
 (to Nate)  
 Especially you, you stinky  
 bastard.

She smiles at Nate and his wide-eyed expression feigns shock. James eyes them both and grins to himself.

INT. SPACE - ISS - OBSERVATION POD - DAY

Nate arrives to find his way blocked by a large banner stretched across the entry. He slides by and emerges into the pod with the other astronauts.

Behind him he sees the sign. It's full of logos.

SIMON  
 Nate. You're just in time. Would  
 you mind operating the camera?

Simon passes the ISS handheld broadcast camera. Nate is about to lose it, but James catches his eye with a stern look.

Nate raises the camera and pulls the trigger to shoot.

SIMON  
 okay, it's time.

Simon un-mutes the TV. A REPORTER, DANIELLE (20s), novice, is in the middle of her report. Simon snatches a random work slate and activates a holographic document.

DANIELLE  
 (in progress)  
 -- at any given time there are  
 between three to six American  
 astronauts or Russian cosmonauts  
 aboard the I.S.S. Yet, what you  
 might not know is that NASA gets  
 a lot of its funding from space  
 tourists. We have a very special  
 guest today who's joining us live  
 from the I.S.S. You may know him.  
 Mr. Simon Skaryota.

The gathered crowd CHEER and SCREAM about the reporter.

DANIELLE (CONT'D)  
 Let's see if we can get Mr.  
 Skaryota on the monitor, shall  
 we? -- Mr. Skaryota,  
 do-you-read-me?

The feed is picked up and broadcast on a massive screen in front of the crowd. Simon looks up from the slate as if caught in the middle of a very important task.

SIMON

Loud and clear, Danielle. Welcome to the I.S.S. And please, call me Simon.

The crowd erupt again.

DANIELLE

Well, Simon, it's a real honor to be talking with you today. How is deep space?

SIMON

Danielle, I have to tell you it's great to be up here. It's like second nature. I underwent significant training with NASA professionals before leaving Earth.

Nate shoots James a glance. James is fixed and smiling at the camera. There is a brief flash of STATIC on the monitor.

DANIELLE

Wonderful. And what are you working on up there? Can you tell us a bit about your mission?

SIMON

Well, Danielle *my* crew and I are working on a very important set of experiments that will lead to huge improvements for the environment. As you know, all of my companies are committed to the environmental issue back on Earth.

Nate shoots another, more intense look at James who is now fidgeting with his uniform.

There is another flicker of STATIC, longer this time. James throws an accusatory look at Nate.

JAMES

Nate.

NATE

It's not me.

SIMON

We appear to be experiencing some technical difficulties here. Are you still receiving me, Danielle?

DANIELLE

Yes, loud and clear commander. We  
have you coming through --

The feed is cut. The screen filled with STATIC. POW.  
Lights and power are extinguished.

NATE

What the shit?

SIMON

What the hell is going on?

JAMES

Everyone stay calm.

CRUNCH. A spectral GLOW emanates from a florescent stick  
in James' hand.

The others follow suit. Each now illuminated by a dim  
personal light.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Okay. Let's work the problem.  
Diagnosis. What failed and what's  
the solution? Simon, please wait  
in your cabin.

They separate and move with purpose.

INT. ISS - COMMAND MODULE - LATER

Dark. Cold. Dust and debris sparkle within shafts of  
bright sunlight pouring from observation windows.

Two figures, barely visible in the dark, jockey over the  
control panel.

NATE

Nothing. We've got nothing.

JAMES

That's impossible.

NATE

Power, O2, heating, all down.

JAMES

We're in trouble.

NATE

I have an idea. But you're not  
going to like it.

JAMES

You could have just said "*I have  
an idea*". I already know I'm not  
going to like it.

NATE

Nice.

JAMES

Okay, what is it.

NATE

By-pass the safeguard. Tap the batteries directly.

JAMES

(grimaces)

Something else.

NATE

There is nothing else. We're out of options and running out of time.

JAMES

We can't do that.

NATE

I can.

James thinks.

JAMES

(shouts)

Sarah!

SARAH (V.O.)

Yeah?

JAMES

Tell me you got something.

Sarah joins them in the command mod.

SARAH

Nothing. This looks bad.

JAMES

Nate wants to by-pass the safeguard and boot up directly from the batteries.

SARAH

(grimaces)

I don't like it, but it could work.

JAMES

There's a lot riding on "could".

NATE  
I don't think we have any choice  
here.

INT. SPACE - ISS - LATER

Indistinct SHOUTS. Darkness. A suggestion of movement. A flashlight.

JAMES (V.O.)  
There. No, right there. Pull it.

NATE (V.O.)  
It ain't moving.

JAMES (V.O.)  
Cut the damn thing.

Flashlights quest in the dark.

NATE (V.O.)  
Hold it steady. I can't see shit.

A panel in the wall of the module is removed. Light spills out illuminating a pair of protruding legs.

SCRAPING of metal on metal. A CLINK.

NATE (V.O.)  
Argh! Damn it!

JAMES (V.O.)  
Shit!

James pulls himself out. Disheveled.

JAMES  
Simon? Simon! Where the hell...  
Sarah! We need a torch.

SARAH (V.O.)  
I'm in the console.

JAMES  
Now. This is going to melt-down.

INT. SPACE - ISS - COMMAND MOD - CONTINUOUS

Sarah, hair spilling from her bun, an arm buried to the shoulder behind a control panel. A flashlight between her teeth.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Sarah!

SARAH

Argh!

Sarah extricates her arm and pushes away from the panel towards the exit. Flashlight in her mouth.

INT. SPACE - ISS - SCIENCE MOD - CONTINUOUS

Shivering, Sarah yanks the ice-cold metal handle of a storage unit. It creaks open. She grabs a small torch pinned to the inside.

She pulls for the portal. Her light finds James' legs at the other end of the tech module.

SARAH

James!

James twists his body from the panel.

She lobbs the torch. It tumbles towards James. He snatches it out of the air and disappears back into the panel.

JAMES

Here. Hurry.

A POP. Flashes of blue light. Replaced by a warm orange glow.

NATE (V.O.)

Got it. Now.

JAMES

Sarah, get back there.

Sarah is already back at the control panel. Her breath visible as she sucks the frigid air.

SARAH

Don't wait for me.

JAMES (V.O.)

Do it.

Sarah grimaces as she strains against a resistant force behind the control panel. A SNAP.

BLINK, BLINK, BLINK. Light returns to the ISS. A WHIRL of motors and air begins to rush from vents. The station moans as it sighs a deep breath. Lazarus returns from the dead.

INT. SPACE - ISS - TECH MOD - CONTINUOUS

NATE (V.O.)  
Got you, you son-of-a-bitch.

James reappears from the panel. Face beaded with a cold sweat.

Nate emerges, covered in dust and grease.

JAMES  
That was damn stupid.

NATE  
Worked didn't it?

JAMES  
You're lucky.

Nate dismisses it with a Cheshire grin. Wipes his hands on his jumpsuit and blows warm breath into them.

James fingers the intercom.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Sarah?

[pause]

SARAH (V.O.)  
Receiving.

JAMES  
Looks like the bypass worked.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Yep.

JAMES  
We're coming to you.

James pulls for the command mod with Nate in tow.

INT. SPACE - ISS - COMMAND MOD - MOMENTS LATER

Sarah is curled up over the air vent.

JAMES  
You okay?

SARAH  
Define "Okay".

NATE  
Fingers and toes intact?



She confirms the presence of her middle finger for him. They share a smile. It lasts a nano-second longer than either expected.

JAMES

Let's find out what the hell happened.

James throws on a headset and keys the comm.

JAMES

Houston, this is I.S.S.

Silence.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Houston, this is I.S.S., come in.

Nothing.

He pulls out the jack and removes the headset. Flicks the switch for the PA.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Houston, this is I.S.S., do you copy?

(several beats)

Houston, do you copy? This is I.S.S.

Nate joins him at the console.

JAMES

External comms didn't come back up.

NATE

Maybe we fried the relay?

JAMES

Sarah, I need a diagnostic.

Sarah, sat at a console, fingers the keyboard.

SARAH

Already on it.

(beat)

I'm not seeing anything.

(beat)

All systems are nominal. No malfunctions. We're just not sending or receiving signal.

From the port Simon appears, wrapped in a warm blanket.

NATE  
Nice of you to show up.

SIMON  
What happened?

JAMES  
We're not sure, yet.

SIMON  
I didn't pay to be entombed up here.

JAMES  
I'm sorry. This never happens.

SIMON  
Never?

NATE  
Hardly ever.

JAMES  
Nate!

NATE  
Wha'?

JAMES  
(to Simon)  
Are you okay?

Simon sulks out of the module.

NATE  
Waste of oxygen.

JAMES  
Cut that shit out.

NATE  
I'm gonna check on the sensors.

Nate pulls himself from the module leaving James and Sarah to exchange concerned looks.

INT. SPACE - ISS - COMMAND MOD - NIGHT

James pours over protocols at the command console as Sarah joins him.

SARAH  
Well, I can't find anything wrong with the hardware. Diagnostic are clear.

JAMES

Run it again. If nothing shows up we'll have to go E.V.A. to check it manually. I want an up-link to Houston A.S.A.P.

SARAH

Alright. Where are those two?

JAMES

In the Sci-mod. Hopefully making friends.

SARAH

Is that wise?

JAMES

We're going to be up here a while. At some point they're going to have to talk.

SARAH

What's Nate's issue?

JAMES

What do ya mean?

SARAH

Why the major chip on his shoulder and a bug up his ass with Simon?

JAMES

He's been like that for as long as I've known him. Not much of a people person.

SARAH

That's clear.

JAMES

After I married his sister we didn't see him for years. Then he gets in touch to pitch these new sensors of his father's to NASA.

SARAH

His father's?

JAMES

Yeah. He'd been working on them.

SARAH

They were close?

JAMES

Close? He was Nate's idol.

SARAH

I read about the incident.

JAMES

Nate blamed himself and just kinda withdrew from everything.

SARAH

And Simon?

JAMES

I don't think it's anything personal. If Nate blames anyone more it's the one percenters that he says ruined the environment.

SARAH

Oh.

JAMES

Yeah. Well, we're all up here now. He's going to have to find some piece.

SARAH

Maybe just put an override on the airlocks.

JAMES

What?

SARAH

Nothing.

INT. SPACE - ISS - SCIENCE MOD - NIGHT

Simon bounces between cabin walls as he watches Nate work.

SIMON

You don't like me much.

Without looking up from his sensors --

NATE

Is that a question?

SIMON

More like an observation.

NATE

I like you just fine.

Simon tugs at equipment straps and cupboard handles.

SIMON  
You were a teacher, right?

NATE  
Yup.

SIMON  
Did you like it?

NATE  
Of course I liked it.

SIMON  
So, why NASA?

Nate pauses his work.

SIMON (CONT'D)  
Your father was up here, wasn't he? Some big-shot environmental scientist?

Nate takes a deep breath.

NATE  
Look Simon, I'm not really all that into sharing... I gotta get some big-boy work done here.

Simon curls his lip. Returns to browsing the cupboards. Opens one. Recreational equipment is inside.

SIMON  
Just trying to get to know my roommate a little better. We might be up here a while.

Long pause before Nate relents.

NATE  
Yeah. My dad was up here. A science officer on an expedition during the early Genesis missions.

SIMON  
I heard a lot of great things about him. Sorry for your loss.

Nate doesn't respond.

SIMON (CONT'D)  
They say you took on his work. These new sensors. They were his idea... Originally, I mean.

NATE

Ya.

Simon lifts the cover on a board game and looks inside.

SIMON

Reentry.

NATE

What?

SIMON

Your father. I heard there was an incident during reentry.

Nate fidgets. Simon notices. His eyes narrow. He pulls out a chess piece. The king. Turns it in his hand.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I heard he wasn't even supposed to be on that mission.

Sweat beads on Nate's temple. Simon's attention is on the chess piece.

SIMON (CONT'D)

They say he only accepted that mission because you --

Nate lunges at Simon and pins him to the hull by his throat.

They stare into each other's eyes. A flash of fear crosses Simon's face.

Nate recovers himself and loosens his grip. Simon tears himself away.

NATE

I'm sorry. I'm... really sorry.

Simon grimaces and rubs his neck. The chess piece floats to the "floor".

SIMON

No harm done.

He pulls himself over to the window. Away from Nate.

He gazes into the infinity of space.

Something catches his eye. He squints to bring the object into focus.

SIMON

What's that?

Nate still gathers himself.

NATE  
What's what?

Simon pokes his finger at the window.

SIMON  
That... out there.

Nate looks up to see Simon point out into the void.

He pushes himself over to the window. Squeezes up next to Simon. They are almost face-to-face.

NATE (CONT'D)  
Where?

Simon prods the window with his finger.

SIMON  
Right there. Like a blue...star.

Nate browses the star speckled sky.

NATE  
It's probably a satellite or a...

Nate breaks off as his eyes find the blue dot, now clearly visible once he has it fixed. He stares, confused. He stretches for the intercom.

NATE (CONT'D)  
James. Take a look out the port window.

JAMES (V.O.)  
What's going on?

INT. SPACE - ISS - COMMAND MOD - NIGHT

James and Sarah calibrate equipment together.

NATE (V.O.)  
Just take a look. Just off the port side. Do you see a blue light?

James and Sarah exchange a quizzical look.

JAMES  
Hold on.

James performs a back-flip to position himself over the window. Scans the sky for a few seconds then stops.

JAMES  
Yeah, I see it. What is that?

NATE (V.O.)

I have no idea. Simon just spotted it.

JAMES

Why did you say "just off the port side"? Without scale that thing could be a million miles away. Probably a supernova or something.

INT. SPACE - ISS - SCIENCE MOD - NIGHT

NATE

No. It's right there. It's no more than a click from us.

JAMES (V.O.)

Did we lose something from the station?

NATE

Nothing that looks like that.

SIMON

Could that thing have caused the blackout? Maybe some kind of spy satellite.

Nate's face begins to twist in reproach, but he stops.

NATE

Let's take a look at the footage from the externals. See if we can figure out where this thing came from.

JAMES (V.O.)

where it came from?

NATE

Couldn't hurt.

INT. SPACE - ISS - COMMAND MOD - NIGHT

All four crew are crowded around a small monitor with Sarah at the controls. The light from the screen casts an ethereal glow.

JAMES

No, try another view.

(beat)

No.

(beat)

No.

(beat)

There. Roll that back.



The screen shows a bright BLUE DOT in the corner. The video feed jolts when the recording is reversed.

The only indication anything is happening is a CLOCK TIMER in the corner that rapidly flickers backward.

The feed has wound back a couple hours when the blue dot disappears.

JAMES

Whoa. There. Okay, now play it back in real time.

Sarah works the keyboard and the clock timer ticks forward. The screen is blank. After a few seconds a blue dot appears.

Sarah looks at James who returns her gaze then looks to Nate.

SIMON

It just appears out of nowhere.

NATE

Or comes right at us, fast.

Nate thinks for a moment.

NATE

(to James)  
Where's Webb?

JAMES

Out past the moon at F-two. Why?

NATE

Which way is it pointing?

James catches on. He thrusts himself from the console and through the module tunnel. Nate at his heel. Simon and Sarah follow behind.

SIMON

What's going on? Who's *Webb*?

INT. SPACE - ISS - SCIENCE MOD - NIGHT

James scans a sky chart. Using a slide rule he makes a couple quick calculations then refers back to the chart.

NATE

(to Simon)  
The "James Webb" is the space telescope that replaced Hubble about twenty years ago. It's bigger and a lot more powerful. The media didn't cover space launches much back then.

JAMES

The declination checks out. If that thing came from more than a hundred miles away the Webb will have picked it up -- Sarah, patch into the Webb archive.

NATE

(off Simon's look)

Everything the Webb sees is automatically transmitted here and archived as a backup. The Webb is constantly looking out for unclassified asteroids or astrological events when it's not on task.

Sarah pulls up a number of files as they crowd around a 3-D projector. She follows a key chain to the archive.

SARAH

Okay, where do we start?

NATE

Open files received between two and three hours ago.

SARAH

Hold on. That's weird. The last file was received two hours and eleven minutes ago. We've received nothing since then.

JAMES

Of course. The problem with the external comms must have affected the Webb relay too.

NATE

What was the last file we received?

Sarah punches a few keys and an image, black as night, opens. In the corner, a distinct blue STREAK.

NATE

Okay, have the computer grab that image.

(beat)

Now have it go through all the files that were collected while the Webb was at this declination and look for that signature.

Sarah executes the command and files begin to migrate into a new folder.

SARAH  
Fifty seven files.

SIMON  
How far can the Webb see?

JAMES  
It's focus is calibrated for  
infinity.

NATE  
okay stack 'em and isolate our  
friend.

The files stack and open in the hologram like a 3-D  
accordion. A series of BLUE DOTS march across the space.

NATE  
Extrapolate.

The dots are connected by a blue line, mostly straight,  
but at intervals kinks a few degrees.

NATE  
Can you overlay that onto a sky  
map?

Sarah types the command. The computer scrolls through star  
maps.

An image of the milky-way appears and the blue line  
superimposes.

NATE  
Are you sure that's right?

SARAH  
Those are the distances that Webb  
collected the images.

SIMON  
How far is it?

NATE  
Far.

JAMES  
Why did it stop here?

SARAH  
Look, it keeps correcting it's  
trajectory. Like it's looking for  
something.

SIMON  
Looking for what?

NATE

I dunno.

Nate thinks. He looks up at the broadcast camera. A revelation!

NATE

Radio! It's looking for radio signal. Chip's broadcast.

SARAH

Yeah, the timeline checks out.

James' brow furrows. Simon wipes perspiration from his forehead.

JAMES

I'm going E.V.A.

NATE/SARAH

What?

JAMES

We have to figure out what that thing is. If it's interfering with our comms we have to try to disable it.

NATE

Are you insane?

(beat)

Whatever that thing is it came from outside our galaxy. We know nothing about it.

JAMES

Exactly. And it's sitting outside the window of this station... which I'm responsible for.

SARAH

James you don't have clearance for E.V.A.

NATE

I'm going with you.

JAMES

No, you stay here. I'm going alone.

NATE

NASA regulation twenty-eighty-eight -- all extra vehicular activity must be carried out in teams of two, with no exceptions.

JAMES  
That's not what it says.

NATE  
(shrugs)  
I'm paraphrasing. You think I memorized that thing? Look, I'm coming.

JAMES  
Okay, fine. Let's suit up. But you maintain a strictly supportive role.

NATE  
Got it.

JAMES  
That's an order. Keep your distance -- We don't know whether we'll have comms out there.

Nate taps his forehead in salute with a forefinger.

NATE  
Affirmative, sir.

SARAH  
I have a bad feeling about this.

INT. SPACE - ISS - QUEST AIRLOCK - NIGHT

The two astronauts climb into their spacesuits.

Sarah assists James. Simon struggles with Nate's suit. Both men are still agitated.

Once suited they back into their Extravehicular Mobility Units (EMUs). A confirmatory CLICK and the packs are securely attached. Ready to go.

Sarah and Simon float out of the module. Sarah sits at the EVA console. Simon watches through the hatch window.

SARAH  
I'm receiving your vitals and all systems are go for E.V.A. Be careful out there, boys.

JAMES  
Roger that.

NATE  
We'll be right back. Put some coffee on and hold my messages.

SARAH  
You want me to make you a  
sandwich, too?

NATE  
Would you?

Sarah blasts a pulse of feedback into his headset.

NATE (CONT'D)  
Ahh! Shit.

James punches the depressurization valve. He pulls the  
outer hatch lever. The hatch opens to reveal a star  
studded void.

The astronauts activate their JET PACKS and glide out into  
the vacuum of space.

EXT. SPACE - ISS

They skillfully maneuver to the port side of the ISS with  
controlled bursts of gas. They round the structure and the  
blue sphere comes into view.

JAMES  
Comms check.

NATE  
Receiving.

JAMES  
Sarah?

Silence.

JAMES  
Looks like we're on our own.

NATE  
Yep. What's our play here?

JAMES  
You hang back. Let me check it  
out first, then make your way  
out.

NATE  
Affirmative. Keep an eye on your  
radiation exposure. Jill won't be  
too happy if that thing cooks  
your nuts.

Nate eases back on the gas and floats meters from the hull  
of the ISS. James throttles toward the object.

EXT. SPACE - 500 METERS FROM ISS

James approaches the object. His suit illuminated by its bright blue glow. It's a sphere, about the size of a large medicine ball, with wisps of silvery light.

In its beauty is harnessed immense energy.

JAMES

I don't know what this is, but  
it's not a satellite.

James, bathed in blue light, checks his radiometer -- Nothing above background radiation. He's mesmerized. A hand reaches out. His fingertips penetrate the surface without resistance.

Instantly the orb emits a powerful PULSE that propels James backwards. He tumbles head over heels. The sphere grows to twelve feet in diameter. As it reaches its zenith it collapses to a singularity. It's gone.

EXT. SPACE.

James tumbles towards Earth's atmosphere.

NATE

Shit... what was that? James?

SARAH (V.O.)

Nate!

NATE

Sarah?

SARAH (V.O.)

I'm receiving you. I've lost  
James' vitals.

Nate fires up his pack and jets towards James at full thrust.

At full speed he's still going to be short. James is moving too fast. Nate's face is set, firm.

SARAH (V.O.)

Nate, you're not going to make  
it. He's going too fast.

JET PACK READ-OUT.

The pack red-lines. Fuel running out fast.

ISS/SPACE INTERCUT.

SARAH

Nate stop. You can't reach him.  
You're going to get stuck out  
there with no fuel.

Nate doesn't respond. He's locked-on. His pack is close to critical. James is only 100 feet away, but it's clear his trajectory and velocity aren't sufficient.

Nate punches the release control. His pack detaches.

He plants his boots against the back of the jet pack -- and leaps. A critical few extra feet per second.

Sarah and Simon are smashed up against the viewing port.

SARAH

No, Nate. What are you doing?

Nate is ten feet away -- arms extended -- full stretch -- only one chance.

SARAH

Get him, Nate, get him!

Nate and James collide. They spin together in their new trajectory. Nate fumbles to get a sure grip. He jams his boots up under James' pack and grips his harness with his left hand.

With his right he snatches the throttle and rams it forward. Internal gyros control jets of gas that bring their spin under control.

Both men, a hapless chimera, float in open space. An epic image of Earth in the b.g.

Nate bangs on the side of James' helmet with his fist.

NATE

James? James?

James is unresponsive. Nate guns the throttle and flares of gas erupt from the rear boosters.

NATE

I.S.S., I have him. Meet us at  
the airlock with a defibrillator.

SARAH (V.O.)

Is he okay?

NATE

He's unresponsive. I don't think  
he's breathing.



INT. SPACE - ISS - DOCKING MOD - NIGHT

James is stripped of his suit. Nate works his chest with CPR. Sarah kneels next to the pair pulling out defibrillator paddles from the wall.

SARAH  
Watch his head, watch his head.

NATE  
I got nothing.

SARAH  
Paddles ready.

NATE  
Hit him.

Sarah charges the paddles and shocks James. His body jolts in zero G. No response.

SARAH  
Increasing the charge.

NATE  
Come on James. Hit him again.

Sarah waits for the charge and shocks James again. His body jolts. He GASPS a lung full of air. He's back.

Nate and Sarah slump back and let out a laugh as the tension is relieved.

INT. SPACE - ISS - MED MOD - DAY

James is asleep. Nate sits next to him. He turns his baseball in his hand. James stirs.

NATE  
Good morning sunshine. How you feeling?

JAMES  
(gruffly)  
Terrible. Talk about a hangover.

NATE  
You gave us a bit of a scare back there. What happened? Do you remember?

JAMES  
I have no idea. I mean, it was beautiful. I reached out. The next thing I remember, I'm here.

NATE

Well, whatever that thing was it gave you a swift kick to the balls then took off.

JAMES

It's gone?

NATE

Yeah, I couldn't really see what happened, but it sorta just vanished.

JAMES

We have to try to make contact with Houston. Call this in.

NATE

They're back up. We've been on with Houston the whole time you've been out. Apparently they picked it up as it entered our solar system.

JAMES

They knew about it?

NATE

Thought it was an asteroid. Were expecting an impact, but then it stopped. It's got 'em all stumped.

JAMES

Get me up. I have to talk with them. See if this thing is a danger to the station.

INT. SPACE - ISS - COMMAND MOD - DAY

Everyone is gathered together around James.

JAMES

Roger, Houston. We'll keep an eye out. Let us know if you pick anything up. I.S.S. out.

HOUSTON (V.O.)

Roger, commander. Houston out.

JAMES

(to the crew)

Okay, that wasn't very informative.

NATE  
What should we do?

JAMES  
Not much we can do right now.  
Let's get some rest...Check back  
at zero nine hundred.

INT. SPACE - ISS - CREW QUARTERS - VARIOUS - NIGHT

James is fast asleep. The other crew are restless and awake. Nate turns his ball in his palm.

INT. SPACE - ISS - SERVICE MODULE - DAY

The crew breakfast together.

SARAH  
How's the head?

JAMES  
It's like the forth of July in  
here.

SARAH  
Didn't your momma ever tell you  
not to go poking strange objects?

NATE  
You sure you're up for work  
today? Maybe you should take some  
time off.

JAMES  
I'm fine. I don't do much other  
than keep an eye on you fools.

SIMON  
What was that thing?

JAMES  
No idea.

SARAH  
Look. I think we should have some  
kind of contingency plan in ca --

NATE  
A contingency plan?

SARAH  
Yeah, a plan -- in case it comes  
back.

NATE  
Why would you think it would come  
back? It's gone.

SARAH

I'm just saying we need to think about potential risk to the station.

JAMES

I agree. We just witnessed something... I dunno...miraculous. But we gotta stay alert.

NATE

Okay. So. What's the plan?

JAMES

I dunno. At least let's keep a watch. You and I will take first watch in the cupola. Simon and Sarah can take over tonight.

NATE

And the expedition.

JAMES

We have to put everything on hold for now. Just until we know what's going on.

James takes a spoonful of food and starts to CHOKE. The crew look around at one another, anxious. He catches his breath and picks up a pouch of water.

JAMES

(off their look)

What?

INT. SPACE - ISS - CUPOLA OBSERVATION MOD - DAY

Nate and James play catch with Nate's ball, each at one end of the module.

The ball sails serenely back and forth in the weightlessness. They pass time in conversation.

JAMES

I can't believe you still carry this thing around. You still have the ticket too?

NATE

Yeah.

JAMES

You know she doesn't blame you, right? You shouldn't blame yourself, either.

Nate's face bruises. He shoots James a "don't go there" look.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Sorry.

There is a pause in the conversation.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Hey. It's not so bad having Simon on board, is it?

NATE

Come talk to me after a couple more months. See if you still feel that way.

JAMES

Crisis brings people together. Maybe by the end of this you guys will be friends.

NATE

Ain't gonna happen.

JAMES

What sort of attitude is that?

Nate doesn't answer.

JAMES (CONT'D)

What's your issue with him?

NATE

You mean other than the obvious?

JAMES

Ah, it doesn't matter. You're going to have to find a way to get along. At least superficially.

NATE

What do you think I've been doing?

JAMES

You guys are like oil and water when you're around each other.

NATE

You know, maybe you're right.

JAMES

Oh?

NATE

We did witness something  
miraculous.

James rolls his eyes. Clearly the discussion about Simon  
is over.

NATE (CONT'D)

That thing put out a lot of  
energy.

James grimaces at the reminder.

JAMES

What's your point?

NATE

I dunno. You think it's possible  
you activated some kind of worm  
hole or something?

JAMES

Worm hole? We've scanned the  
area. It's just empty space --  
Besides, there isn't enough  
negative energy in the entire  
solar system to open a worm hole.

NATE

Well, the more I think about it  
the more I feel that was just the  
beginning.

JAMES

Careful. You're going to give  
yourself space terrors --

James breaks off. The ball, which had been floating back  
and forth between them, now spirals off to the side.

James and Nate follow it with their eyes. Loose straps on  
shelving fly and their limbs take on weight.

JAMES

Do you feel that?

NATE

Yeah... gravity.

JAMES

Did we slip out of orbit?

Both men spring into action. Nate logs into a console and  
James makes for the comms.

JAMES

Sarah, are we out of orbit?

Beat.

SARAH (V.O.)

Negative. We're flying the wire.

NATE

Confirmed. We're right where we're supposed to be.

SARAH (V.O.)

What's going on? We're experiencing gravity down here.

JAMES

Yeah, I know. Get on the computer and see if you can find out what's going on... Wake up Houston.

The pull is now substantial. The two men are dumped on the port side of the module. Nate slams into the window.

NATE

Ugh.

JAMES

Nate, can you see anything out there?

Nate rotates over the window and looks out.

NATE

No.

The word is barely out of his mouth when a giant SHIP appears not far from the ISS.

The shock, combined with a sudden loss of gravitational pull sends Nate flying backwards onto the opposite wall.

NATE

Whoa.

JAMES

Nate?

Nate pushes himself back to the window.

NATE

Holy Mother of God.

The ship, much like a giant nautilus gilt in brass and gold, holds off the port bow of the ISS.

JAMES  
What's going on?

NATE  
Err... we just got new neighbors.

James leaps for the window.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Commander?

James doesn't tear his gaze from the window as he reaches for the comm.

JAMES  
Sarah, get up here!  
(beat)  
Nate. Ideas?

NATE  
Well... there aren't a lot of  
choices, so I'm going to have to  
go with... an alien spaceship.

JAMES  
Can't be.

NATE  
It sure as shit is.

INT. SPACE - ALIEN SHIP - DAY

A hologram of the ISS hovers above a console.

An alien hand, similar to a human hand but with an almost translucent "skin", longer "fingers" and a "thumb" on either side, plays with the display.

Glowing, pulsating dots appear to represent the live crew contrasted against the inorganic ISS. The Alien ship probes the ISS.

The display identifies the docking port and the hologram appears to gauge its dimensions.

EXT. SPACE

A portion of the alien ship displaces and floats away from the main ship. It moves to the ISS docking port and latches on.



INT. ISS - CUPOLA OBSERVATION MOD - DAY

James and Nate are pressed against the window. Simon and Sarah join them. Sarah pulls herself to the comms.

JAMES

I think that thing is heading for the docking port.

SIMON

Oh shit. What the hell are we going to do?

JAMES

Sarah, get me Houston.

Sarah holds a head-set to an ear. Shakes her head.

SARAH

Comms are down again.

JAMES

Shit.

SIMON

We're screwed. We're totally screwed.

NATE

Cool your boots, Simon. Panicking isn't going to help.

SIMON

Cool my b--? Are you kidding me, hippy? We're defenseless up here and there's an alien spaceship outside our window. Real freaking aliens, man.

JAMES

Simon, please. Lemme think.

(beat)

Okay. Everyone, airlock.

SIMON

No way. There's no way I'm going down there.

NATE

Dammit Simon. We're floating in a pressurized tin-can in space. If they wanted to harm us all they'd have to do is poke a hole in our hull and we'd all be popsicles -- Grow some goddam stones, yuppie.

INT. ISS MISSION CONTROL - HUSTON - NIGHT

A TECH, PIP (20s), lounges at her station. She's engaged on a personal computer. Light from the monitor illuminates her face.

Around her terminals are empty. On the walls large-panel screens project internal and external views of the ISS, bio-metric readings and station trailematories.

The video feeds all cut to static. The tech almost falls backward as she jumps from her chair.

PIP

No, no, no.

Panicked she checks her console and reaches for a phone.

PIP

Wake the Chief, it's happened again.

INT. ISS MISSION CONTROL - HUSTON - NIGHT

The lights are on and the control room buzzes with activity. TECHNICIANS begin to arrive, sleepy-eyed.

The bustle pauses as Chief Entega bursts through the door. He wrestles his tie into a workable knot.

CHIEF

Okay, where is she?

PIP

Here sir.

CHIEF

Talk us through it, Pip.

PIP

There isn't much to report, sir. I was at my station and then...pow.

CHIEF

Pow?

PIP

Yeah, everything went down. Just like last time.

CHIEF

Alright. Who's on the video feed?

TECH 2

Working on it now  
(beat)

(MORE)

TECH 2 (cont'd)  
Okay, we have it.

CHIEF  
Let's see it. Punch it up there.

Video feed from the ISS flicks onto the main monitors.  
Multiple internal and external angles -- then static.

CHIEF  
Play it back.

The feed is rewound and resumes before the interruption.

PIP  
There.

CHIEF  
What?

PIP  
Rewind and put camera seven on  
the main.

Views switch monitors. Feed from camera 7 now plays on the  
largest screen.

PIP  
There. See it?

CHIEF  
See what?

PIP  
Play it back again, but at half  
speed. Watch the webbing and  
cinch straps on the right side.

The video plays again, this time much slower.

The Chief and techs watch, transfixed. Webbing and straps  
lift as the feed cuts.

PIP  
Gravity.

INT. SPACE - ISS - QUEST AIRLOCK - DAY

The crew file through the hatch into the airlock.

SARAH  
Now what?

A pause then a TAP on the docking hatch.

SIMON  
Did they just knock?

James and Nate exchange a look.

JAMES  
Okay, okay. Hold on. Let's think  
a moment.

Another TAP on the hatch.

SARAH  
I think they wanna come in.

NATE  
(shrugs)  
Shall we open it?

SIMON  
Whoa, whoa, whoa. Hold on. No  
way. We have no idea what's out  
there.

JAMES  
This is crazy.

NATE  
It's okay. I have a good feeling.

The other crew stare at him.

James puffs his cheeks. He pulls the depressurization  
latch and the locking mechanism disengages.

SARAH  
James!

SIMON  
Shit, shit, shit.

Simon looks around. Grabs a solid tool and pounds it into  
his palm. The door opens. The crew withdraw to the hull.

Two humanoid ALIENS emerge into the pod. Their spacesuits  
resemble the material of their ship. They are tall and  
slender with elongated helmets. Humanoid.

The aliens hold in front of the crew. The first alien  
produces a DEVICE. There is an audible "confirmatory"  
SOUND. They reach to their helmets and deactivate the  
covers.

Reveal: The aliens have oval heads, skin that resembles a  
squid, pigmented, but punctate. Their eyes are small, but  
harbor wisdom. Their mouth is discrete.

The crew is silent. Neither species sure how to proceed.

JAMES

Hello.

The aliens exchange a look. They TALK in a dialect of HUMS and CLICKS that resembles Zulu more than any other human dialect.

The second alien gestures for the crew to enter their ship.

NATE

I think they want us to follow them.

JAMES

We can't leave our post without discussing this with Houston.

NATE

Not possible. Comms are down. We have to deal with this the best way we can...I say we go.

JAMES

I don't know. Sarah?

SARAH

I guess I'm with Nate. We're on our own here. We have to improvise. They seem friendly. I say we go... but it's your call.

SIMON

Hold on. I'm not going in there.

This seems to solidify James' decision.

JAMES

Okay. Alright. You stay here and take command. If anything happens fill Houston in.

SIMON

Take command?

NATE

Okay, boss. So we go?

JAMES

I guess.

SIMON

Whoa, wait... damn it.

Nate leads them through the hatch and further into the alien ship.

As soon as they enter the ship they are subjected to artificial gravity.

INT. ALIEN SHIP - DAY

NATE  
Gravity.

SARAH  
Weird.

The crew walk into the ship. Technically slick. Several ALIENS sit at consoles, turned to face them, staring in curiosity.

The first alien gestures at a wall DEVICE that resembles a comms console. The crew are nonplussed.

The alien gestures again and CLICKS some alien "words". Nate catches on. He speaks into the comm.

NATE  
Errr... Hello?

The seated aliens turn to their consoles and busy themselves for a moment before turning back.

The first alien gestures again.

NATE  
Hello. Welcome to Earth.

Nate looks over at James who appears to question his choice of words. Nate shrugs it off.

The aliens again turn to their respective consoles and busy themselves with holograms and lights.

The first alien points at Nate. He hesitates then:

NATE  
Man.

The alien gestures to itself.

NATE  
Umm... Alien?

It points out the window towards the ISS.

NATE  
International Space Station.

The alien continues.

NATE  
Sun. Earth.

JAMES  
Nate, what's going on?

NATE  
I'm not sure, but I think they  
are establishing primers to  
translate our language.

SARAH  
My knees are shaking.

The alien points to James and Sarah.

NATE  
James. Sarah.

Now the ship resonates with the sound of their voices. But  
their voices from earlier.

RECORDING  
Whoa. Nate? Holy Mother of God--

The recording speeds up until the voices are  
unintelligible. Holograms and waveforms dance and plots of  
ZIPFIAN distributions condense.

JAMES  
Nate?

NATE  
(in awe)  
Yeah, they're looking for  
character streams and language  
features.

JAMES  
What?

NATE  
They're identifying what are  
words and what's non-language...  
background noise.

The recording stops. The first alien CHIRPS and CLICKS and  
the ship's overhead speaker translates it.

ALIEN 1  
Welcome.

NATE  
Holy crap. Thanks.

The alien gestures towards Earth.

ALIEN 1  
Alien. Meet. Earth.

NATE  
Ah. That's not such a good idea  
right now. Lots... of... issues  
down there.

ALIEN 1  
Issues.

NATE  
Yeah, Issues. Lot's of issues. We  
need to talk to Earth first, but  
your ship is blocking our  
communications.

ALIEN 1  
Man. James. Sarah. Meet. Alien.  
Earth.

NATE  
Oh, my name's not "man", It's  
Nate.

ALIEN 1  
Nate. Understood. Let's. Go. Man.

Sarah sniggers.

SARAH  
I like this guy.

NATE  
What do ya say, Commander?

JAMES  
No, no, no. No way.

NATE  
What? Come on James. This is  
freaking historic. Once Earth is  
brought into it we're out of the  
picture, permanently.

JAMES  
I don't have the authority. We  
have to raise Houston.

NATE  
(pleading)  
Sarah?

SARAH  
James, I think he's right. We're  
off script here. There are no  
protocols for this.



James isn't convinced.

NATE

James, come on. Don't be such a tool.

JAMES

Hey, I'm still the damn ranking officer here.

NATE

Not if you screw up first contact. They'll bust you back to the corps.

As they argue, more voices are being piped in. Human voices, but not theirs. The aliens pull radio waves from earth to feed the translator. ENGLISH.

ALIEN 2

If I may, I suggest we take a short trip to our world, then you can report back to your superiors.

NATE

Damn... they're good at this.

ALIEN 2

Perhaps, afterwards, we can arrange to visit your world. We have much technology to share.

NATE

James! Come on.

JAMES

Ugh. If I go down for this I'm taking you with me.

NATE

What you gonna do, put me in detention?

JAMES

I don't want Simon left alone. Someone has to stay behind and babysit him.

NATE

He's an billionaire. He's resourceful.

JAMES

Exactly. He's bankrolling this mission. If we abandon him he might not let us back in.

NATE

Good point. It's more like we'd get back to find he's sold the station to the Chinese.

SARAH

I'll do it.

JAMES

What?

SARAH

I'll do it. I'll stay with the station.

JAMES

You sure?

SARAH

Yeah. You should be the ones to go. The commander and the science officer.

JAMES

Okay. We're really doing this.

NATE

(to Sarah)

Remember to give Simon his bottle before putting him to bed.

James cracks an uncharacteristic smile at the unprofessional comment.

SARAH

Take lots of pictures for me.

NATE

Oh, damn.

JAMES

What?

NATE

Wait. Don't leave without me.

Nate races out of the alien ship back to the airlock.

INT. ISS - QUEST AIRLOCK - CONTINUOUS

For a moment he forgets he's in space. The sudden loss of gravity catches him by surprise. He enters the ISS with too much speed and crashes into the hull.

NATE

Damn it.

Now acutely reminded of his surroundings he grabs at the handrails and pulls himself through the station towards the science module.

NATE

Simon?

No reply.

NATE (CONT'D)

Simon?

Nate passes the comms module as Simon catches his eye at a console. A sat-phone in his hand.

NATE (CONT'D)

Simon.

SIMON

(guiltily)

Yip?

NATE

What are you doing.

SIMON

Oh. I was just tryin'... the radio. Tryin' to contact Earth. Let them know we... they --

NATE

Okay, Si.

Nate doesn't wait around to listen further.

He reaches the sci-mod and eases out the metal case from a storage bay. He carries it like a precious football back to the airlock.

As he passes the comm-mod:

NATE

Sarah is coming back on board. Me and James will be back in a bit.

SIMON

Back from where?

Nate doesn't reply.

INT. ALIEN SHIP - CONTINUOUS

James and Sarah talk with the aliens. Nate joins them.

JAMES

Well?

NATE

My sensors. Might as well collect  
some data while we're there.

JAMES

(to alien)

Would that be okay?

ALIEN 1

Yes, that would be quite  
acceptable.

Nate has a big grin. He's like a kid on Christmas Eve.

JAMES

Okay, Sarah. I guess this is it.  
When we get outta here I predict  
comms will come back up. Raise  
Houston. Explain everything.

SARAH

Aye, sir.

JAMES

Nate, you ready?

NATE

Ready.

SARAH

Be careful.

Sarah eyes linger on Nate, but his focus is elsewhere. She  
leaves the capsule and closes the airlock.

INT. ISS - CONTINUOUS

She pulls herself to a window with a view of the ship.

She watches as the ship detaches, glides to the larger  
ship and docks.

INT. ALIEN SHIP - CONTINUOUS

Nate and James stand among a crowd of curios aliens. A  
door opens and they are ushered into the primary ship.

The helm is occupied by as many ALIENS again. They stare  
at the humans. Nate raises a hand in greeting.

NATE

Hello.

Some of the aliens raise hands in return.

ALIEN 2

Nate, James. Please, follow me.

NATE

So, how does this work. Will it take long?

ALIEN 2

Oh, it will be instantaneous. You will not even feel that we have traveled. But we will go very far.

JAMES

How is that possible?

ALIEN 2

There...

The alien points to the center of the compartment. An alien activates a hologram and wipes its hand through the web of dots and lines.

A compartment opens and a small bright red orb, the size of a grapefruit and similar to the blue sphere outside the ISS, levitates out.

ALIEN 2

We use what you would call worm holes.

NATE

(loud)

Ha!

Several of the aliens are startled.

NATE (CONT'D)

I told you worm holes.

JAMES

But that's not possible. The amount of negative energy required to open a worm hole, much less keep one open, is inconceivable.

ALIEN 1

Not inconceivable. It is there.

JAMES

You're saying you have enough negative energy stored in that thing to open a worm hole?

ALIEN 2

Yes. That is how we travel. And how we learned of your existence. The probe you encountered was designed by our ancestors but our technology has improved much.

ALIEN 1

If you're ready we can pass through now.

The alien signals departure to the helmsman.

ALIEN 1

Once a bridge has been created between two locations it remains stable and we can travel freely between those two points.

NATE

How does it work? Your probe actually killed James for a few minutes and shut down our station.

ALIEN 2

It *killed* you?

JAMES

He's exaggerating. So, how do you activate it?

ALIEN 2

One must simply disrupt its structure and the effect will be almost instantaneous. The probe is different. It was programmed to only activate when it contacts organic life.

ALIEN 1

You are the first. We abandoned the search long ago.

ALIEN 2

A probe returning at this stage was a very big surprise.

The helmsman pulls a slender stylus from the console. Like a conductor he swipes through the orb. In an instant the orb collapses to nothing.

The humans watch, transfixed as the orb rapidly regrows.

NATE

What happened?

ALIEN 2

That's it. We have arrived.

NATE/JAMES

What?

ALIEN 2

The voyage is instantaneous. As the structure of the worm hole is disrupted it collapses and we collapse into it. It reemerges from the other side and we emerge from it.

NATE

That just blew my mind.

ALIEN 1

This is just one of the many technologies we can share with you.

ALIEN 2

Please. Follow me. You would perhaps enjoy a view.

INT. ALIEN CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

The pair follow the alien out another door and through a curvilinear, brightly lit corridor. They enter a room with a large oval viewing window.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - ALIEN SHIP - CONTINUOUS

The sight is magnificent. Another world. Three fourths of the disk is lit by their star with a majestic blue atmospheric haze. The world looks just like Earth but with almost the opposite ratio of land and water.

Blankets of cloud drape over the landscape.

For the observable portion not lit by the star it is night. Sparse spider-like trails, lights, appear to embrace vast coastlines.

Nate is dashed up against the window. One might almost think he's giving the planet a hug.

ALIEN 2

Take care, Nate. The window is not secured.

Nate shoots him a look.

ALIEN 2

This is a joke, no?

James laughs out loud.

JAMES  
You sure learn fast.

ALIEN 2  
We have much to learn.

Nate is still drinking in the view.

JAMES  
Can we visit the surface?

ALIEN 2  
We have already begun our descent. This will take a little more time. I suggest we remain here. The view gets better as we descend.

JAMES  
Sounds good. Where is the other guy?

ALIEN 2  
Oh, that one remains in the control room. That one -- does not like heights.

INT. ISS - DAY

As the alien ship disappears the radio comes alive. Its sudden activity startles Sarah and Simon.

TECH (V.O.)  
I.S.S. this is Houston, come in.  
I.S.S. this is Houston, come in  
--

Simon dives for the comm. Sarah reaches it first.

SARAH  
Houston. This is I.S.S.

INT. ISS MISSION CONTROL - HOUSTON - DAWN

TECH  
(surprised)  
Chief, I have them.

CHIEF  
Put them on the P.A.  
(to the room)  
Hush down. Hush.  
(to the overhead PA)  
I.S.S. this is Houston. Good to hear from you. What's your status?



SARAH

This is tech officer Brockworth. Mr. Skaryota and myself are aboard the I.S.S. -- The commander and science officer are currently off structure.

CHIEF

What do you mean by "off structure". Where are they? Has the station experienced another malfunction?

SARAH

No sir. We... we made contact with... well, an alien species.

CHIEF

What? -- Wait. Hold on.  
(to tech)  
Cut the P.A. Give me your headset.

The chief slips on the headset and adjusts the mic.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

Say again I.S.S.  
(beat)  
Hold on, Sarah.  
(to the room)  
Get me the White House and Roscosmos on the line... Someone go wake Scooter and bring him here.  
(to tech)  
Jones. Shut down all other outward communication. Put a security detail on the door.

The staff begin to chatter among themselves. Their faces are a mix of surprise and confusion.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

Quiet down.  
(into the mic)  
Sarah. Tell me exactly what happened.

The Chief listens as an armed SECURITY DETAIL walks into the room.

CHIEF

(into mic)  
Sarah. Hold on.

CHIEF  
Sergeant, I need a security  
detail on that door. I don't want  
anyone coming or going without my  
permission.

SERGEANT  
Roger that.

The sergeant speaks to a couple of soldiers. They take up  
posts outside and the doors are locked.

CHIEF  
(to tech)  
Okay. Pump the audio back through  
the P.A.  
(to Sarah over the PA)  
Sarah?

SARAH  
Yes, sir. Still here.

CHIEF  
I'd like you to transmit all  
video files from the last  
twenty-four hours.

SARAH  
Roger.

CHIEF  
(to tech)  
When you receive the files queue  
them up right before the feed was  
cut.  
(to Sarah)  
What is the status of Mr.  
Skaryota?

SIMON  
Get me the hell outta here,  
Chief.

TECH  
Received the files. Queuing up.

CHIEF  
Hold on Mr. Skaryota.  
(to tech)  
Let's see it.

The large monitors splutter to life. Multiple angles  
inside and outside the ISS. The room is silent, everyone  
is glued to the video feed.

Then, there is the alien ship. Audible GASPS permeate the  
room.

CHIEF  
Mother of...

All watch as a section of the ship breaks off and moves towards the ISS.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE - OVAL OFFICE - DAWN

The PRESIDENT of the United States sits behind the Resolute desk. Sips on a cup of coffee while he fingers through the morning reports.

There is a loud and urgent KNOCK at the door.

PRESIDENT  
Come in.

Michael Dimon, the president's chief of staff, enters the office followed by ANTHONY GOLDBERG, the vice president and CARL NICHOLS, the national security advisor.

GOLDBERG  
Mr. President. We have an urgent situation, sir.

DIMON  
We just received confirmed notification from NASA. The I.S.S. has come into contact with intelligent extraterrestrial life.

PRESIDENT  
What?

GOLDBERG  
Aliens, sir. The I.S.S. crew have been contacted by aliens.

PRESIDENT  
(at Dimon)  
Is this verified?

DIMON  
yes, sir.

PRESIDENT  
This got something to do with your visit to NASA, Mike?

DIMON  
We believe it's related. NASA are currently reviewing recordings of the alien ship arriving then docking with the I.S.S.

PRESIDENT

Who's up there right now? Our boys or the Ruskies?

DIMON

It's an American expedition currently on station.

NICHOLS

Mr. President. I recommend activation of contingency protocols. We need to put a lid on this and protect American interest.

PRESIDENT

Alright, what's the protocol?

NICHOLS

We need to isolate NASA and transfer operational oversight to the White House.

PRESIDENT

(to Dimon and VP)

Mike? Anthony?

DIMON

I concur with the general sir. We need to run this through the White House.

GOLDBERG

And we need to act fast.

PRESIDENT

Okay. Set us up in the war room. Assemble the security council -- Be selective who you bring in on this.

INT. HOUSTON - ISS MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Staff relay updates via headsets and discuss data that pours in over their consoles.

CHIEF

Double check those pressure readings. I want to make sure there wasn't any kind of hull breach when that thing attached.

All the monitors and computers shut off.

CHIEF

What the hell just happened?

TECH 2  
We've lost all feed.

CHIEF  
Again?

TECH 2  
No, This is different. We've been  
cut off internally.

Chief picks up a desks phone. No dial tone. He pulls out  
his personal phone. No reception.

CHIEF  
Phones are dead. Cell phone  
signal is blocked.

Several techs pull out their phones to check signal.

PIP  
What's going on?

CHIEF  
I don't know, but I think we've  
been marooned.

The chief moves to the door and pulls at the handle.  
Locked. He knocks at the door.

CHIEF  
Soldier, this is Chief Entega.  
Open the door.

No reply.

CHIEF (CONT'D)  
Soldier, open this door.

INTERCUT.

SOLDIER 1  
Sorry sir. Orders directly from  
the White House. Please step away  
from the doors.

CHIEF  
Open this door.

SOLDIER 1  
Step away from the door, sir.

CHIEF  
Those ass-holes. Sons-of-a-bitch.

TECH  
Sir?

CHIEF

They've marooned us -- Completely cut us off.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WAR ROOM - DAY

The security council has convened at the White House. The president addresses the assembled group of advisers.

PRESIDENT

Thank you all for coming. Here's what we know. Forty-eight hours ago we were informed by NASA of an interstellar anomaly approaching Earth. Impact was of high concern.

The council murmur and exchange looks of confusion.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

That concern was allayed when the object abruptly came to a stop near the space station.

Confusion shifts to distress.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

The White house chief of staff has just returned from NASA where the situation has recently escalated. Mike. Fill us in?

DIMON

I arrived at NASA to find the object had stopped outside the station and NASA had lost contact with the crew. At zero six hundred the commander was incapacitated by the object while E.V.A. At this point communications were reestablished.

PRESIDENT

Let's get to the point, Mike.

DIMON

Yes, sir. At fifteen thirty the I.S.S. made contact with an extraterrestrial spacecraft.

Gasps of disbelief around the room.

DIMON (CONT'D)

Subsequently, the commander and science officer went aboard the alien ship and are now believed to be at the alien world.

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS  
Where is this alien world?

DIMON  
Unknown.

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS  
Well, are they coming back? Are they captured?

DIMON  
Unknown.

DEFENSE SECRETARY  
We have confirmation that the Kremlin has disbanded I.S.S. mission control at Roscosmos.

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS  
The Russians know.

DEFENSE SECRETARY  
Yes. They are aware and want in.

DIMON  
The Kremlin can go to hell. Our priority is to prevent Russian interference and determine what alien tech we might have access to.

PRESIDENT  
Mike.

DIMON  
Sorry, sir.

PRESIDENT  
Our priority is establish potential threats and gather intelligence -- It's time to circle the wagons, gentlemen.

EXT. SPACE - ALIEN WORLD

The ship, like a tiny crustacean in an ocean of stars, drifts slowly towards the immense and beautiful planet.

INT. ALIEN SHIP - OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

NATE  
Would you mind if I collect some readings from the planet?

ALIEN 2  
No, please proceed. What kind of readings are you interested in?

NATE

Atmospheric and mantle composition, temperatures, tectonics, that sort of thing.

ALIEN 2

From here?

NATE

Yes.

ALIEN 2

This is interesting technology.

NATE

It was designed by my father to study changes to the earth's environment. He never got the chance to use it.

Nate removes the delicate sensors from storage.

JAMES

It's the first of it's kind. Able to survey an entire planet. Full diagnostic. Don't ask me how it works.

NATE

Are you the only species living here?

ALIEN 2

Oh no. Our world is very diverse with life.

There is a sensation of the ship picking up speed as it drops into the atmosphere. Geological features begin to emerge from the landscape and light from their star reflects in large land-locked lakes and open seas.

Massive forests glint in the light betraying their hidden lagoons and shallow ground waters. The planet is lush and vibrant.

Nate lurches between the view and the data from his sensors.

NATE

This is very Earth-like. Very Earth-like. I guess there *is* a template for life.

JAMES

Nate, look.



As they continue to descend huge herds of beasts migrate over vast grasslands. Flocks of flying animals sweep under the ship.

The ship heads toward an area without vegetation. Regular shapes dominate that landscape. The structures are congregated in loose concentric circles. Many are interconnected.

The ship jolts. Retro boosters slow the decent. A landing field comes into view. Several similar ships are docked and sit inactive on the pad. Humanoids, move among the ships.

ALIEN 2

Let us return to the command deck. We are arriving.

Nate packs up his sensors and they file back out the door.

INT. ALIEN SHIP - COMMAND DECK - DAY

The aliens are busy with their respective jobs but continue to sneak curious looks at the humans.

ALIEN 1

We have arrived. We are preparing for your visit. You have generated a lot of interest.

NATE

We missed you on the observation deck.

ALIEN 1

Oh. I am sorry. It is not possible for me to go into that room during travel. I feel that my brain falls out of my head.

Nate and James exchange a snigger.

ALIEN 2

It is time. Let us exit to the surface. There are many eager to meet you.

JAMES

We'll be okay with the air out there? It's the same as in here?

ALIEN 2

Oh no. This air is synthetic. The air outside is much more desirable.

The outer door opens and the cabin is flooded with natural sunlight. The men are met with the sweet smell of the alien atmosphere.

They both react in surprise by the aroma and purity in each breath.

NATE

Oh my God.

(breath)

Oh, wow.

Nate looks to James for comment but he's stood, eyes closed. Sunlight spills over his frame. A smile broadens as he fills his lungs with long, deep breaths. A hint of tears form in the corner of his eyes.

The aliens are mesmerized by this. Happy to see their world so well received by their guests.

Once Nate and James look ready they are invited to disembark.

ALIEN 2

Please follow me.

They follow the alien down a ramp to the surface. Many ALIENS have gathered outside the ship. A chorus of CHIRPING a CLICKING emanates from the crowd.

As the visitors approach they part to clear the way to a building ahead.

Once inside the building the computer and audio system takes over to re-enable communication.

ALIEN 2

This is our space travel control center. We have much to discuss and show you.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SITUATION ROOM - DAY

The president is joined by his security council at a large central table. Members continue to arrive.

At the head of the table stands the president, arms spread in front of him.

PRESIDENT

Okay, Mike let's get her on.

Dimon leans forward from his chair and pokes a finger at the intercom in the center of the table.

DIMON  
I.S.S. come in. Are you receiving  
Officer Brockworth?

Pause.

SARAH (V.O.)  
Affirmative Houston. I'm  
receiving. Go ahead.

PRESIDENT  
Officer Brockworth. This is the  
President.

SARAH (V.O.)  
President?

PRESIDENT  
The president of the United  
States.

INTERCUT BETWEEN WHITE HOUSE/ISS.

SARAH  
Yes sir. Sorry sir. I wasn't  
expecting --

PRESIDENT  
That's quite all right. Now  
listen. This is very important.  
I'm here with the national  
security council.

SARAH  
In Houston?

PRESIDENT  
No, the White House -- What I'm  
about to tell you is very  
important. Do I have your full  
attention?

SARAH  
Yes sir. Sorry sir, I'm just a  
little confused.

PRESIDENT  
Yes, yes. That's perfectly  
understandable. The I.S.S. and  
crew are now under operational  
control of the White House. From  
now on you will report directly  
to me.

Silence.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Are you receiving me officer?

SARAH

Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT

What you've reported is miraculous. This is a truly historical moment. Americans were contacted for a reason and we'd like to maintain control.

DIMON

Sarah, this is chief of staff Dimon. The situation is quite sensitive. We've received word that Moscow is attempting to take control of the mission. The cold war is reaching into space. You're to ignore all communications from Russia.

SARAH

Yes, sir. Of course, sir.

DIMON

This is a matter of national security. We are taking full operational control.

SARAH

Okay. What do you need me to do?

DIMON

Are you in contact with the commander?

SARAH

No, we've had no contact since they left yesterday.

DIMON

It's imperative you have him contact us as soon as he returns so we can debrief him.

SARAH

Yes sir.

PRESIDENT

Okay Brockworth. Thank you for your service to your country. Keep an open channel and don't communicate with anyone except this office.

SARAH  
Affirmative sir. I.S.S. out.

Dimon exits the call.

DIMON  
Sounds like we have her.

INT. HOUSTON - OUTSIDE MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Scooter strides down the corridor to the armed detail at the door.

SCOOTER  
Solider, open this door.

SOLDIER 1  
Sorry sir. We have orders that no one is to leave.

SCOOTER  
Son, I'm not trying to leave, I want to get in. Open the door.

The two guards exchange a look of conciliation, level their rifles and open the door.

There is a ruckus from inside as the door swings open to allow Scooter entry.

SOLDIER 1  
Back everyone, back.

CHIEF  
Scooter!

Scooter squeezes through the door and walks towards the Chief as the doors are again closed and sealed.

SCOOTER  
Chief. What the hell's going on here?

CHIEF  
We've been shut out by the White House.

SCOOTER  
There's been a lot of military activity. Then I get some crazy call about aliens. Is this real world or an exercise?

CHIEF  
Oh it's real. Nate and James went aboard their ship and are, apparently, on their way to the alien world.

SCOOTER

Damn.

(beat)

Sarah and Skaryota?

CHIEF

Still aboard the I.S.S.

SCOOTER

We have to try to reestablish contact with them. Can we open a back channel?

CHIEF

Power and internet access is cut. Only thing working are the lights and A.C.

SCOOTER

You telling me we, literally, have a room full of rocket scientists, but we can't figure a work around?

The Chief thinks for a moment.

CHIEF

(to room)

Okay, everyone, listen up. Give me two teams. Team one, I want you working a solution to salvage enough power to send and receive a message from the I.S.S. Team two, I want you figuring out solutions for making contact outside of this room -- Get on it.

The room bustles as the techs organize themselves by their relative skills.

SCOOTER

Here, this might help.

Scooter hands the Chief a palm-sized, old fashioned battery powered radio. The chief looks confused.

SCOOTER (CONT'D)

Find a way to boost it's power and you might have a communication device. It's the best I could do at short notice.

CHIEF

Pip, I want you with team two. See what you guys can do with this.

He tosses her the radio and she catches it. She moves to join her group as she turns the obsolete technology over in her hand.

CHIEF (CONT'D)  
 (to Scooter)  
 Coffee?

SCOOTER  
 Sure.

CHIEF  
 It's cold.

SCOOTER  
 Forget it.

INT. SPACE - ISS - OBSERVATION MOD - DAY

Sarah and Simon anxiously browse the sky through opposite view ports.

Sarah checks her watch then swings herself around the cabin to the console. She consults monitors and types a few commands to make standard systems checks.

She stops and places her hands on her stomach. She looks at Simon. He feels it too. His head snatches back to the window. Sarah pulls herself beside him.

SARAH  
 There!

Less than a mile from the station the same-looking alien ship snaps into view. The docking section detaches and it moves towards the ISS.

SARAH  
 Airlock.

The pair race through the station to the airlock.

INT. SPACE - ISS - QUEST AIRLOCK - DAY

As they arrive they hear activity on the other side of the portal.

There is a RAP on the door.

Simon and Sarah exchange an apprehensive look. Sarah reaches for the depressurization latch and disengages the locking mechanism.

There is an anxious pause, then Nate and James climb through the port.

NATE

Evening.

Sarah and Simon exhale in relief.

SARAH

What took you sons-of-bitches so long?

JAMES

Good to see you too, Sarah.

SARAH

Sorry. Just glad you're back. It's been a tough couple days -- Our guests have created a bit of a jurisdictional mess back on Earth.

Nate and James move into the module, followed by one of the aliens. Simon pulls himself towards the far wall.

ALIEN 2

Hello Sarah. Good to see you again.

SARAH

Hey.

NATE

Sarah, Simon. This is Ben.

SARAH

Ben?

NATE

Yeah, Ben. Jerry stayed behind this time.

SARAH

Ben and Jerry?

Nate grins like a child.

SARAH

(to James)

Commander, we've got a situation developing. You really need to debrief with Washington.

JAMES

Washington?

SARAH

I'll explain, but it's urgent you get on the radio.



BEN

I will be going. I look forward to arranging further visits soon, my friends.

Ben hands James a metallic box.

BEN (CONT'D)

A gift.

JAMES

Thank you.

BEN

It is a bridge. You open the box here. Activate it, as we have shown you, then you can travel back and fourth between our worlds -- We are now neighbors.

NATE

Great, 'cus James used up all the sugar.

BEN

A joke?

NATE

Not my best.

BEN

Goodbye, friends. Let us see one another again soon.

James and Nate shake hands with Ben and he exits back through the port into his ship.

SARAH

So, they're male?

NATE

Actually, they're hermaphrodites. Their biology is pretty interesting.

There is a jolt as the ship detaches.

JAMES

Okay, let's go find out what's been going on here.

NATE

James, please be mindful of what you tell them.

The crew files out the airlock to the command mod. Nate stops by the science mod to stow the case of sensors.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WAR ROOM - DAY

The president talks with Dimon. Other members of the security council are in discussion with their aids or talk on one of the many phones that litter the central table.

Nichols pulls the phone from his ear.

NICHOLS

Mr. President. The Commander has returned. He's on comms.

Everyone in the room halts what they are doing.

PRESIDENT

Put him on speaker.

(beat)

Commander. Welcome back. This is the President. I'm here with the security council.

JAMES (V.O.)

Mr. President. It's an honor.

PRESIDENT

The honor is mine, Commander. So, what news from space?

INTERCUT BETWEEN WH/ISS.

JAMES

Well sir. We have successfully established contact with an intelligent alien species.

PRESIDENT

That's certainly a headline. What can you tell us about them? Do they pose any immediate threat to our security?

JAMES

No sir. I would say none at all. They're a very peaceful species. They have no military or any weapons of any kind, as far as we could tell.

At this the members of the room exchange glances. The president looks to Dimon and Nichols.

PRESIDENT

No military you say?

JAMES

No sir. A remarkably friendly and inquisitive species.

PRESIDENT

Well that is reassuring, commander. Were you able to collect much data about them and their technology.

JAMES

Some sir. Mostly atmospheric and geological data collected by the science officer.

PRESIDENT

Very good. I'm going to ask you to compile all your data and transmit everything to us as soon as possible.

JAMES

Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT

Right away, Commander.

JAMES

Affirmative, sir.

DIMON

Mike Dimon. Under no circumstances are you to communicate with the Russians.

JAMES

Sir?

DIMON

Officer Brockworth can fill you in on that.

JAMES

And NASA? What's happening with Mission control?

DIMON

The White House has operational control moving forward. For now just focus on compiling that data and sending us everything you can. Out.

JAMES

Yes, sir. I.S.S. Out.

INT. SPACE - ISS - COMMAND MOD - DAY

Nate enters just as they end the transmission.

NATE

It smells worse here than I remember. What did I miss?

JAMES

The White House has mission oversight.

NATE

Where's NASA?

SARAH

They've been off comms since the White House took over.

NATE

What?

JAMES

(to Nate)

I'm gonna need your data from the sensors. The President has requested the audio and video files too.

(to Sarah)

I need you to upload everything to them as soon as you can.

NATE

Wait. What? James, hold on. We talked about this.

JAMES

This is direct from the President himself. The files, go get them.

NATE

Can we talk for a moment? In private.

With reluctance James signals to the exit and pulls himself toward the portal. Nate follows.

JAMES

(to Sarah)

Pool the audio and video files from the E.V.A. and the trip. Prepare to receive additional files. I want everything uploaded as soon as possible.

Sarah busies herself with the files as Simon slips quietly out of the module.

INT. ISS - SCIENCE MOD - DAY

James and Nate are hunkered in the corner.

NATE

What have you already told them?

JAMES

He's the President. I answered his questions.

NATE

Think James. We can't trust the politicians with this. You saw the data. Fresh water, unlimited resources, precious metals. If they find out how much oil is down there it's over.

JAMES

You don't know that.

NATE

They have no protection. If our government, or any government, uses a bridge to get down there it's over for them.

JAMES

He's my commander-in-chief. This is now a military operation. It's a direct order.

NATE

We can't tell them. Just give me some time to change the data.

JAMES

I can't do that. This is *not* our call.

James moves to leave, but Nate thrusts him back into the wall.

NATE

Don't do this.

JAMES

Move aside.

NATE

James, you do this and there's no going back.

James pushes past Nate who doesn't resist further.

JAMES

I want a copy of the data files right now. The President will decide how best to use the information. Get them or I'll do it and revoke your mission status.

James hands Nate a USB stick.

JAMES

Now.

Nate grudgingly retrieves the case, inserts the data stick and pulls the data.

NATE

This is wrong. And you know it.

Without another word James pushes his way out of the sci-mod. Simon, who has overheard this exchange, sulks into the shadows to avoid being seen as James passes by.

Nate works out his anger on some equipment. He pulls himself out of the opposite exit towards his quarters.

Simon seizes the opportunity. He rolls into the sci-mod and retrieves a USB from a drawer. He inserts it into the case and filches a copy of the data.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WAR ROOM - DAY

The council are busy on phones. The president watches a large monitor, coffee in hand.

COMMUNICATION OFFICER

Mr. President. We've received the files from the I.S.S. It'll take some time to analyze all the data.

PRESIDENT

What information did they send?

COMMUNICATION OFFICER

Looks like a bunch atmospheric and geological scans.

PRESIDENT

Okay, let's see it. Put it on the big screen.

Soon the monitor is full of raw data. Percentages of all elements in the periodic table.

DIMON

What does any of this mean?

COMMUNICATION OFFICER

Hold on sir, let me clean it up.

Moments later the raw data stream is replaced with more legible information in easy to read rows.

COMMUNICATION OFFICER

I can run a program to compare this to Earth's elements.

The program runs and it's clear that the composition is almost identical to earth. With a few significant differences.

Elements like Gold, Rhodium, Platinum are vastly increased in the Alien crust. Huge underground lakes, the size of continents, full of oil. Much of the carbon is in the form of diamond. The room starts to buzz.

This new world is a treasure trove. Unlimited fresh water, breathable air, fertile land and riches beyond anything the Earth could provide.

DIMON

Mr. President. I believe this has taken a more urgent turn.

(beat)

If these data are correct this new world holds more value than just alien technology. With these riches we could dominate the world economy for generations.

NICHOLS

If the Russians don't get there first.

PRESIDENT

What do you mean? We've already got our boys up there.

NICHOLS

Sir, we've picking up a lot of chatter from the Chinese and Russians. The word is that the Russians are preparing a launch within a few days.

PRESIDENT

What? What kind of launch?

NICHOLS

It's unclear, but they appear determined to take point on the alien front.

GOLDBERG

Once they get wind of this new data they're going to make a grab for it.

DIMON

We can't allow that to happen.

(to president)

Sir. We need to get some firepower up there. Four or five marines. We can't afford to let the Russians secure the I.S.S.

PRESIDENT

Oh. Well, yes. Of course. How long until we can make a launch?

DIMON

It's going to be close sir. Say, five days if we go private. Maybe four if we reengage NASA.

NICHOLS

The Russians could be ready about the same time. We have no intel on the Chinese response.

The president thinks this over for a moment.

PRESIDENT

Okay. I want you all working every angle you have to slow these Russians down. I don't want their launch going ahead any time soon. Let's get a team of our boys up there before anyone gets a sniff of this.

DIMON

You heard him. Let's go people.

INT. CHINA - BEIJING - ZHONGNANHAI- HEADQUARTERS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA - EVENING.

A darkened room. Indistinct FIGURES stand around a central desk. A PHONE RINGS and is answered by a dark, seated FIGURE.

SEATED FIGURE

(in mandarin, English subtitles)

Yes. Send the file.

He hangs up the phone.



SEATED FIGURE (CONT'D)  
 (in mandarin to room,  
 English subtitles)

Gentlemen. Our asset within the White House has confirmed the report. We can not allow the Americans to monopolize the resources of this new world. Deploy the military.

INT. SPACE - ISS - QUARTERS - DAY

Simon sits alone on his bunk. He connects the USB to a computer. Complex data streams over the monitor.

Some details catch his eye. Gold, minerals and lots of oil. Simon's face bruises with excitement.

He's salivating. He opens a bag and retrieves a sat phone and keys the pad.

The phone is answered by an indistinct voice. [In Russian with English subtitles].

SIMON

Yakov, put Abram on the phone.

(pause)

I don't care who he's with, put him on the damn phone.

(pause)

I'm going to punch you in the throat if you don't go and get him right now.

(long pause)

Yes, it's me.

(pause)

Didn't you tell him where I was?

(pause)

Well, he's a moron. Listen. I've got a business proposition -- Talk to me about Russian hardware up here.

INT. SPACE - ISS - QUARTERS - DAY

Simon pokes his head out of the room then pulls himself through the modules to the Russian half of the station.

RUSSIAN SCIENCE MODULE.

He enters the module and opens a storage unit. Pulls out a large case. In Russian a label reads "*Mars Mission Supply iv*". He dials the combination and is shocked to discover the contents.

He removes an emergency O2 canister and mask, a large hunting knife and a military-issue MP-443 Grach and three clips of 9×19mm parabellum rounds. There are several small vials, perhaps cyanide. In the bottom there is a concealed compartment.

Inside the compartment are six sticks of TNT and a timer attached to a detonator. He empties a nearby case and repacks the items into it. He exits the module.

INT. RUSSIA - KREMLIN - CORRIDOR - EVENING

A Russian in a suit hangs up a sat phone. This is ABRAM, 60s, ex-military/KGB, businessman. He walks down an echoing hallway to a large set of doors.

Without knocking he enters into the office of the Russian security council. Conversations stop as the members of the Russian government stare.

ABRAM

Gentlemen. We have a new situation.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - MEN'S TOILET - DAWN

Expensive suit-pants sag around ankles inside a cubicle. A phone RINGS.

Fumbling to pull up his pants. The phone drops and breaks. The stall door opens and Dimon catapults out.

He's down the hall and slides into the war room door with a BANG that quiets the room. Inside everyone's attention is now on the door as Dimon enters.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WAR ROOM - DUSK

The council look worn. Ties are removed and shirt sleeves rolled up. Coffee cups and fast food containers litter the table.

DIMON

The Russians have moved up their launch. They're T-minus six hours.

PRESIDENT

How's that possible?

DIMON

It seems their shuttle program was never fully abandoned. They've purpose modified some equipment to transport troops to the I.S.S.

GOLDBERG

They know. Somehow they know.

PRESIDENT

How many troops?

DIMON

That's all the information I have.

PRESIDENT

(enraged)

We'll find out. And task a damn satellite.

EXT. RUSSIA - PLESETSK COSMODROME - DAWN

A Russian shuttle sits on the pad being fueled. Coolant vents from the tanks like a sleeping giant breathing in the morning frost. Snow blankets the ground. The new sun pokes holes in the dense conifer tree line.

INT. PLESETSK COSMODROME - PREP HANGER - DAWN

A dozen members of the Russian Aerospace Force ready tactical gear and stock provision crates. Around them support staff prep twelve launch suits.

An engineering marvel. The Russians have stripped and retrofitted an ISS resupply module with twelve surplus Soviet MIG pilot seats.

INT. CHINESE NUCLEAR SUB - WHITE SEA - DAWN

A Chinese crew work silently at their respective stations, lights dimmed to red. The vessel is in stealth mode. [In Mandarin, English subtitles].

NAVIGATOR

Captain, we have arrived. Fifty miles to target.

CAPTAIN

(to first officer)

Prepare the payload.

FIRST OFFICER

(into comm)

Weapons, con.

WEAPONS OFFICER

Con, weapons.

FIRST OFFICER

Prepare for launch.

WEAPONS OFFICER

Yes, sir.

FIRST OFFICER

(to captain)

Weapon is being readied, sir.

CAPTAIN

Bring us to periscope depth.

FIRST OFFICER

Periscope depth, yes sir.

The First officer grunts at the helmsman and the ship begins to slowly rise from the depths.

EXT. RUSSIA - WHITE SEA - DAWN

A steel eye breaks the surface of the calm, frigid blackness. Street lights glisten over the snowy northern coast. Plesetsk Cosmodrome glows fifty miles inland.

EXT. RUSSIA - PLESETSK COSMODROME - LAUNCH PAD - DAY

The arm of a metallic Titan raises a crew pod from a flatbed. It swings into the gaping mouth of the vertical shuttle cargo hold.

The ship exhales a vaporous breath in anticipation of the climb ahead.

CREW POD.

Stern faces. Experienced and professional. The soldiers focus on their internal preparations as the pod SLAMS home, secure within the shuttle cargo hold.

LAUNCH PAD.

Calm. A picture postcard winter scene. A belch of smoke. A POWERFUL BLAST from rocket engines shakes snow from surrounding trees. A dragons breath - fire on ice.

The shuttle pulls for the sky, toasted terrain below. A dense black tail follows her arc out over the sea.

EXT. RUSSIA - WHITE SEA - DAY

Silence.

A ROAR of blinding light trails a streak of gray smoke upward from slate-black waters.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - WAR ROOM - NIGHT

The faces of the security council are locked on the main screen. A satellite image of a shuttle lifting from a snowy plateau.

The shuttle begins its roll as it throttles-up over the sea.

At the top of the screen the computer identifies a new target. Slow at first, but with rapid acceleration. It closes on the shuttle.

DIMON

What... is... that?

EXT. AIRSPACE ABOVE WHITE SEA - DAY

The shuttle pitches. Punching through the atmosphere. A second trail raises from the sea. Collision course. The shuttle rockets forward on a deadly trajectory. The two converge.

A MASSIVE EXPLOSION. Fire and debris swell like a raw blister. Annihilation.

WAR ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Shock. Surprise. Relief. A stunned silence is broken with:

SECRETARY FOR DEFENSE

Whooooo!

Cheers and jubilation. High-fives and handshakes. Dimon notices an incoming call. He picks up the receiver. His face contorts.

DIMON

Mr. President.

He's voice is lost in the cacophony of self congratulation.

DIMON (CONT'D)

Mr. President.

The celebration continues.

DIMON (CONT'D)

Sir!

The raucous cedes to silence.

PRESIDENT

Mike. What is it?

DIMON

I have the Chinese... they say they shot down the shuttle.

PRESIDENT

Well, send them a box of cigars.

DIMON

They say they used an American missile, sir. They've forwarded evidence to the Russians that you gave the strike order.

PRESIDENT

What? What are they up to?

He returns to the phone. A shadow falls over his face.

DIMON

They say they will actuate a tactical nuclear strike on Roscosmos under false flag unless we transfer all mission protocols to them.

SECRETARY FOR DEFENSE

They're bluffing.

DIMON

They just blew a Russian shuttle out of the sky with one of our missiles.

PRESIDENT

Are they trying to start world war three?

GOLDBERG

They've been left out of the game. Now they want it all.

PRESIDENT

Get me the Russians on the phone. Now.

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS

(on phone)

Sir. It may be too late. I'm receiving word that the Russians are fueling their I.C.B.Ms.

PRESIDENT

What? How many?

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS

Appears to be everything.

GOLDBERG

Oh, God.

DIMON

The Chinese are playing both sides.

SECRETARY FOR DEFENSE

We are under imminent threat. We must act preemptively.

The room is plunged into darkness. Backup power kicks in. There is a rush to the phones. Lights flicker.

DIMON

(on phone, to room)

Sir, we've been breached...An active hack.

CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS

We are exposed. This represents a clear and present danger. We must act.

PRESIDENT

NATO. Get me NATO!

INT. HOUSTON - MISSION CONTROL - DAY

NASA techs are busy on task. A group kneel around a monitor. Its guts are out and connected to a nest of wires. It flickers to life.

TECH

That's it. We got it.

PIP

Chief. We're breathing over here.

The Chief and Scooter lean over a group at the other end of the room. The Chief wheels around.

CHIEF

What you got, Pip?

PIP

Internet. Well, sort of. Not much bandwidth, but should be enough to send an email.

CHIEF

You beauty. Let's find out what the hell is going on.

The Chief squeezes in between the eager, yet fatigued faces of the techs. He raps on the keyboard.

WHITE HOUSE - WAR ROOM.

The White House Chief of Staff's assistant, Darren, checks an incoming email. Without drawing attention he types a covert reply.

MISSION CONTROL.

The blood drains from the Chief's face. The surrounding techs are immobilized.

SCOOTER

Bob, we gotta get a message up to them. We gotta let 'em know.

The Chief grabs the old radio.

CHIEF

Does this work?

PIP

Yeah, it works, but I can't see how it can help.

CHIEF

It's designed to receive radio signals, right?

PIP

Yes.

CHIEF

Well, if we reverse the polarity on the coil could we --

PIP

-- *send* a signal.

CHIEF

Exactly.

PIP

But it would be very weak. It wouldn't transmit further than a couple blocks. And we'd not be able to send anything more than, perhaps, a binary signal.

CHIEF

Do you think you could reprogram the alpha array to receive a low frequency radio signal and broadcast it to the ultra-low frequency antenna aboard the I.S.S.?



PIP

I guess it's possible, but not from in here. I'd have to be inside the room.

CHIEF

Outstanding.

(to the room)

Okay people. Drop everything. Science class is over. You've all graduated to drama school.

The Chief hands Scooter a piece of paper and a pen.

INT. HOUSTON - OUTSIDE MISSION CONTROL - DAY

The security detail looks ragged. One soldier half dozes, chin on chest. The other rests against a wall.

There's a COMMOTION, YELLING from inside the room. The soldiers snap alert. Disoriented they look to each other for an explanation.

The cacophony gets louder. Furniture is broken against walls. SHOUTS for help.

The soldiers open the door, the business end of their rifles lead the way.

At the far side of the room a dozen techs are engaged in a weak tussle, like a poorly choreographed western bar-fight. The room is in ruin.

SOLDIER 1

Hey! Hey! Stop that!

SOLDIER 2

Quit it! Now!

The techs, ruffled, stop and stare at the soldiers. Pip slips from behind the door. Cat-like she swoops out into the corridor. Once clear she sprints for a side exit like she was running on hot coals.

The techs break and go back to their stations. The soldiers exchange a confused look. Content the event is over they leave the room and lock the doors.

Chief and Scooter exchange a relieved look.

INT. ARRAY CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Pip runs up to a door and looks in through the window. The room is empty. She pulls from her pocket the piece of paper Chief had handed to Scooter.

She punches the series of numbers hand written on the note into the keypad. The override opens the door.

She takes the console. A sleeping system blinks to life.  
On the monitor a radio waveform.

PIP  
Okay-dokay.

She inputs a few choice commands and the waveform stretches and contracts into a rudimentary series of long and short pulses. Morse code.

Into another console she keys further commands.

EXT. ALPHA ARRAY - HUSTON - DAY

A small array of three dishes set between buildings move in sync to align at a new point in the sky.

INT. SPACE - ISS - SCIENCE MOD - NIGHT

Nate lays on his bunk. He pounds his baseball into his palm. Tears streak his face.

He stuffs the ball under his pillow and pulls for the command mod.

COMMAND MOD.

James and Sarah are hunkered together as Nate enters.

NATE  
James.

James holds up a finger to silence him.

NATE (CONT'D)  
We need to talk.

JAMES  
Come look at this.

Nate is caught off guard. He approaches the pair.

NATE  
What?

JAMES  
What does that look like to you?

NATE  
Static.

JAMES  
Wait. Watch.

Nate watches as the radio waves dip and spike in an artificial rhythm.

NATE  
Morse. That's Morse code.

SARAH  
Why is the V.L.F. picking up  
Morse?

JAMES  
(to Nate)  
Can you translate?

NATE  
Something. Errr. I need paper and  
pencil.

Sarah hands Nate a small pencil and a pad of paper.

Nate scribbles, unblinking as the signal scrolls by on the monitor. James cranes his neck to see.

JAMES  
Well?

NATE  
Hold on.

More scribbling then the pencil stops. Nate reads the message. His jaw clenches. He slams the notepad down on the console. James scrambles for the pad as Nate hurls himself out of the module.

JAMES  
Nate?

James reads the message.

JAMES  
Oh God.

JAMES' BERTH.

Nate locates the box containing the bridge.

He returns to the science mod and pulls the scanner case from the rack. He wrenches a power cord from the wall and jams it into the up-link port of the case.

Sparks and a puff of smoke and the scanners are junked along with their data.

AIRLOCK.

He maneuvers through the station to the airlock. He pulls on a space suit and locks into an EMU. He purges the airlock with an emergency override. The outer door opens and Nate fires up the thrusters.

COMMAND MOD.

An ALARM informs James and sarah of the exposed port.

SARAH  
Airlock in the E.V.A. MOD.

JAMES  
Where's Nate?

James keys the comm.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Nate?

No reply.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Nate. Report.

SARAH  
I have him on the externals. He's  
E.V.A.

JAMES  
Nate. What the hell are you  
doing?

NATE (V.O.)  
I'm sorry James. I can't let you  
give the government access to  
this planet. I have to do  
something.

JAMES  
Are you out of your mind? Turn  
around now and get back inside.  
We're under Presidential order.

EXT. SPACE - 500 METERS FROM ISS

NATE  
The President can go to hell.  
I've gotta warn them. It's  
spiraling out of control down  
there--

JAMES  
Nate!

NATE  
Maybe Dad couldn't save our  
planet, but I can save theirs.

Nate is half a mile from the ISS. He throttles back. He activates the lid of the box and a beautiful red orb levitates out. From the ISS James and Ryan can see Nate bathed in red light.

JAMES (V.O.)  
Don't you do it.

Nate reaches out and grabs at the orb like he's squeezing an orange.

EXT. ALIEN PLANET - CONTINUOUS

The ISS is gone and Nate floats in space with the alien planet in the b.g.

The shock causes him to gasp for breath then vomit inside his helmet.

He gathers himself and evaluates his isolation.

NATE  
(to self)  
Well, you didn't think that through, did you?

There is nothing for him to do but float above the planet with a visor covered in puke and a waning O2 supply.

INT. ISS. COMMAND MOD.

James is furious.

JAMES  
Dammit. Sarah, go find Simon. I want everyone up here. I have to radio Washington.

INT. ISS - VARIOUS LOCATIONS.

Sarah searches for Simon. She reaches his berth. He's absent. An open bag catches her eye. She looks inside and pulls out a pistol. Studies it in disbelief. She replaces it and pulls out a knife. A voice behind her:

SIMON  
Well, this is unfortunate.

She wheels around, knife in hand.

SARAH  
What is this, Simon? Did you bring this on-board?

SIMON  
No. I found it.

SARAH  
You *found* it? You're joking? I have to take this to James.

SIMON

I can't let you do that.

SARAH

Get the fuck out of my way.

Simon makes a grab for the knife. The sheath slides off in his hand, exposing the blade. They grapple.

Sarah receives a savage blow to the stomach. Simon thrusts her up against the wall by her throat. Simon is suddenly a monster and she's in a fight for her life.

With a pivot she delivers an elbow to his jaw. She breaks free, but he's on her instantly.

Locked in battle in zero-G. No up nor down, they bounce off the walls of the module disoriented and confused.

A deadly jolt. The combatants stare into one another's eyes, both caught by the surprise of this fatal moment. Marbles of blood boil away from the pair.

Sarah's eyes roll back in her head as her body peels away from Simon, limp and lifeless.

Simon stares at the knife, buried to the hilt between Sarah's ribs. He grabs his bag and bolts for the door.

EXT. SPACE - ABOVE ALIEN WORLD

Nate floats helpless. He struggles to focus. A faint glow rises from the planet surface. He slips into unconsciousness.

A ship arrives. A port opens and swallows Nate.

INT. ALIEN SHIP - DAY

Ben and his crew tend to Nate. They remove his helmet and clean his face. He's out cold.

Ben barks an order. The helmsman deploys a red sphere. The bridge is activated. The ship appears next to:

ISS - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY

James hurries to the airlock and keys the comm.

JAMES

Sarah, Simon. airlock. Now.

James releases the airlock and enters the ship.

ALIEN SHIP - CONTINUOUS

He finds Nate stripped of his suit, but still unconscious.

JAMES

Ben. Is he okay?

BEN

The bridge is not designed for individual use. There is too much energy. He's lucky to be alive. I should have perhaps warned of this.

JAMES

You can't expect to predict Nate.

BEN

Oh, hello Simon.

James turns on his heel to see Simon standing behind him.

JAMES

Simon. Where's Sarah?

He notices the pistol gripped between white knuckles.

JAMES

What the hell is that?

SIMON

Hand me the bridge.

JAMES

Are you out of your mind? Why do you have a gun?

SIMON

Hand it over or I blow the whole place.

Simon jiggles the bag in his hand.

JAMES

You have explosives here? Aboard the station? Are you insane?

SIMON

There's enough T.N.T. in here to turn this shit-hole station into confetti. Hand over the bridge!

James turns to Ben who holds out the box. James accepts it and skids it over the floor to Simon.

Simon tosses the bag to the side and picks up the box.

SIMON

This planet is mine. If you were smart you'd do the same.

JAMES

What are you talking about?

SIMON

This planet will make me a superpower in my own right. When I secure the surface with the Russians I'll have *exclusive* access to all of its wealth. Imagine arriving at the beginning of the gold rush or before the oil industry began and claiming exclusive rights. Imagine being there, but knowing what we know now. Imagine owning all the land rights to build and live there. This place is mine. I'm the new lord of this land. Every liter of oil will flow through me. Every precious metal and mineral will be stamped with my name. I'll build cities and the people will come. The Earth is dying. I own the future!

NATE

I told you he was an asshole.

Simon registers the now conscious Nate. He grimaces, levels the gun and squeezes the trigger. CLICK. James rushes Simon as he fumbles with the safety.

BANG. James shields Nate with his body and takes the round to the stomach.

Simon turns on his heel and flees back into the ISS.

James lifts himself from the floor. He limps to the bag and looks inside. Sticks of TNT are strapped to a timer. The counter shows three minutes. Seconds tick down.

With a groan James shoulders the bag and pursues Simon.

Nate struggles to rise. He calls out to James as he disappears into the ISS. Streaks of blood smear the floor.

NATE

James!



AMERICAN SOYUZ - MOMENTS LATER

Simon punches the entry hatch control and dives in.

INT. ISS - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - CONTINUOUS

James moves from hand rail to hand rail. He hemorrhages a floating trail of claret-red spheres.

He reaches the Soyuz to see Simon working the launch controls. He pounds a fist on the window and leaves a smudge of blood.

JAMES

Get out of there, you  
son-of-a-bitch.

Simon ignores him. Works on the commands for detachment.

James, in agony, reaches for the external hatch lock. He pries it open. Simon looks up to see James throw the bag into the Soyuz. The hatch closes again.

Simon grabs the bag, opens the hatch and tosses it back into the ISS. Time is running out. James seizes the bag, plants his feet against the wall and launches towards the hatch. He passes the lock and smacks the hatch open.

James flies into the Soyuz and crashes into Simon. The bullet in his gut causes him to cringe in pain.

Simon is manic. He throws punches at James' face with a bloody fury. James reaches for the emergency release and tugs.

The hatch closes and the Soyuz is ejected from the ISS with a massive jolt. James closes his bloodied eyes, arms drift open, cruciform. Simon panics.

An EXPLOSION -- reduced to a singularity.

EXT. SPACE - ABOVE ALIEN WORLD

At the other end of space a ball of FIRE erupts over the alien world. Debris from the Soyuz is vaporized in the planet's atmosphere.

INT. ISS - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - CONTINUOUS

Ben helps Nate navigate through the ISS in search of James. A trail of blood-drops cling to the hull towards a vacated docking port. On the window a bloody hand print and beyond, space.

NATE

James!

Nate pulls for the cupola observation pod.

INT. CUPOLA - CONTINUOUS

Nate and Ben scan the sky for the Soyuz. Earth looms, but no sign of the Soyuz.

Something catches Nate's eye. A bright flash on the Eastern seaboard of the US. Another.

He cranes at the window. The flashes are replaced by large red disks. More flashes. More. Now in Europe. The land is peppered with flashes, like a dance of fireflies. Too many to count. Unending.

Nate eyes are wild.

NATE

No. No! No!

The scene escalates. South America and the visible parts of West Africa begin to light up.

Earth has engaged in global nuclear war.

Ben looks to his friend for an explanation. Nate's expression is sufficient communication.

Ben lowers himself from the cupola and pulls himself back to his ship.

The aliens disengage from the ISS and return to the main ship. In a blink the ship is drawn into a singularity.

ISS - CUPOLA - MUCH LATER

Nate still stares at his home. Occasional lights flash though a dense cover of black soot. As the Earth turns he sees that Asia has not escaped the devastation.

Nate holds his head. Devastated.

He sits up. Tears in his eyes.

NATE

Ben?

Silence.

NATE (CONT'D)

Sarah?

He pulls from the cupola.

NATE (CONT'D)

Sarah?

He turns into Chip's berth where he finds Sarah's lifeless body.

Then a familiar sensation. He pulls for the port window.

EXT. SPACE THROUGH WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

Beyond the window a Black desert. Desolate. Lonely.

Nate blinks as a shiny nautilus ship appears. A tearful smile breaks through the disrepair.

Another ship arrives. Identical. Another. And Another. In a flash dozens of ships fill the viewing port.

INT. ISS - QUEST AIRLOCK - MOMENTS LATER

Nate opens the airlock to find Ben and Jerry in front of him.

BEN

Let's go. We don't have much time.

Without a word Nate jumps through the airlock into their ship.

As they walk:

JERRY

We have been able to analyze what has happened. A large number of high energy fusion events have caused severe damage to the planet.

BEN

By our calculations the devastation will lead to the extinction of seventy one percent of the life on earth. I'm sorry to say, my friend. This includes humans.

JERRY

However, if we act fast we may be able to salvage a number of humans from areas not yet affected by the radiation.

NATE

What?

JERRY

But we must act quick. The radiation is spreading fast.

They enter the main ship. The crew are busy at their stations.

EXT. SPACE - ABOVE EARTH

Dozens of alien ships descend into Earth's atmosphere. They disperse. Each on a specific trajectory.

INT. ALIEN SHIP 1 - OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

The view clears as the ship descends through stratospheric smoke and soot. Nate points.

NATE

There! Can we try there?

The remains of a vaporized city looms in the distance. East of the city the ship approaches a lake upwind of a plume of super-heated radioactive cloud.

The ship touches down. A lake house dominates a clearing. Nate and the aliens rush out --

NATE

Jill? Jill?

JILL HAMILTON (30s), long dark hair and familiar features, pokes out of the front door. She looks confused, terrified. A child-in-arms clings to her and cowers.

JILL

Nate! Is it you?

NATE

Yes. Quick, get on board.

JILL

That thing?

NATE

Yes, no time to explain. We gotta go.

Once on-board the door closes with a CLANK of finality.

The ship rises. Buffeted heavily by turbulence. Smoke and cinders obscure the view.

Nate sits upfront with Ben, while Jill and the child huddle in the back. He looks over his shoulder to check on them.

JILL

Where's James?

Nate's expression says more than words could. Jill breaks-down. Pulls the child in closer.

A small eye finds an opening through Jill's clothes. The child and Nate exchange a silent moment.

EXT. EARTH - ABOVE THE AMERICAS - DAY

Ships lift from the ground. Their precious human cargo aboard. They fight to gain altitude. Over a hill in South America an image of a soapstone statue, arms outstretched, comes into view.

INT. ALIEN SHIP 2 - OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

Upon seeing this from the window passengers prostrate and cross themselves. Smoke and fire envelops Christ The Redeemer.

EXT. SPACE - ABOVE EARTH - MOMENTS LATER

Many ships sail away from an unrecognizable Earth. One by one they make the jump and disappear.

EXT. ALIEN PLANET - DAWN

Nate's ship descends to a clearing surrounded by lush vegetation. He helps Jill to her feet and ushers them onto the new world.

Other ships follow into the clearing.

EXT. CLEARING NEAR WOODS - DAWN

As they alight the ships, people react to their new home with expressions as varied as their backgrounds. Some excited and expectant. Others confused and afraid.

Nate notices the child with Jill is overwhelmed. She sobs into her mothers arms.

NATE

Hey. Hi. Everything is going to be okay. You must be Isabelle. I'm your uncle, Nate.

The child cowers further into her mothers arms.

NATE

Hey, do you like baseball?

She sniffs and rolls her swollen eyes towards Nate.

NATE

Look. You know what the World Series is?

Isabelle nods. Clearly interested in this distraction.

NATE

This here is a game ball from the twenty-twenty World Series. Your grandad caught it and gave it to me when I was about your age.

She looks down at the ball. The sobbing has subsided.

NATE

Would you like to have it?

She looks to her mother for a confirmatory smile then slowly reaches out her hand.

Nate stares at her open palm.

A pause for several beats.

He looks at the ball and rubs his thumb over the soft leather. Nate places the ball in her hand and is instantly rewarded with a smile.

FADE OUT: