

DEMOLISHED MAN

SCREENPLAY BY OLIVER STONE

ADAPTED FROM THE NOVEL BY  
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DRAFT 1  
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1. LIMBO

THE FILM OPENS IN A BLACK AND WHITE DREAMSCAPE; Except for the sound of wind, the images are drained of strength. They're harsh and reedy.

There are manifold images of a uterine passage, but the hard contrast makes it seem like we're watching enormous paramecium mating under a microscope. We're moving upwards, along the walls of the tunnel with bizarre SOUND FX, towards a light which shines and then:

A huge BABY'S HEAD squeezes out the passage -- and there's a squawk of pain and the lights in the vague room switch to an intenser tone.

The BABY OBJECT is pulled from the blurry passage and swung in the air, by its heels dangling, but soundless. Only one cry and then nothing again but the wind --

And the FACES of the NURSES - and the MOTHER lying there, all this from the baby's POV -- leading to an upside down shot of the umbilical cord being severed. Another sharp screech of pain - and then the silence again, and the wind, and the DOCTOR is seen, upside down, doing something, and the view of the world changes and the DOCTOR is seen upright passing the child to a NURSE who cradles it, all this continuing from the baby's POV, as the NURSE looks up and says something (soundless) to somebody unseen - and then tilts the CHILD around so that it can see --

A MAN in an elegant dark cape with suit and walking stick clutched in his hand. He's reaching forward to touch the baby. The man has no face. The breathing of the child, which has grown more and more labored, now violently climaxes to A SCREAM -

MATCH CUT TO:

2. REICH BEDROOM - DAWN

BEN REICH is covered in sweat, sitting up in his antique bed. Faint light fractures through the cathedral-size windows encased in steel. A SUBTITLE appears quietly underneath.

NEW YORK CITY 2491 A.D.

THE BUTLER JONAS appears anxiously at the door in white wig, tails, buckles and breeches. He has the sad, humble eyes of an undertaker. The style of the room is plush black and white art deco of the 20th Century mixed with the steel surfaces and angular lengths of germanic expressionism. The effect is bizarre and cold of personality.

REICH  
Again?

JONAS (English accent)  
Yes Mr. Reich.

REICH (nods)  
Loud?

JONAS  
Very loud, sir. And terrified.

REICH rises from the bed with a troubled look on his face. His features are sharp, angular, his frame lean and hard. His eyes, with their driven turboprop intensity, are riveting.

REICH  
Nobody, Jonas, tell nobody or I'll crucify your ass.

JONAS  
Yes sir

REICH  
Leave me alone

JONAS  
Yes sir

Retreating

REICH (shouts)  
Jonas!

Jonas reappears

REICH  
Sorry

JONAS  
Quite all right sir

Reich is crossing the room, his gait athletic.

REICH  
It's not all right. I'm treating you like a relative. I don't pay you enough for the privilege.

JONAS  
Oh no, I'm paid quite...

REICH  
Next time I yell at you, yell right back. Why should I have all the fun?

JONAS  
Oh, Mr. Reich, I couldn't...

REICH  
Do that and you get a raise.

Jonas is troubled.

REICH  
That's all, Jonas.

JONAS  
(withdrawing)  
Thank you sir

REICH, fastening his robe, momentarily catches his handsome reflection in the full length mirror. A pause. In subtitle:

REICH (to himself)  
Make your enemies by choice. Not by accident.

CUT TO:

3. INTERIOR - REICH INDUSTRIES - DAY

REICH, elegantly attired in a 20th Century suit and in his wrong mind, storms into the large LOBBY AREA dominated by the monstrous steel MONOGRAM of the initial "R" around which hundreds of WORKERS flow ant-like in white shirts, black ties, black suits, no-nonsense haircuts. They part deferentially for Reich, their tone and behavior church-like.

WORKERS  
(en passant)  
Good morning Mr. Reich...  
Morning, Mr. Reich...  
Good morning, sir...

Reich strides past without a word.

CUT TO:

4. ELEVATOR - REICH

enters. He pushes a button. An airlock shifts and secures and a sudden WHOOSH of an airjet shoots REICH 57 stories upward in 2.2 seconds.

ANOTHER ANGLE - REICH exits elevator at the EXECUTIVE FLOOR with a panoramic view of a futuristic NEW YORK (miniature).

WORKERS  
(en passant)  
Morning Mr. Reich...  
Have a nice day Mr. Reich...

A stern-looking CHIEF SECRETARY manages to keep pace with his stride, the morning paperwork filling her hands.

SECRETARY  
Morning, Mr. Reich. Jones on Callisto called. Urgent. Reich Utilities down 2 and 1/8 as of 10. You have dental surgery at 12:30. The Callico Mining...

REICH  
Stall everything! No calls!

REICH slams the door of his office in her face.

CUT TO:

5. CLOSE - REICH - OFFICE

Unlocking a safe, he pulls out a leather-lined copy of the "Executive Code Book" published by "Lloyd's London." The office has huge spaces and curves of glass peering out over the city. The office itself is as large as a football field rife with modernistic design sculpture, plant-life and plunging see-through floors leading to a pool below. All is space, light, wealth -- optimism.

QUICK CUTS:

REICH, installed behind a huge antique desk with long swivel chair topped by the "R" symbol, excitedly runs his finger down a page of the code book.

CODE INSERT

QQBA	PARTNERSHIP
RRCB	BOTH OUR
SSDC	BOTH YOUR
TTED	MERGER
UUFE	INTERESTS
VVGF	INFORMATION
WWHG	ACCEPT OFFER
XXIH	GENERALLY KNOWN
YYJI	SUGGEST
ZZXJ	CONFIDENTIAL
AALK	EQUAL
BBML	CONTRACT
CCHK	REJECT OFFER

CUT TO:

REICH studies a sophisticated computer console in his office, the 24th Century equivalent of the telex.

COMPUTER CONSOLE

CODE REICH INDUSTRIES TO D'COURTNEY  
 CARTEL, SUGGEST MERGER BOTH OUR  
 INTERESTS EQUAL PARTNERSHIP AS  
 DISCUSSED PLAN C

REICH types over

COMPUTER CONSOLE

YYJI TTED RRCB UUFE AALK QQBA EECJ C

REICH now activates a switch which reads "SEND" and the code letters flash several times on the console, then smoothly fade to nothingness. No sound at all has accompanied this process. REICH, satisfied, shuts off the scrambler.

CUT TO:

6. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

It's like a war room with maps, models, computerization. TWO DOZEN VICE PRESIDENTS sit at an altar-like round table with flashing lights and vid-phones. On the walls are shifting visual patterns of Reich Industry subdivisions, set in differing environments (agri-farms on Callisto, underwater mining company on aquatic Io, a space resort on sunshiny Venus, a spaceline in the vast reaches of the Milky Way, a factory on cold gaseous Mars, etc.) These wall-projected miniatures are the only reality to Ben

CONTINUED

Reich, the flesh and muscle of his empire. The voices are sharply undercut with the images:

REICH  
Io?

VICE PRESIDENT 1  
April. Down 6½ million tons.

REICH  
D'Courtney?

Vice President 1 ponders his paperwork.

REICH  
Come on, come on.  
(to 2nd Vice President)  
Jones, the Mars sit?

VICE PRESIDENT 2  
Aggregate planetary gross is off  
2.113 percent this month. For the  
week off 2.6351 per.

VICE PRESIDENT 1  
D'Courtney up 1.7 million tons.

REICH  
(grinaces)  
Forbes, the Inner Satellites and  
asteroids. Totals?

VICE PRESIDENT 3  
Off 12.3 on the year. D'Courtney  
running at plus 7.8. Part of that of  
course is the severe solar wind that  
hit our agrifarms on Callisto

REICH  
Solar winds and space frosts! That's  
always your excuse Forbes. Mahoney -  
what's our Galaxy Net running?

VICE PRESIDENT 4  
Seven and four-tenths points off last  
year at this time. Points to a  
significant...

REICH  
I know! And D'Courtney?

VICE PRESIDENT 4  
Up -- 8.7 this time last year.

REICH  
God damn him! He's killing us. He's tearing our guts out. Why? Why? Will one of you geniuses tell me!

A hush among them. The MEN and WOMEN look at each other uncomfortably. Finally, a harried prissy little man, BRULE, clears his throat and stands, and speaks in a precise, commanding tone.

BRULE  
Excuse me, Mister Reich, but have you read my memo on Blonn yet?

Reich turns to his CHIEF SECRETARY, aside:

REICH  
Who the hell's he?

SECRETARY  
Brule. Personnel.  
(to Brule)  
Mister Reich hasn't read your memo yet, Brule.

BRULE stares icily at her.

BRULE  
May I point out, young woman, that unless I'm used with maximum efficiency, I'm wasted.

The SECRETARY glares.

REICH  
Who the hell is Blonn, Brule?

BRULE  
Blonn, Mister Reich, is one of the thousand First Class Espers in the Galaxy. He's right up there with Tate, Gart, Akins, Moselle. He's capable of the most refined Extra-Sensory Perception at the deepest levels of the unconscious. He...

SECRETARY  
Mr. Brule, would you mind getting to the point. Mister Reich has limited...

Brule glares at her.



BRULE

The point, Miss Prynne, is that once this company realizes that Extra-Sensory Perception is not a miracle, but a skill subject to wage-hour limitations, the quicker we're going to turn our profit picture around. There're 100,000 3rd Class Espers in the Esper Guild. We employ 200 of them. There're 10,000 2nd Class Espers of which we employ less than 15. People like me and Harrington and...

REICH

And you all cost me a fortune. Get on with it, Brule!

BRULE

(imperturbable)

But what Reich Industries doesn't have and desperately needs is a 1st Class Esper. The fact is we're not hiring the best Espers. The D'Courtney Cartel has been getting the cream of the graduating crop by offering generous research grants whereas we keep bidding for the inferior...

He stops. An AIDE has bustled in, whispering in SECRETARY PRYNN'S ear; she in turns whispers it into REICH'S ear. He snaps up to a standing position.

BRULE

...In short I recommend we purchase the services of Mister Blonn immediately.

VICE PRESIDENTS

(en masse)

Ben, we question this...  
Ben, the Espers've always been anti-business...  
Espers don't fit into a corporate team...  
Espers are moralists, Ben, not businessmen!

REICH, eyes blazing, strides past the quaking BRULE.

REICH

Shut up - all of you! Hyenas!  
Vice Presidents? Hah!

CONTINUED

REICH (CONTINUED)

(to Brule)

All right! Hire this bastard. Pay him anything he wants. And damn D'Courtney! We'll match him step by step even if we go broke doing it!

Accompanied by the AIDE, he stalks out.

CUT TO:

7. REICH - OFFICE

Reich slams the door. Left alone, he hurries to the COMPUTER CONSOLE where the RED BUZZER marked "Transmission" pulses in a soft steady beat of sound, somewhat erotic.

COMPUTER CONSOLE  
CODE D'COURTNEY TO REICH

Then pauses, maddeningly. REICH is clenched with tension.

REICH  
C'mon, c'mon...

The computer suddenly flashes.

COMPUTER CONSOLE  
REPLY WWHG.

A pause. REICH slowly grimaces, his features searing into white rage. A momentary SPECIAL EFFECT SUBLIMINAL here of his face transforming into that of a TIGER bearing its fangs, then fading swiftly. Reich snaps the computer off. A hiss of sound from his lips.

CUT TO:

8. INTERIOR - REICH HOME - NIGHT

Reich is in his robes in his BEDROOM as JONAS exits with the remnants of his dinner on a silver tray.

JONAS  
Will that be all, Mister Reich?

REICH stands, is switching television channels.

REICH  
Yes, thank you Jonas

A wall-size TELEVISION image of a NEWSCASTER occupies one wall as Reich impatiently moves past it to his WALL SAFE

## NEWSCASTER

On Tranxia today two major earthquakes.  
Thirty-five dead. While on Callisto  
and Io, major legislation passed to  
prohibit Esper organizations. More  
at eleven. Stay tuned to Station 67.  
Coming up...

(tinkling music)

Reich punches out the combination on a telephone-type lock  
and an elaborate wall safe swings open. He reaches inside  
and pulls out a large RED ENVELOPE and a tiny BLACK BOOK.

CUT TO:

8A. REICH - STUDY - NIGHT

Reich rips open the red envelope. Inside is a film cart-  
ridge, on which is stamped the antique logo - "REICH  
INDUSTRIES FOUNDED 1951 A.D." ("Where Progress is A Product")

CUT TO:

SCREEN - Effect to be worked out so that the figure of  
CORNELIUS REICH on the screen is as multidimensional as  
possible. The patriarch of the family is in his sixties  
and is blind in one milky eye. He has a malevolent facial  
character and sits somewhat stiffly in a pastoral GARDEN  
setting on the family estate, talking to camera from a  
bench. The SOUND, for some reason, is atrocious, but its  
scratchiness lends another bizarre bent to the content of  
his speech. He is wearing a double-breasted suit and  
watch chain, suggesting the late 1940s. The FILM IS IN  
BLACK AND WHITE.

## CORNELIUS REICH

For you Reiches who will come after me,  
the test of intellect, you will find,  
is the refusal to belabor the obvious.  
If you've opened the envelope and  
are now looking at this piece of film,  
we understand each other.

The first traces of humor appear now on the old man's face.

## CORNELIUS REICH

Confronted as I have been all my life  
by the jealousy and hatred of my  
enemies and the hatred of my friends;  
I have hypostulated four abstract murder  
plans which I now bequeath to you as  
part of your inheritance as a Reich.

BEN REICH sits there absorbed, his face lit by the screen.

CORNELIUS REICH

The important thing to remember is that the essence of murder never changes. In every era it remains the conflict of the killer against society with the victim as prize. Therefore it's imperative the killer enter into the contract of murder with clear intention and sharp mind. This requires an amoral mind free of doubt, conscience, or the trappings of guilt. Any one of these will inevitably cause the subconscious of the killer to give himself away. Society functions best off the collective guilt of its masses. The rebel, therefore, must not compromise with that society or he will relinquish his greatness and become one of many...

CLOSE - BEN REICH, lit by the intimacy of the projector, fingers a page of the BLACK BOOK he took from the safe.

INSERT BLACK BOOK PAGES -- Categories with names attached for ABDUCTION... ANARCHISTS... ARSONISTS... BRIBERY (PROVEN). His fingers run down the page to... BRIBERY (POTENTIAL)... moving down the list to -- AUGUSTUS FINLAY TATE, ESPER MEDICAL DOCTOR 1. REICH pauses, considers. During this:

CORNELIUS REICH

...Be audacious, be brave, be confident and you won't fail. The killer only fails when he succumbs to either guilt or intellect. These, I repeat, cause mistakes. The natural killer avoids planning too carefully. He trusts his instincts more than his intellect because he knows that against pure instinct, Society has no defense. In its purest form, the Killer instinct is invincible...

FADE OUT on the OLD MAN wagging a hortatory finger at camera -

SHARP CUT TO:

9. INTERIOR - DREAMSCAPE - NIGHT (BLACK AND WHITE)

A strange, monochromatic BEDROOM (notif to be worked out). The CAMERA closes, SOUNDLESS, on BEN REICH, obscured in shadow, copulating with a WOMAN approximately 200 pounds and built like a bear... a shaft of LIGHT cuts across the bed and a MAN is standing in the doorway. He approaches. REICH looks up in terror. The man has NO FACE. He raises his arm to strike Reich.

JERKY CUTS TO:

REICH falling down a flight of stairs... The MAN WITH NO FACE chases him.

REICH runs out into an empty STREET, naked... THE MAN WITH NO FACE chasing after.

CLOSE - REICH running. He tears around the side of a building - FULL into the arms of the MAN WITH NO FACE who grips him.

CUT TO:

10. REICH - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Reich wakes suddenly. A pause. He grips himself, frustrated.

CUT TO:

11. EXTERIOR - THERAPY BUILDING - DAY

A MONORAIL transports REICH into the heart of a large A-frame BUILDING. Monorails are evident throughout film as an efficient ground level mass transportation. No smoke-spitting trucks or buses are evident and cars have become expensive antiques, usually owned by the rich. Similarly, the rich dress in the "old" way as opposed to cheaper action-wear garb most of the population wears. The upper classes wear real wools and silks and furs and curious hats and all sorts of idiosyncracies to celebrate the ego.

CUT TO:

12. TATE OFFICE - THERAPY BUILDING

In his rich double-breasted pinstripe suit, REICH is seductive as he enters a sliding glass door marked AUGUSTUS TATE, ESPER M.D. 1, and leans over the SECRETARY.

REICH  
I want to see Doctor Tate. Tell  
him Ben Reich is here.

SECRETARY  
But you have no appoint...

Her voice trails off as she realizes who she's talking to.

CUT TO:

13. TATE OFFICE - DAY

REICH plops his head back on the soft leather settee.

REICH  
Peep me quick, Tate.

TATE, a tiny, round, impeccably tailored gnome, concentrates intensely. His office, on the roof of the therapy building, is a splash of light, water, sun, half indoors, half out, the design composed for maximum peace effect. Plant life swells the room to tropic proportions and soothing pastorals play on the wall-size VID SCREEN as electronic music calms the angry heart. Tate finally speaks in quick bursts:

TATE  
You're Ben Reich of Reich Industries.  
Ten billion credit firm. You're  
involved in a death struggle with  
the D'Courtney Cartel. You're  
savagely hostile towards D'Courtney.  
You've offered him a very fair  
merger proposal but the offer has  
been refused.

Tate's eyes are glittering

TATE  
You're resolved to --

In desperation, he breaks off abruptly.

REICH  
Go ahead.

TATE  
To murder Cray D'Courtney as the  
first step in taking over his cartel.  
You... you want my help... Mr. Reich  
this is ridiculous! If you keep  
on thinking like this, I'll have to  
commit you. You know the law.

REICH

Clever up Tate, you're going to help me break the law

TATE

You're crazy Reich. There hasn't been a successful premeditated murder in 79 years

REICH

Why? Because mind-readers patrol the world. What can stop a mind-reader? Another mind-reader. You, Tate.

TATE

You don't understand Reich. We're born in the Esper Guild. We live and die inside the Guild. The Esper Pledge is like the Hippocratic Oath. If we use our mind-reading powers to do any harm, we'd be ostracized from the only society we know. We'd be like...

REICH

Knock it off Tate. You hate the Guild as much as I do. Guild Ethics are bad for business. You make maybe 80,000 credits a year. Eighty iots on every credit you make goes to the Guild to train other espers. That doesn't leave much for your fancy tastes, does it? Save a little time. Peep me again.

TATE'S eyes narrow. He watches REICH. A long moment.

ESPER REICH

(in subtitles)

250 million credits. I'm offering you 250 million credits Tate! A quarter of all my wealth - It's yours! -

TATE winces his eyes shut. His face tightens painfully. He gasps.

NOTE ESPER EFFECT: This "thought" is being read by Tate. Reich is sending it. The thought appears in subtitle, rather quickly (Note similar effect used in rooftop scene "Annie Hall"). Reich, however, is not an esper. His thought can be read (or peeped), but he cannot read himself.

TATE  
My God! You can't be serious Reich!

REICH smiles.

REICH  
I'm going to fight a war with Society.  
You know I am -- and you know I can  
make good on it!

TATE stares into Reich's eyes, reading the certainty in  
the relentless stare. Tate concentrates intensely, then -

REICH  
I can win with you. I can beat  
society. Look again Tate. Be sure.

A long beat. Tate suddenly slumps in his chair.

TATE  
(in a whisper)  
I believe you, Reich. goddammit I  
believe you...

REICH  
Then you'll do it?

A long pause. TATE nods imperceptibly. REICH rises.

REICH  
We'll be in close touch.

He walks through a patch of roses towards the exit when:

TATE  
Reich

REICH turns

TATE  
The screaming will continue. Even  
if you murder D'Courtney, the Man  
with No Face won't go away.

REICH crouches, furious.

ESPER REICH  
(in subtitle)  
How!

NOTE ESPER EFFECT -- Reich, in the heat of the moment,  
is not aware of thinking this thought. It's being  
picked up by fate



TATE

Don't be a fool Reich. You think you can hide anything from a First Esper? In the past six months you've had dozens of nightmares about a Man with No Face.

ESPER REICH

(in subtitle)

Who is he?

TATE (teasing)

You know, Reich.

REICH resorts to his voice.

REICH

For the love of God Tate, I'll pay you anything! Tell me who he is! Tell me.

TATE rises to his nattily elegant little height and smiles malevolently.

TATE

No, Reich, I won't tell you. No one but a First Esper could tell you and I doubt after this meeting you'd dare to consult another Esper.

ESPER REICH

(in subtitle)

Play rough huh?

TATE

More the balance of power. You understand? Mutual dependence, mutual faith. Criminal but peeper-- that's me.

REICH holds a beat, then exits.

CUT TO:

14: EXTERIOR - NEW YORK CITY - TWILIGHT (MINIATURE)

The City to be worked out along combination styles of old and new. Antique slums and bohemian areas are interspersed with sleek pyramids and cubes of glass and chrome. The Empire State is still there but dwarfed by a 700 story cubistic structure. Monorail systems and moving sidewalks catacomb the deep valleys of the inner city. Airships (JUMPERS) move in prearranged tangents along the airways.

15. INTERIOR JUMPER - REICH

peers down as JONAS lands the classic antique jumper at a JUMPERPORT along one of the BOULEVARD at the bottom level of the city. (If possible we should have a view from above that suggests the street-level is 2-3 miles down from the airways at the tops of the buildings.)

16. INNER-CITY SIDEWALK - REICH

Reich is on a fast-moving inner-city sidewalk (approximately 30 mph). Monorails lurk directly above for longer hops. Alongside the walkways are lanes for moving vehicles such as electronic bikes, trikes, skates, and the occasional oddball SKYPACKER shooting past. The entire floor level of the city is astonishingly bright-lit by vast electronic radom globes that dispel the gloom of the skyscraper shadows during the day and glow seductively at night, giving the impression that every City Street is a little well-lit stage.

17. MUSIC TOWN - NIGHT

REICH moves into a catacomb of winding bohemian streets. Musicians play in the street. Messengers intersect with stacks of tape. The atmosphere is charged. Reich enters an elegant old TOWNHOUSE marked PSYCH SONGS INC.

CUT TO:

18. INTERIOR - MUSIC STUDIO

REICH plants a casual kiss on the lips of DUFFY KINCAIDE. She's 22, bright, very ambitious and shapely as a sales curve. A JINGLE is playing over

DUFFY

Well Mister Reich. Some day I'm going to hire a peeper to case your kiss. I keep thinking you don't mean business.

REICH

I don't.

DUFFY

Dog!

REICH

A man has to make up his mind early Duffy. If he kisses girls he kisses his money goodbye.

DUFFY  
Keep a man in debt and he'll  
never leave you.

Pip REICH

Pop DUFFY

Bim REICH

Bam DUFFY

Reich laughs. Duffy sighs.

DUFFY  
I'd like to kill the bum who  
invented that frab. All right  
handsome, what do you want --  
another corporate jingle?

She cuts the jingle on the monitor and pops an upper  
into the old esophagus.

REICH  
Tell me what's the most  
persistent tune you ever wrote?

DUFFY  
Persistent?

REICH  
You know like those advertising  
jingles you can't get out of  
your head.

DUFFY  
Oh. Pepsies, we call em.

REICH  
Why?

DUFFY  
Dunno. They say cause the first  
one was written centuries ago by  
a character named Pepsi. I wrote  
one once. Guaranteed to obsess  
you for a month.

She winces in recollection.

DUFFY

What for?

REICH

My poker games. I'm losing big  
and I'm getting the feeling I'm  
being read. Throw it at me.

DUFFY

It was "Tenser, Said the Tensor."  
I wrote it for a flop show about  
a crazy mathematician. They wanted  
nuisance value but people got so  
sore they had to withdraw it.  
Lost a fortune.

REICH

Let's hear it.

DUFFY

I couldn't do that to you

REICH

Come on Duffy

DUFFY

All right dog. But you have to  
pay me back.

She sets to work on the punch panel. A TUNE of utter  
monotony (to be worked out) fills the studio with an  
agonizing banality which, at the same time, must be  
unforgettable. It's the quintessence of every cliché  
we've heard. REICH reacts.

DUFFY (sings)

"Eight, sir; seven, sir;  
Six, sir; five, sir;  
Four, sir; three, sir;  
Two, sir; one!  
Tenser, said the Tensor.  
Tenser, said the Tensor.  
Tension, apprehension,  
And dissension have begun..."

REICH

Oh my God!

DUFFY continues to play it, proudly:

DUFFY

I told you! I got some real tricks  
in it. Keeps you running around

CONTINUED

DUFFY (Continued)  
 in circles. Never ends. Listen.  
 Tension, apprehension, and  
 dissension have begun. RIFF.  
 Tension, apprehension, and  
 dissension have begun. RIFF.  
 Tension...

REICH claps his hands over his ears.

REICH  
 Stop! Stop! Please stop!

DUFFY  
 And what's worse is you can't  
 forget it!

She turns it off at last.

REICH  
 How long does this last?

DUFFY  
 A month. Hah!

REICH  
 You rat!

DUFFY  
 Clever up, dog. You're dealing  
 with the best brains money can  
 buy. Pig. Lout. Boob. Dolt.

She presses herself against him and plants a kiss on his  
 lips.

DUFFY  
 When are you going to wake up and  
 drag me through the gutter? Why  
 aren't you as smart as I think  
 you are?

REICH  
 I'm smarter.

He kisses her and leaves.

CUT TO:

19. INTERIOR REICH INDUSTRIES POOL AND BATH

UNDERWATER SHOT - REICH as he swims the Olympic length of  
 the pool, the body trim, the eyes open as he concentrate;  
 in a soft, sibilant whisper -- exercising the sub-  
 conscious.

ESPER REICH (WHISPER OVER)  
 ...Tensor, said the tensor. Tenser,  
 said the tensor. Tersion, apprehension,  
 and dissension have begun. Eight, sir;  
 seven, sir...

CUT TO:

REICH, wrapping himself in a bathrobe, hurries to a Vid-Phone at the bar of the pool, which is in a huge grey and green basement with steel ramps and steam rooms. Against this vastness, apart from a single BATH ATTENDANT at the other end, REICH is alone with AUGUSTUS TATE'S face which now appears on the Vid-Screen.

TATE

Can we talk?

REICH signals him.

TATE

All right. I think I got the job done for you. I peeped Eickleberger at an Esper Guild meeting last night. He's D'Courtney's psychiatrist.

REICH

(eyes alight)

Great! And?

TATE

I warn you, there's a chance of error. When you deep peep a First, they can block you or trick you.

REICH

Yes, yes. And?

TATE

Craye D'Courtney arrives from Sargasso on his ship the Astra next Friday morning. He'll be in town one day at the house of Maria Beaumont. He goes home on Saturday.

Reich is suddenly awake.

REICH

Maria - yes. I know her very well.

TATE

That same night she's planned a dinner party in honor of Busi Nauwit -- the Martian ballerina. Can you get invited?

REICH  
With her? No problem. She worships power. She'd be honored to have me there.

TATE  
Apparently D'Courtney is planning some form of drastic action.

REICH  
Against me?

TATE  
Don't know. According to Eickleberger, D'Courtney has cancer of the throat. His vocal chords are gone. He's regressing rapidly under some kind of violent strain.

REICH  
He must be up to something. Can't you see it Tate? He's pretending to be sick so we won't notice. He's obviously here to talk to the banks. He knows we're in trouble. He'll spread panic along the credit grids. He wants to destroy me once and for all! Cancer - sure! Clever...

TATE pauses, uncertain. REICH calms himself with a pill.

TATE  
Even if it's true, you can't be ready by Friday night, you -

REICH  
I'll be ready. You be ready too Tate. Remember -- if we fail, it's Demolition. For both of us.

He cuts the Vid-Screen off.

CUT TO:

20. EXTERIOR - NEW YORK CITY (MINIATURE) - NIGHT

The thousand little LIGHTS looking down FIFTH AVENUE glow icily against a vast backdrop of monolithic 500 story buildings stretched across CENTRAL PARK SOUTH. - The City is more enormous than ever - more light, more traffic, more people, more canyons, more, more, more.

CUT TO:

21. EXTERIOR - BEAUMONT HOUSE - NIGHT

A splendid six horse CARRIAGE pulls up to the Beaumont mansion, with JONAS at the reins. A liveried SERVANT opens the carriage door to AUGUSTUS TATE and BEN REICH. Dressed in tails, they join the general flow of rich and wealthy GUESTS to the well-lit doors of MARIA BEAUMONT'S mansion.

22. INTERIOR BEAUMONT MANSION

The PARTY glows with the opulence of its time. Lights, chandeliers, groaning tables of pheasant and fossil fish from Jupiter under aspic and caviar. The more decadent of the guests wear outrageous fashions calculated to shock and provoke (to be worked out) whereas the more conservative abide by tails, mustaches, monocles, furs, silks, canes and heels. One lady has brought her bloodhounds. Several others are behaving like them, their eyes darting hungrily over the new arrivals. Beneath the respectable high society veneer, the atmosphere is charged with sex and lust.

MARIA BEAUMONT cloves through the crowd, arms and eyes outstretched, her body transformed by pneumatic surgery into an exaggerated East Indian-type figure with puffed hips, puffed calves, and puffed, semi-naked breasts plunging outwards like the prow of a pornographic ship.

MARIA

Ben, darling creature! It's too too wonderful.

She embraces him with pneumatic intensity, pressing his hand into her cleavage. Reich murmurs back in her ear.

REICH

It's too too sexy

MARIA

Mmmm. I thought you'd forgotten.

REICH

You Maria? Never!

He tweaks her -

MARIA

Audacious lover!

REICH

What are you doing later?



MARIA  
It would have to be much later -

REICH  
Imagining it. My associate, Augustus  
Tate

MARIA  
Come. Come. Meet everybody -

She sweeps them towards the party.

MARIA  
Darlings - all of them! We're  
going to have so much fun tonight!

CLOSE - REICH moving into the party.

ESPER REICH (OVER)  
Tensor, said the Tensor  
Tensor, said the Tensor  
Tension, apprehension and dissension  
have begun... Eight, sir; seven,  
sir; six, sir...

The camera closes tighter, his eyes lit with pleasure and cunning. An auxiliary music track blends in, signifying increasing tension. TATE suddenly murmurs.

TATE  
Careful. They're screening the  
guests. An esper -

A slender YOUNG MAN approaches with foppish curls and a violet blouse with silver culottes. Behind the veneer, the eyes are keen.

YOUNG MAN  
Dr. Tate. Mr. Reich. I'm speechless.  
What an honor to have you both here  
tonight. I'm Hortense Perry...

CLOSE REICH

REICH (shaking hands)  
Nice to meet you. Party looks like  
fun.

ESPER REICH  
"Eight, sir; seven, sir; six,  
sir; five, sir..."

CLOSE the YOUNG MAN'S eyes shift, picking up the TP pattern. He's puzzled. TATE tenses.

YOUNG MAN  
Yes, quite a lot of fun. Marie's parties always are.

ESPER REICH  
"...four, sir; three, six; two, sir..."

REICH senses the tension.

REICH (muttering)  
Damned song. Heard it for the first time the other day. Can't get it out of my mind.

The YOUNG MAN relaxes. TATE does the same.

YOUNG MAN  
I know what you mean. Mind blocks. Well...if I can be of any service.

NOTE ESPER EFFECT 2: These "thoughts" have been transferred from Reich to the Young Man in short bursts of sound over and under the track. The effect should aspire to more subtlety than the ordinary dub. The imagery should be varied and sudden on the sound tracks -- ionization of voice, modulations, whispers, rock mix effects approximating levels of consciousness, semi-consciousness -- and the lower ranges incorporating animal sounds, growling, sighing, wailing, sounds of grief, feminine/masculine cries, in short all the possible sounds of the inner universe.

CUT TO:

23. THE PARTY

in full swing later. The lights are dimmer. REICH, nervous, is in conversation with a thick-set Russian.

RUSSIAN  
...very impressed, Mr. Reich, with the underwater agricultural work you've been doing on Callisto...

REICH  
...only proves, Mr. Boshelavsky, it's obviously possible to feed a billion people from the waters of one planet. But with these new Galaxy agricultural laws, believe me, it's certainly not our most lucrative subdivision. Profits

CONTINUED

REICH (Continued)  
are higher in selling people  
photographic equipment than  
feeding their bellies.

TATE joins them, anxious.

RUSSIAN  
The profit is to Mankind, Mister  
Reich.

REICH  
Yes Mr. Boshelavski but Mankind  
doesn't help me sleep at night.  
Profit does. Excuse me.

He smoothly walks Tate aside.

TATE  
He's here all right. Alone. Upstairs.  
No servants. Third floor. The art-  
walk. The door between Picasso and  
Van Gogh. For God's sake! Be  
careful! Your murder's showing!

REICH'S face is seething with impatience.

ESPER REICH  
"Tenser, said the Tensor. Tenser,  
said the Tensor..."

A SECOND YOUNG MAN looks sharply at Tate from across the  
room, then moves on.

TATE  
Akins was right. He's sick. He'll  
be dead in six months.

REICH (demented)  
In six months we'll be dead!  
Where is he?

Tate's eyes shoot around the room.

TATE  
Be careful, damnit.

The lights suddenly dim. MARIA BEAUMONT has her arms  
outraised in the middle of the floor.

MARIA  
Darlings! Darlings! Darlings!  
Into the Salon!

CUT TO:

24. A STAGE - DANCERS

The lights are dim. The company cheers. The dais blazes with light as DANCERS in sleek fashions, perform an erotic tableau, to be worked out.

CUT TO:

REICH slipping away, up the stairs as

TATE AND HORTENSE PERRY, the young esper, talk in fast esper-ese, without looking at each other and eating canapes.

ESPER TATE

Yes but enough Esper Men remaining unmarried can ruin the Guild's entire Eugenic Plan.

ESPER PERRY

Well some people were never meant to have children. That doesn't prevent them from teaching others.

ESPER TATE

Maybe, but the less Espers around, the smaller the tax base and what that means is...

They occasionally glance at each other as people move around them, gossiping.

CUT TO:

25. ARTWALK - REICH

moves under a lovely curving arch, over a plush carpet down an ARTWALK replete with master paintings (Rembrandt and Warhol juxtaposed.) He checks behind him to ensure he is not followed, now pops a large transparent capsule into his gorge - and turning the corner he collides with a DRUNKEN YOUNG WOMAN.

YOUNG WOMAN

Ooooooh!....well....uh....

She executes a series of contorted motions before she slides her arm around his neck and thrusts her pelvis into his.

YOUNG WOMAN

Yeah....

REICH makes an animal sound, mured by the thick walls, and thrusts her aside. She retreats indignantly. He moves on, distracted, colliding with another arch, his head reeling with pain. His heart eats mount.

26. PICTURE GALLERY - REICH

He moves in padded silence beneath a vaulted ceiling. Between a painting of Picasso and a particularly twisted reality by Van Gogh, he pauses, and from his pocket draws a thick ugly module of steel.

CLOSE - REICH

He presses a stud and the lump of metal springs open into a malevolent looking PISTOL of Germanic steel and cold precision -- of the late 20th Century with attached stiletto component and a set of steel knuckles. The weapon reeks of death.

REICH'S hands begin to tremble as he reaches for the knob of the semi-visible door between the two paintings - and hesitates. His heartbeats pound. He mustn't lose his nerve now.

REICH

Stand by me, dear Christ! Today,  
tomorrow and yesterday. Stand by  
me! Stand by me! Stand by me!

Rage and hatred are boiling on his face. He flings open the door and tears through it, swiftly mounting the narrow steps to:

27. APARTMENT SUITE - CRAYE D' COURTNEY

is a very withered figure in his seventies with a mop of white hair and a lined, distinguished face. He rises from the couch where he's resting with the video playing. The room is spherical and lush, designed like an orchid. The walls are curling red and white petals. He steps towards REICH, his arms outstretched and welcoming. His mouth working.

D' COURTNEY

Ben... dear Ben... Waited so long...  
Can't talk. My throat... Can't talk.

The words come wheezy and faint from the cancerous larynx, partially drowned as well by the sound of the Vid where a pop-drink jingle starts to play. The old man's eyes are stung with tears of recognition. REICH is aghast. D' COURTNEY is about to embrace him when he raises the PISTOL between them.

REICH

Arrgh! Keep away! You hear me!  
What the hell's the matter with  
you! I've come to kill you you  
old bastard. To kill you!

He screams this as he starts walking D'COURTNEY back with  
the gun stuck in his face. D'Courtney staggers, stunned,  
and regains his balance, struggling with his mouth to  
croak out a meagre whisper.

D'COURTNEY

Ben... Listen, Ben...

REICH

Don't call me "Ben" you lying old  
fraud, you miserable, arrogant,  
bastard, you...

REICH grabs D'COURTNEY violently around the neck in a  
headlock. The old man twists and struggles in the grasp,  
his face pleading, the eyes glazed and rheumy, the voice  
a pitiable whisper with no resonance:

D'COURTNEY

Ben... Ben... No... Help. Help me.

The voice is harshly choked off as REICH rams his PISTOL  
into D'COURTNEY'S mouth and holds it there, poised.

REICH

SHUT UP YOU! MAN WITH NO FACE -  
DIE!

The DOOR to the adjoining room suddenly flies open and  
a wild-eyed half-dressed YOUNG WOMAN is standing there  
startled, long dark hair flying, eyes wide with fear.

YOUNG WOMAN

FATHER! FOR GOD'S SAKE FATHER!

She runs towards them screaming.

REICH - the SOUND of roaring in his ears - fires.

OVERHEAD -- a muffled explosion and a gout of blood spouts  
from the back of D'COURTNEY'S head.

THE YOUNG WOMAN screams

REICH screams and shakes with galvanic spasms.

D'COURTNEY is dropped lifelessly to the floor.

THE YOUNG WOMAN looks from the corpse of her father to REICH and back again. She falls forward to her knees and crawls towards the body. She crouches over it, silent, fixed, staring into the face. She moans.

REICH gasps for breath, staring. The ROAR continues in his ears. He is trying desperately to arrange his thoughts. What to do with her? The pistol is lifeless in the hand at his side.

THE YOUNG WOMAN as if reading his thought pattern, turns and shoots a terror-stricken glance over her shoulder.

Those wild eyes. She suddenly leaps to her feet and darts for the exit door.

REICH takes a lifeless step to prevent her but seems in the grip of apathy.

THE YOUNG WOMAN flees out the door, down the stairs.

REICH now snaps back to life. The ROAR in his ears abruptly subsides. He reaches the door in quick strides.

CUT TO:

28. PICTURE GALLERY - REICH

tears down the steps. The Gallery is empty, but there is no sound, no cry for help. Puzzled, he peers around nervously, pocketing the pistol when he suddenly remembers something. He spins around and runs back up the stairs, his mind a mess.

29. THE PARTY

is taking a wild turn now. Dancing and music in various rooms, GUESTS copulating in shadowed corners. In tight foreground, the YOUNG WOMAN in her nightdress runs past SEVERAL GUESTS who don't especially notice her in the brouhaha; nor, in her dazed state, does she make any attempt to contact them.

30. OMIT

31. NIGHT STREET - THE YOUNG WOMAN

flees out the front door of the Beaumont TOWNHOUSE - past the bored, jaded eyes of the SERVANTS. Raising no cry of alarm, she is propelled numbly into the night, her night-dress floating around her.

32. THE PARTY - REICH

trying to compose himself, rejoins TATE who is in a dither.

REICH

You little son of a bitch! There was a daughter

TATE

What!... No! Quiet! Let me peep you.

REICH pleasantly looks around the room.

REICH

She went into a shock state. Didn't scream, cry for help.

TATE gasps. He whines in a terrified voice.

TATE

My God Reich, my God!

REICH

(in control)

Shut up. It isn't Desolation yet.

TATE

You'll have to kill her Reich -

REICH

You got her pattern. Cover the house.

Urgently, they separate.

CUT TO:

33. D'COURTNEY SUITE - MARIA BEAUMONT

enters from an altogether new door, followed by SEVERAL WAITERS carrying trays of caviar and seafoods and buckets of champagne.



MARIA  
 (calls out)  
 Tracy? Craye? Surprise -  
 compliments of...

She halts, transfixed by the sight of Craye D'Courtney's  
 corpse.

CUT TO:

34. THE PARTY

TATE intersects REICH at the fountains with a backdrop of  
 overhanging plants.

TATE  
 She's gone!

REICH  
 How?

TATE  
 I tell you her pattern's nowhere  
 in the house. She's gone! In  
 the street.

REICH  
 (pauses)  
 Let's go!

Suddenly there're screams from the central STAIRCASE and  
 MARIA BEAUMONT is standing there surrounded by scurrying  
 SERVANTS and SECRETARIES.

MARIA  
 Lights! Lights! Give me Lights!

The GUESTS react.

MARIA  
 Someone call the police. There's  
 been a shooting! Craye D'Courtney's  
 dead! In my house! He's dead...

INTERCUT the FACES at the party. A feverish buzz.

REICH and TATE freeze in stride and slip back into the  
 party.

CUT TO:

35. EXTERIOR - BEAUMONT HOUSE - NIGHT

POLICE JUMPERS whirr around the mansion, landing PERSONNEL. Camera, moving at a clip, intersects a POLICE OFFICIAL on a scrambler. The police, in this day and age, wear low-visibility, non-fascist type uniforms (to be worked out).

COP

GZ. Beaumont House. An Act of  
Omission, 2nd Class

Directly behind him, a JUMPER has landed and out come a YOUNG WOMAN and YOUNG MAN, moving authoritatively.

CUT TO:

36. INTERIOR - BEAUMONT MANSION

The great HALL blazes with harsh white light now. POLICE are everywhere. White-smocked TECHNICIANS scurry up and down stairs like beetles, checking prints and measurements. In the center of the hall, the GUESTS, dressed, have been assembled and they will like terrified steer in their elegant clothing.

The camera now moves and intersects LIZ POWELL as she enters, scans the room. She attractive, no-nonsense. Accompanying her is LARRY BECK, her second. He's straight, passive of nature with no observable idiosyncracies. Their relationship is all business.

POWELL

Ladies and Gentlemen, please excuse the inconvenience, but where a Death is concerned, the law requires a routine investigation. I'm Elizabeth Powell - Chief Prefect, Psychotic Division.

There is a swell of anxious murmuring around the room.

CLOSE on MARIA BEAUMONT clinging to one of her guests' arms.

CLOSE BECK

ESPER BECK

(in subtitle)

Never get anything out of this pack of hyenas. Rich, corrupt - all got something to hide.

CLOSE POWELL

ESPER POWELL  
(in subtitle)  
You're right. Lousy crowd.

POWELL  
Please! Please! You have nothing to  
fear. I have no intention and no  
right to make a telepathic examination  
of any of you without your permission.

She's spotted someone in the crowd. In SUBTITLE, quickly  
under:

ESPER POWELL  
Gus Tate? What are you doing here?

TATE is deep in the crowd, alongside REICH.

ESPER TATE  
(sheepish)  
Hello Powell

CLOSE - POWELL'S eyes move to REICH.

ESPER POWELL  
With Ben Reich no less? Mixed up  
with him?

REICH catches POWELL staring at him momentarily. Powell's  
eyes flick away.

ESPER TATE  
Perfectly legal Powell. I'm a psi-  
financial consultant. Running  
interference at social occasions  
is one of my duties.

ESPER POWELL  
Doesn't trust anybody does he?

ESPER TATE  
Would you in his position?

ESPER POWELL  
I don't in mine either. Be careful.  
Tate, Reich can get you in trouble.

TATE sickens slightly, going green at the thought. Mean-  
while, Powell's normal voice:

POWELL (continuous)

...Nor could I possibly mass mind read you. It's difficult enough to probe a single individual. It's impossible when dozens of TP patterns are confusing the picture. And when a group of highly unique individual people like yourselves are gathered, we find ourselves completely at your mercy.

The Crowd is reassured. Mass psychological approval shifts towards POWELL. CLOSE on MARIA BEAUMONT relieved.

POWELL

My assistants will simply take your names and addresses and an oral statement if you care to make one. And I must apologize, Mrs. Beaumont -- to you and to your guests for any inconvenience. And hope to have you on your way home shortly.

She turns crisply to leave the room.

ESPER POWELL

(in subtitle)

How's that?

ESPER BECK

(in subtitle)

They love you.

REICH, not quite at ease, watches her leave the room. The GUESTS are milling towards the door.

CUT TO:

37. D'COURTNEY SUITE

The camera is close on the HANDS of an ARMS EXPERT as he pries the pistol loose from D'Courtney's grasp and brings it into frame with POWELL and BECK, surrounded by MEDICAL PERSONNEL and POLICE.

ARMS EXPERT

...Germanic... the Rotogen gun... from the late 20th Century. Popular murder weapon. They used to shoot bullets with explosives. Phased out by the time of the Third World War. Too noisy and smelly.

He rotates it with disdain.

POWELL  
Museums? Pawnbrokers?

ARMS EXPERT  
Yes. Or private collections.  
Antique value.

BECK  
Millions of private gun collections.  
Never can trace that stuff through  
generations.

ESPER POWELL  
(shifting to subtitle)  
Somebody rich...

ESPER BECK  
Why not D'Courtney himself?

ESPER POWELL  
Suspicious nature...

She's moving towards the door. Fast exit. BECK follows.

ESPER BECK  
Medic says he was dying anyway.  
And the wound's clean, death  
instantaneous.

ESPER POWELL  
All this gory mess? And his daughter  
in the other room? How unlike a tycoon?

ESPER BECK  
Maybe she...?

POWELL shrugs and exits the room, bothered. The conversations between her and Beck are usually clipped and to the point, their shoulders and eyes in constant motion.

CUT TO:

38. MAIN LIVING ROOM - PARTY

GUESTS are exiting slowly, giving their names and addresses to POLICE OFFICIALS in various areas. POWELL intersects TATE and REICH leaving together.

POWELL  
Excuse me, Tate, do you mind? I've  
always wanted to meet Ben Reich.

TATE turns, bothered, but REICH is all smiles.

TATE

Liz Powell, Ben Reich. Esper,  
First Class. Watch her.

REICH

First Esper? I'm very impressed,  
Miss Powell. Brains and beauty.

POWELL

The brains sometimes get in the way.  
I've heard much about you, Mr. Reich,  
not all of it flattering.

REICH

We share a common trait.

They both smile. There's an awkward pause, then low on the  
SOUNDTRACK we hear:

ESPER REICH

"Eight, sir; seven, sir; six, sir;  
five, sir..."

POWELL picks it up. TATE quickly jumps in.

ESPER TATE

Watch the peeping Powell

ESPER POWELL

Oops! Sorry, slipped. Interesting  
mind, couldn't resist.

ESPER TATE

Keep it on Reich's level, my dear

ESPER POWELL

Promise

REICH seems to notice something in the air between them.

REICH

I suppose you have one or two questions.  
Miss Powell? Of course I deplore the  
murder of Craye D'Courtney. He was  
a great man and a great competitor,  
and if in any way I can help...

ESPER REICH

"Tension, apprehension, and dissension  
have begun..."

POWELL

Maria Beaumont's told us you and several others went up to the suite with her after she yelled for the lights?

REICH

Yes, that's correct.

POWELL

But you had no trouble locating the suite?

REICH'S amused by her.

REICH

I didn't locate the suite, Inspector. It was a secret. Maria had to lead the way.

POWELL

And when you got there, D'Courtney was dead?

REICH

He looked dead. Hell, he was dead.

POWELL

And everybody was standing around staring?

REICH

Some were in the other part of the suite, looking for the daughter.

POWELL

Tracy D'Courtney. But I thought nobody knew D'Courtney and his daughter were in the house. Why look for her?

REICH

We didn't know. Maria told us and we looked.

POWELL

Surprised to find her gone?

REICH

We were beyond surprise.

POWELL

Any idea where she went?

REICH

Maria said she must've killed her father and fled.

POWELL

Would you buy that?

Reich pauses.

REICH

I don't know. To me it looked like D'Courtney was under pressure and folded. But the whole thing was crazy. If the girl was lunatic enough to sneak out of the house without a word and go running naked through the streets, then maybe she had her father's blood on her hands.

Pause. POWELL stares.

ESPER REICH

"...six, sir; five, sir; four, sir; three, sir..."

POWELL looks at TATE, back to REICH

POWELL

Would you permit me to peep you on all this for background and details?

TATE

(sharp)

The answer is no. Every suspect has the constitutional right to refuse Esper Examination without prejudice to himself. Reich is refusing --

Reich turns his eyes innocently on Powell.

REICH

In Esper matters, Inspector, I'm afraid I'm in the hands of my advisers.

POWELL

I understand. Well, I don't want to delay you any longer. Please accept my apologies for the questions.

REICH

Not at all. I have the feeling we'll meet again.



REICH and TATE depart. POWELL ponders something as BECK intersects. The exchange rapid:

                                  ESPER BECK  
Here's thinking at you...

                                  ESPER POWELL  
Hunch...

                                  ESPER BECK  
What?

                                  ESPER POWELL  
Dunno... Tracy D'Courtney. The key.

                                  ESPER BECK  
We'll find her

                                  ESPER POWELL  
In the streets?... give me an image

CLOSE BECK, shifting eyes nonchalantly as he transmits.

39. FLASH - TRACY D'COURTNEY - STREET - NIGHT

She's running out the house. According to Beck's image, she's fully clothed and terrified.

40. BACK TO POWELL

She comes alive.

                                  ESPER POWELL  
That's it!

                                  ESPER BECK  
What?

POWELL is hurrying after Reich and Tate.

CUT TO:

41. EXTERIOR - BEAUMONT HOUSE - NIGHT

REICH and TATE intersect GUESTS, about to climb into their CARRIAGE driven by JONAS when POWELL catches up with them.

                                  POWELL  
Oh Mister Reich?

TATE swivels on her first.

ESPER TATE

Now look Powell - getting bit much

ESPER POWELL

Buzz off Tate. Want to say something to Reich. Private. Won't peep him or record his words. Esper pledge.

She holds his stare. He mutters to REICH.

TATE

She's given the pledge. It's all right.

He withdraws.

REICH

Scared him off?

POWELL

Warned him. Let's take a walk.

They walk against the monumental shadows of a 500-story cube.

POWELL

I won't peep you.

REICH

But you were doing it upstairs?

POWELL

Felt that?

REICH

No. Guessed. It's what I would've done.

POWELL

Neither of us can be trusted

REICH

Well, we don't exactly play by girls' rules, Powell. We play for keeps, both of us. It's the cowards and the critics who hide behind the rules.

POWELL

And honor and ethics?

REICH

In the world of D'Courtney Cartel and Reich Industries, power is ethic.

CONTINUED

REICH (Continued)

Call it what you want -- history, genetics, necessity -- it still comes down to one basic thing, doesn't it? We do what we do not because we want to but because we have to.

POWELL waits, then:

POWELL

Is that why you killed D'Courtney?  
Because you had to?

REICH stares back at her a long moment. He doesn't break stride.

REICH

I never know when the punch is coming with you Powell. Your theory?

POWELL

You didn't know there was a daughter till Maria told you. Nobody did. You didn't see her. Nobody did. You could infer that the murder made her run out of the house into the streets. Anybody could. But how did you know she was naked?

REICH says nothing.

POWELL

Interesting mindblock. That song.  
(intones it)  
"Eight, sir; seven, sir; Tension, apprehension, and dissension..."

CLOSE REICH - his mind panicking now, futilely repeats the rhythm.

ESPER REICH

"...Tension, apprehension, and dissension have begun..."

POWELL

You seem like two men, Reich. One of them's bright and powerful and good. The other's a killer who's just regressed several thousand years and is proud of what he's done. I'm sorry for you. You're ripe for Adjustment... Make it easy for yourself. Give it up now Reich.

For a moment REICH wavers, then musters himself.

REICH

And miss the best fight of my life?  
I like your guts Powell but you've  
got nothing on me. Esper evidence -  
is inadmissible in court - so take  
the psychology and shove it up your  
buns. You got miles to go before  
you beat me.

POWELL brings the stroll to its conclusion.

POWELL

But I will Reich, I promise you I will.

REICH

(smiles)

Looking forward to it.

He extends his hand. She shakes it. He applies incredible pressure. She clenches and holds.

REICH

Enemies?

POWELL

(pause)

Yes...

He relinquishes his hold. They part.

CUT TO:

42. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

POWELL paces up and down her OFFICE addressing BECK and a DOZEN OTHERS. Interior of the station to be worked out along enlightened, modernistic lines suggesting the triumph of intelligence over authoritarianism.

POWELL

Beck, Travis, I want to pull a  
Rough and Smooth. Go through  
every department, pull out a  
hundred low-grade cops, the worst  
and put them in plain clothes and  
assign them to Reich

BECK

Right.

POWELL

Then go to Lab. Get hold of every crackpot tracer-robot that's been used the last ten years. Stick them on Reich

BECK

Check.

POWELL

And what about that psych-song block, "Tension, apprehension, dissension...?" Who wrote it? Where'd Reich hear it? Backtrack on Reich's relations with D'Courtney. Besides commercial rivals, did they know each other personally? Were they enemies? What does Reich stand to win by D'Courtney's death? Put the tax boys on him. Get into his books. Ask Justice League to investigate Reich Industries. Let them know we're coming. And that girl, Tracy D'Courtney -- I want her face on every TP band in the country. She'll be Reich's first target...

CUT TO:

CONFERENCE ROOM (REICH INDUSTRIES) - NIGHT

REICH'S assembled his entire staff. On the Vid-Screens are logos for "Sanctuary Charities."

REICH

We're calling it Sanctuary. We offer aid and comfort and sanctuary to the city's submerged millions in their time of crisis. If you've been evicted, bankrupted, terrorized, swindled. If you're frightened for any reason and don't know where to turn. If you're desperate... take Sanctuary!

CITY-STREET - REICH AND TATE - DAY

Reich and Tate emerge into a mob of REPORTERS and MEDIA outside the Reich Industries Building. Tate quickly whispers in Reich's ear.

TATE

Careful! The one with the raincoat. Peeper.

REPORTERS surround him. The ESPER REPORTER, with raincoat, close.

REPORTERS

Mister Reich. About Sanctuary? Can you tell us why you're doing this? The cost must be enormous and... -

REICH

Sorry. I can't comment on financial matters...

ESPER REPORTER

Mister Reich, what childhood episode in your life brought about...

REICH

I'm afraid it's a question of my conscience. I have no public comment.

ESPER REICH

(singsong over)

"Tenser, said the Tenser; Tenser, said the Tenser..."

ESPER REPORTER

Was there ever a time in your life when you didn't know where to turn? Were you ever afraid of death or murder? Were -

ESPER REICH

"Tension, apprehension, and dissension have begun. Eight, six; seven, sir..."

REICH is negotiating his way through the crowd.

REICH

No comment. Excuse me. No comment.

MATCH CUT TO:

45. TELEVISION SCREEN - POWELL JUMPER - NIGHT

POWELL and BECK watch an ANCHOR LADY on the 2491 A.D. version of the Six O'clock News. Their sleek black JUMPER whizzes through the dark nighttime canyons of the CITY SET.

TV NEWSWOMAN

Side by side with his charity work, Ben Reich today made a 26 lots a share offer for the controlling stock in D'Courtney Cartel, whose founder Craye D'Courtney ended his life

CONTINUED

TV NEWSWOMAN (Continued)  
 two nights ago. Together these two  
 companies represent an annual gross  
 income of 241.7 billion credits.

INTERCUT shots of REICH and TATE climbing into their  
 jumper with JONAS, hounded by the PRESS.

TV NEWSWOMAN  
 The controversy grows around Ben Reich,  
 as late this afternoon Justice Depart-  
 ment Attorneys announced they were  
 investigating the proposed take-over  
 bid. Maybe, some insiders are saying,  
 this is the real reason why Ben Reich  
 Industries has suddenly gone public  
 in the charity department.

POWELL nods to BECK

ESPER POWELL  
 Brilliant! With the charity, he just  
 might reel Tracy D'Courtney in off  
 the street. Meanwhile he camouflages  
 it as a P.R. stunt. He's a step  
 ahead of us, Beck -

CUT TO:

46. EXTERIOR - STREETS - NIGHT

THE JUMPER cuts past the Wall Street area in a blaze of  
 light.

CUT TO:

47. ESPER GUILD LOBBY - NIGHT

A structure along classical Grecian lines to be worked out.  
 APPLICANTS of all sexes, ages, classes wait in a long line  
 proclaiming "Admission." A SOCIALITE WOMAN in fur, at the  
 head of the line wags a checkbook at the female RECEPTIONIST  
 who wearily shakes her head.

RECEPTIONIST  
 No, Madame, the Guild doesn't charge  
 for training or instruction. We  
 can't do anything for you. Please  
 go home.

Simultaneously in SUBTITLE flashing at regular beats we see:

## ESPER RECEPTIONIST

If you can hear me, please go through the door on the left marked Employees Only. If you can hear me, please go through the door on the left marked Employees Only...

PANNING down the line of APPLICANTS, stopping at a BUSINESSMAN enrapt in his financial newspaper.

## BUSINESSMAN

(subtitle)

Get in here... on the side... make a killing in the market...

Panning a YOUNG BOY, shy

## BOY

(subtitle)

...what girls really think of me

Panning a bored 17 year-old PUNK GIRL

## PUNK GIRL

Exams? Nah... cheat I will... read minds, know where she hides her jewels... go to the track... get Johnny to... Whazzat!

She's nosing static in the air. An uncertain frown.

## ESPER RECEPTIONIST

(continuing over)

If you can hear me, please go through the door on the left marked Employees Only...

## ESPER PUNK GIRL

(in subtitle)

What the...

The motivation unconscious to her, she notices the DOOR marked "Employees Only."

## ESPER RECEPTIONIST

If you can hear me, please go through the door on the left marked Employees Only...

With uncertainty she detaches herself from the line and crosses to the door, intersecting POWELL and BECK who wait as she opens and hesitantly enters.



48. ESPER GUILD OFFICES

POWELL and BECK follow the PUNK GIRL through the door.  
 ESPERS are waiting for her.

ESPER POWELL

'Grats, you have the makings of  
 an esper.

ESPER GIRL

(unable to identify the source voice)  
 What the...

ESPER POWELL

Wake up - it's easy

In a hurry, she moves on with Beck, leaving the puzzled  
 GIRL in the hands of the Espers.

CUT TO:

49. ESPER GUILD CORRIDOR AND CLASSROOM

POWELL and BECK pass a CLASSROOM, momentarily stopping to  
 peek in and wave to a TEACHER, patiently broadcasting to  
 some THIRTY CHILDREN.

ESPER TEACHER

Words not necessary... break the  
 speech reflex... repeat the first  
 rule after me.

ESPER CLASS

(in unison, chanting)  
 Eliminate the larynx!

POWELL winces and moves on.

CUT TO:

50. PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

POWELL and BECK move through OUTER OFFICE intersecting  
 busy SECRETARIES into the INNER OFFICE where PRESIDENT  
 TSUNG HAI is shouting at his staff. He's a portly  
 mandarin with a shaven skull and benign features.

TSUNG HAI

Miss Prinn, take a letter to these  
 devils!

MISS PRINN is thin and meek.

TSUNG HAI

To the League of Esper 'Patriots' --  
bunch of fascist reactionaries! No,  
delete that... Gentlemen. The  
organized campaign of your clique...

He spots POWELL

ESPER TSUNG HAI

Morning, sexy. Haven't seen you  
in ages.

TSUNG HAI

(simultaneous)

...to cut down Guild Taxation for the  
education of new Espers is conceived  
in a spirit of treachery and fascism  
to mankind. Paragraph...

TSUNG winks at POWELL, continues pacing furiously.

ESPER TSUNG HAI

And have you found the peeper of  
your dreams yet?

ESPER POWELL

Not yet sir

ESPER TSUNG HAI

Confound you Powell. Get married!  
I don't want to be stuck with this  
job forever.

TSUNG HAI

You speak of the hardships of taxation,  
of preserving the aristocracy of  
Espers, of the unsuitability of the  
average man for Esper Training...

ESPER TSUNG HAI

What do you want Powell?

ESPER POWELL

I want to use the grapevine sir.  
On the D'Courtney murder case.

ESPER TSUNG HAI

Dirty business.

ESPER POWELL

An Esper could be involved.

ESPER TSUNG HAI  
Oh no! No! No! That's all we  
need. More controversy.

TSUNG HAI  
...Paragraph Miss Prinn. Why don't  
you come out into the open? You -  
parasites want Esper powers reserved  
for an exclusive class...

ESPER TSUNG HAI  
All right. Go ahead, but for God's  
sake Liz, try to keep it quiet. No  
big headlines. Speak to my 2 girl.

TSUNG HAI  
...so you can charge more for your  
blood sucking services as doctors,  
engineers, shrinks, and other  
leeches on the corpse of the working  
class. Well I won't...

POWELL eases out the door to OUTER OFFICE where GIRL 2  
sits at desk.

ESPER POWELL  
Tsung approves. This goes on grapevine  
coded Urgent.

She drops a file and portrait of Tracy D'Courtney on desk.  
GIRL 2 secures as BECK rejoins POWELL

ESPER POWELL  
Reward goes with it. Pass the word the  
peeper locates Tracy D'Courtney'll have  
his Guild taxes remitted for the year.

GIRL 2 sits bolt upright, a fat type with a high squeaky  
esper voice that rattles at a deliriously intelligent speed.

ESPER GIRL 2  
Jeepers! Can you do that?

ESPER POWELL  
I think I'm big enough in the Council  
to swing it.

ESPER GIRL 2  
This'll make the grapevine jump!

ESPER POWELL  
I want it to jump. I want that girl!

CUT TO:

51. EXTERIOR - UNDERWORLD CLUB - NIGHT CITY

REICH and TATE are in the seediest section of the city -- the streets a throw back to the 20th Century with its slum housing and grimy stores. A COP PATROL glides by in a JUMPER as a DOOR with elaborate screening device slides and EYES stare out at them.

REICH

Reich to see Kenzo Quizzard

As the screening device locks and the door opens:

TATE

(with distaste)

Jesus Reich, why these people!  
Genetic basket cases!

REICH

Shut up

The door slides open and they enter.

A MUTANT ROCK GROUP is playing to a crowd of young PUNKERS in a dark and dangerous looking club. Warehouse boxes and cold blue neon lights dot a warfare landscape. Chicks trot by in sleazy black leather with pyramid hairstyles and nine-inch stilettos. Guys are necking chicks in corners.

REICH is with KENZO QUIZZARD in a dark booth. A long, lean leopard-like SEX GODDESS is coiled around him, lavishing sexual favors on his face slabs with long licks of her tongue. Kenzo is an enforcer-type, 350 pounds of fat and muscle ambiguously entwined. It's impossible to estimate the strength of this man. His eyes are scaly and reptilian.

REICH

...every whorehouse in the underworld,  
Kenzo. Every bagnio, blind tiger and  
frab joint. I want the word passed  
down the grapevine. Ben Reich'll pay  
the price. No fuss. Frab that.

Kenzo's dead white eyes flicker malevolently.

REICH

And I want her undamaged. No scars.

It's a long moment before Kenzo speaks in a deep, rasping voice.

KENZO

It'll cost.

REICH  
I'll pay

KENZO  
I gotta slush for her

REICH  
Then slush!

A pause. REICH glances at TATE who is studying KENZO.  
Finally:

TATE  
I think Mr. Quizzard has the notion  
of shopping for higher bids.

KENZO leans lazily across the table and clamps a thick  
hand around TATE'S poor neck.

KENZO  
You lousy little peeper!

TATE is writhing in terror -

REICH  
You don't stand a chance of double-  
crossing me Quizzard. Tate's a  
First. At best you're a latent  
3rd. Let him go.

KENZO lets TATE slump back in his chair.

REICH  
I suspected you'd try to sell me  
out Quizzard.

KENZO  
I had that idea, Reich... I still  
got that idea.

REICH  
I'll save you some time. The only  
person'll buy from you is Lizzie  
Powell, Prefect - Psychotic Division.  
The problem is she works for the  
State. They don't pay. I do.  
You jackie that?

KENZO  
You got a hundred thousand Ms lying  
around?

REICH  
Half now, half delivery

TATE  
A hundred thousand! Reich, have  
you...

REICH  
Shut up! Kenzo?

KENZO  
She's yours.

CUT TO:

52. BANK - ARTHUR SNIM - DAY

Snim is a thin, little Arabic-looking crook. With a long snout for a nose and large sorrowful eyes, he surveys the TELLER ROBOTS dispensing bank services to the PUBLIC. His eyes slide to the side exit of the bank. He cops a bunch of deposit slips and a pen from the writing stalls.

INTERCUT ESPER FRED DEAL, a solid middle-aged citizen, straight in hair, clothes and general appearance. He's in line with the other CUSTOMERS but can't help reading the thoughts of Arthur Snim whom he watches across the bank.

FLASH (Precognitive) -- SNIM is outside the bank talking to an OLD LADY just coming out. He takes her cash gently and starts leading her back to the bank.

SECOND FLASH (Precognitive) -- SNIM darts smoothly across the bank floor, slips away from the OLD LADY into the CROWD at the teller cages.

THIRD FLASH (Precognitive) -- The OLD LADY looks for Snim at the cages but doesn't see him.

FOURTH FLASH (Precognitive) -- SNIM sneaks out the back exit of the bank.

BACK TO:

ESPER FRED DEAL approaches a weary SECURITY GUARD

FRED DEAL  
Excuse me sir. I'm a Third Level Esper.

Showing the GUARD the guild membership in his wallet, the guard snaps alert.

SECURITY GUARD  
You in the Guild? Say, I got a son  
he's always saying how much he...

Deal points in the direction of Snim.

FRED DEAL

See that dark little man going out?

INTERCUT ARTHUR SNIM cheerily exiting the bank in LONG SHOT.

SECURITY GUARD

Yeah. I seen him lurking around

FRED DEAL

He's about to pull an adjustment routine, but I think he's picked the wrong profession. His mind's radiating the crime at the widest possible TP level...

CUT TO:

53. EXTERIOR BANK - ARTHUR SNIM

lurks outside. If ever there was a loser, he looks like it. He's removed his jacket, now rolls up his sleeves and tucks a pen in his ear as AN OLD LADY comes out of the bank counting her money. Snim slips up behind her in his tight shiny trousers and taps her shoulder. His accent is East Indian.

SNIM

Excuse me, miss. I am from Cage Z. I'm afraid one of our computers has had a breakdown and made a mistake and shortcounted you. Will you kindly please come back for the adjustment please? You have another 200 credits please

Snim waves the sheaf of bank slips in his hand and gracefully sweeps the money from the OLD LADY'S hands, and turns towards the bank.

SNIM

This way, ma'm.

The OLD LADY, muttering something irritable, follows.

CUT TO:

54. INTERIOR BANK - SNIM

leads the OLD LADY across the vast hall.

SNIM

These robot tellers -- sichi! sichi!  
Need so much maintenance. People  
be simpler. Why can't you wait  
here. And I will give you your  
change. Yes? Thank you.

Positioning her in a spot near the cages, SNIM slips  
into the crowd and is no sooner heading for the back  
exit when a rough hand grasps the back of his neck.

SECURITY GUARD

Where you going, big nose?

CUT TO:

55. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

INSPECTOR RINGOLA, chomping on his cigar, barrels into  
the INVESTIGATION ROOMS and spots a terrified SNIM  
being grilled by an ASSOCIATE.

RINGOLA

Snim! You again!

SNIM

Oh no - Ringola!

RINGOLA

This time you're going to Kingston.

SNIM

Oh no. No.

RINGOLA

You're getting adjusted.

SNIM

No, Ringola, give me a break please.

RINGOLA

You know the law Snim. Seven times  
and you go in.

SNIM

Not Kingston, it wasn't my fault,  
it was Chooka's!

56. FLASH - TRACY D'COURTNEY

She's dazed, in a nightdress. SNIM is handing her over to  
CHOOKA, a dark crazy-looking woman, in a CORRIDOR someplace.



57. BACK TO RINGOLA

reacts immediately; his expression sharpens.

RINGOLA

Chooka? What's she have to do with this?

SNIM

She won't pay me what she owes me, that's why. Plus she screws me on the rent. There's no way I can make ends meet. You know I'm not a bad man, Ringola. I have no harm in my heart...

RINGOLA

Wait a minute, wait a minute. You just said Chooka owes you money?

CLOSE SNIM sensing an advantage here.

SNIM

Yes. Yes. Last week. A little matter of flesh.

58. FLASH - TRACY D'COURTNEY - STREET

She's near naked and numbed the night of the murder, lost in the underworld slum section.

SNIM slides up from a seedy ALLEYWAY in a friendly manner and whispers, in another one of his personality disguises.

SNIM

Hello baby - what's happening? You together? You need a little something? You know?

BACK TO:

59. CLOSE SNIM - STATION

remembering. He smiles. His sneakiest look.

SNIM

In fact there are a lot of things -  
I know about Chooka. I could give -  
you Chooka on a silver platter, -  
Ringola, if you were to drop these -  
charges against me.

RINGOLA is already on his way out the door.

RINGOLA  
 It's her! It's Tracy D'Courtney!  
 (to his associate)  
 Get me Powell!

SNIM  
 Ringola, what about me?

RINGOLA  
 Snim, I love you...

CUT TO:

60. EXTERIOR - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

SNIM departs -- a free man, hands in pockets and shoulders slouched. Looking left and right for the action.

CUT TO:

61. BRAIN CLINIC - POWELL AND EICKLEBERGER - NIGHT

POWELL questions a large Germanic doctor with triple chin and huge forehead. The camera cracking with them, their conversation totally SUBTITLED in esperese as they walk together through the lab, past sleep labs, experiments in progress, racks of drugs, and SCIENTISTS working the late shift. The large windows specify Night outside. The pace of the conversation is swift and scientific -

ESPER EICKLEBERGER  
 I see. The answer is yes. D'Courtney was suicidal.

ESPER POWELL  
 Because of his throat cancer?

ESPER EICKLEBERGER  
 Yes, but his pattern was crumbling.  
 He had deep guilt sensations.

ESPER POWELL  
 Towards who?

ESPER EICKLEBERGER  
 His child

ESPER POWELL  
 Tracy? Why?

ESPER EICKLEBERGER  
 Don't know. He was fighting irrational symbols of abandonment, desertion, shame... cowardice.

ESPER POWELL

Then he could have shot himself  
through the roof of the mouth?

ESPER EICKLEBERGER

He could have

ESPER POWELL

But you have doubts?

ESPER EICKLEBERGER

I've studied suicides. Once they're  
fixed on a particular form of death,  
they don't change the pattern, and  
Craye D'Courtney had a strong  
poison fixation. He...

An ASSISTANT SECRETARY intersects them, breaking the  
silence.

SECRETARY

Miss Powell. Vid-phone.

ESPER EICKLEBERGER

...He would've done it with barbituates,  
narcotics, but not...

ESPER POWELL

I see. Right back.

POWELL moves swiftly after the ASSISTANT to the VID-SCREEN  
and depresses a channel band. A snowed-out image of BECK  
appears. The connection is bad, the voice static-ridden.

BECK

Powell! A girl answering the  
description Tracy D'Courtney was  
traced by a peeper 3 to a whore-  
house in the River Section.  
Get here!

She bangs the phone.

ESPER POWELL

Damned f--- vid!

BECK

What?

POWELL

On my way!

CUT TO:

62. POOL HALL - NIGHT

The CROWD'S cheap, garish, young. Playing pool and hitting the equivalents of pinball machines. In a far corner, KENZO QUIZZARD is cornering a worried SNIM against a blinking pinball machine.

SNIM

...but I got all my bread on the bail, Kenzo. I been set up.

KENZO reaches down and grabs SNIM by the ankles. An urking sound, and Snim is dangling upside down grasped by the ankles, his head bouncing against his knee caps.

KENZO

Shaddup. I don't want to hear this crap out of you, you little nerd. You been sniffing my snab. Three frabs worth. And you still ain't paid up.

SNIM

Look, I can pay you Kenzo! I got this chick.

KENZO

So what?

SNIM

I sold her to Chooka. Chooka owes me. If you can collect it, I can...

Kenzo immediately senses something special. Slams Kenzo against a pinball machine.

KENZO

Who is this chick?

SNIM swinging by his heels.

SNIM

Just a chick!

63. FLASH - SNIM AND CHOOKA FROOD

In a dark corridor someplace, Chooka's inspecting the dazed TRACY D' COURTNEY in the black nightdress. SNIM props her upright.

CHOOKA

All right. 750 credits.

SNIM

In advance

CHOOK!

What! What about the rent you owe me,  
you little sleazoid. What about the  
broken V-phone and the water pipe.  
What about Mandy and what you did  
to Jackie?

Angry, she slaps SNIM up on the side of the head. He  
staggers.

CUT BACK TO:

64. KENZO - POOL HALL

Peeping this, Kenzo reacts with amazing velocity. He  
releases SNIM'S ankles and rushes out of the pool hall.  
Snim rises from the floor, hurting -- wondering why the  
world hates him when a pair of HANDS grab him and haul  
him to his feet. The man is small and fat with an angry  
red face.

RED FACE

Snim! I been looking for you. You  
was making it with my wife last year  
when I was in the hospital. I been  
looking for you a long time, smerz!

CUT TO:

65. RAINBOW BATH - REICH

bathes in a spectrum of medicinal lights. He wears dark  
little holes for glasses. TATE, reclining alongside,  
wears the same. They both look blind.

TATE

...check your legal department.  
I can't peep what's going on but  
something's up.

The Vid-Phone rings.

REICH

Sometimes I get the feeling Powell's  
brighter than you Tate. You're  
paying too much attention to the  
investigation that shows. But  
there's another one going on  
underneath...

TATE

Impossible! I'd peep it.

The Vid-Phone rings again and REICH snaps it on. On the screen is KENZO QUIZZARD.

INTERCUT:

66. KENZO QUIZZARD - STREET PHONE - NIGHT

KENZO

Reich! Meet me at Chooka Froot's warehouse, 99 Eros Drive, the River Section. The chicken's there.

REICH

Alive, Quizzard, I want her alive.

QUIZZARD hangs up.

CUT TO:

67. EXTERIOR - SLUM SECTION - NIGHT

The derelict STREETS are filled with creatures that lurk under cloaks and lie in gutters. In their leisure clothing, POWELL and BECK approach Chooka Froot's WHOREHOUSE. Eyes watch. Powell stares back. Eyes retreat. Men drink in dark glassed bars without women. Beggars huddle over fires in tin caves, and big cat-like hookers glide the vines of the jungle.

68. INTERIOR - WHOREHOUSE

POWELL and BECK join the flow of NIGHT PEOPLE through the huge double door shaped like a mouth. SAILORS, jabbering in Russian, mix with chic UPTOWN PEOPLE looking for a thrill. Both MALE and FEMALE WHORES beckon from cages as bizarre bar lights wash and stripe their faces. Some wear imaginative masks on their faces and have installed themselves on small sets built along the walls like stages, each suggesting a separate fantasy.

THE BARTENDER, a tattooed dyke with a factory hat and a cigar, confronts POWELL and BECK at the bar -

BARTENDER

Whaddaya want?

BECK

A prool. Dry.

POWELL

A prack. Black.

BARTENDER  
With or without the olive?

POWELL  
Either way

THE BARTENDER does one of those pissed-off bits, susses Powell again and exits. POWELL studies the room as KENZO QUIZZARD suddenly strides in, glances around and marches in deadly fashion towards a flight of stairs.

THE BARTENDER brings the drinks. POWELL takes one, following Kenzo.

ESPER POWELL  
Kenzo Quizzard?

ESPER BECK  
Whatever he wants, it doesn't want him

ESPER POWELL  
Stay here. Keep an eye out for Chooka.

BECK nods. POWELL leaves.

CUT TO:

69. CORRIDORS - WHOREHOUSE

POWELL moves through a series of labyrinthine circuits with mirrors, coming to a corner. She peeks around it.

KENZO is shaking down CHOOKA FROOD - the dark, crazy-looking woman seen before in Arthur Snim's mental imagery.

KENZO  
Where's she Chooka? Tell me or I'll break your head!

CHOOKA  
Dunno... nyaacow!

As Kenzo pops her head into the wall a few times. He enjoys it. A DYKE BODYGUARD runs up out of another corridor in this maze and attacks KENZO. He catches her face in one hand and mashes her up against the wall next to CHOOKA. The two women quick cat talk.

CHOOKA  
Nininini nyaow? -

DYKE BODYGUARD  
Nuko sacatakatakil

CHOOKA  
Gumpf!

KENZO  
You don't talk I'll crocock your  
frooba's face!

His huge fist is poised directly in a line with the  
BODYGUARD'S mug. CHOOKA is terrified.

CHOOKA  
Floor Four. Center cavern. The  
salmon room. Legge you fat schmerz!

KENZO smashes their two heads together and plods on as  
the LEZZIES sink to the floor.

POWELL follows - up a corkscrewed RAMP.

CUT TO:

70. INTERIOR - WHOREHOUSE

REICH enters, silently flows into the CROWD.

INTERCUT:

BECK paying the BARTENDER fails to spot Reich at that  
moment.

CUT TO:

71. CORRIDOR - WHOREHOUSE

POWELL slips along a bizarre corridor that slants downward  
at a 30 degree tilt. The ceiling glows at intervals with  
small flickering globes of radon. The walls are lined  
with plush doors, deep set on brass hinges. She comes to  
a pink door with a salmon on it. She waits, listens,  
hears nothing. She cautiously reaches for the knob,  
twists it - and enters the room.

72. INTERIOR - SALMON ROOM

POWELL steps into a plush sex chamber decorated in pink  
velvets. The room is entirely circular with full-length  
mirrors reflecting a 360 degree view of POWELL stepping  
CONTINUED



## 72. CONTINUED

in as KENZO stands directly behind door, his arm upraised like a club.

POWELL spins, too late. KENZO'S arm flashed and her sight blurs (subjective shot).

POWELL flies across the room, rumbling up dazed as KENZO waddles after her, past the figure of TRACY D'COURTNEY who watches, crouched on the bed with a semi-conscious expression on her face.

POWELL is up on her feet. KENZO is coming.

CLOSE POWELL -- peeping what KENZO is thinking.

FLASH (Precognitive) -- KENZO swinging out with his left, following with his right.

POWELL begins her move. KENZO does exactly what she was thinking. He leads with his left, about to follow with his right as POWELL, anticipating the exact timing of it, takes a half step inside the coming left paw of the giant, snaps her two hands into the precise position where she can apply an armlock.

KENZO'S left arm intersects that precise position and POWELL applies the arm lock, whereupon she executes a full 180 degree twist slamming her backside into his stomach and with a quick crouch of the knees, sails the entire 300 pound carcass of Kenzo Quizzard into the air.

POWELL applies a further twist to KENZO'S left arm in mid-air. A sharp cracking sound and then:

KENZO crashes full onto one of the mirrors, smashing our point of view.

73. REICH - VOYEUR CHAMBER

watches, awed -- through a mirror. The chamber is walled in midnight velvet. In his hand is a flat deadly-looking lazer blaster, trim and rapier-like.

INTERCUT:

POWELL as perceived through the crystal mirror, moves towards TRACY D'COURTNEY on the bed and props her up.

POWELL

Tracy?

Tracy is semi-conscious.

REICH, returning to his senses, activates the blaster.

POWELL stares down in a blank, placid face.

POWELL

Are you all right, Tracy?...Tracy,  
can you walk?...Do you need help?

CLOSE - TRACY suddenly whips her head up in a listening attitude, fully alert. She leaps up, out of Powell's grasp. POWELL is astonished.

TRACY runs, then stops abruptly and reaches out as though grasping a doorknob. She turns the knob, thrusts an imaginary door open and bursts through. She screams:

TRACY

FATHER! FOR GOD'S SAKE, FATHER!

She runs forward, then stops and SCREAMS again, her eyes going to the floor. The timing of her motions is bizarre, the camera slightly FAST MOTION.

REICH is watching avidly. He knows what she's doing.

TRACY looks in two directions, then falls forward on her knees and crawls to an imaginary spot. She crouches over it, silent, fixed, staring at it. She moans.

REICH stares. Reliving it.

TRACY turns and shoots a terror-stricken glance over her shoulder. Those wild beautiful eyes. She turns and stares again at the imaginary spot, her expression doll-like and dull. She ceases all movement, goes limp.

REICH watches. He's sick, begins to sweat.

POWELL watches, concentrated. The silence in the room is heavy. She helps TRACY to her feet. The girl rises as gracefully as a somnambulist. Powell starts to put her arm around her, then freezes. Her eyes scout the room, listening.

REICH waits, terse, his face damp and dark against the camera, his breathing claustrophobic.

POWELL, failing to peep anything, continues towards the door, supporting TRACY.

REICH is sweating profusely, his eyes in agony. He raises his lazerblaster.

OVER the muzzle of the blaster, POWELL and TRACY open the door.

CLOSE REICH - on the verge of pulling the trigger. He can't.

POWELL and TRACY exit into the CORRIDOR.

REICH, trembling, eyes haunted, retches.

CUT TO:

74. INTERIOR - POWELL HOUSE - NIGHT

The living room area is wide, spacy, with glass and plant-life uniting duplex levels. Modernistic furniture and appliances are interspersed with the occasional personal touches Powell has supplied. TRACY D'COURTNEY is on all fours, crawling energetically about in cotton pyjamas spewing baby talk. She's just been fed and her face is eggy.

TRACY

Haja haja haja...

DOCTOR JEEMS, POWELL and BECK supervise. Jeems has a sharp pointed head, thick glasses, high nasal tone. Boy genius type.

JEEMS

The shock was terrible, it put her in a state of hysterical recall. She responds only to the key word "help" and relives, over and over again, that terrible experience.

POWELL (to herself)

The death of her father.

JEEMS

She wishes she'd never been born. So we give her what she wants. We disassociate the mind from the lower levels and send it back to the womb where we let it pretend it's being born all over again.

TRACY clutches JEEMS pantleg and looks up with big baby eyes. She drools.

POWELL

But how long will it take for her to learn to speak...to walk again?

JEEMS

With the proper chemicals - three weeks. First wee', birth and childhood. Second week, adolescence. Third week - maturity. We accelerate them. Like an egg.

POWELL

And when she catches up with herself?

JEEMS

She'll be ready for it. The shock'll be expected. She'll absorb it without trying to escape and return to reality.

BECK

In other words, if we don't like what we experienced, we get to back up and do it again. Not bad. What are you people going to think up next?

JEEMS

(at face value)

In this day and age? Death is the most interesting new field of study. One of you peepers, Gatt, is working on the theory that it may not exist. He...

POWELL

Doctor Jeems, may I peep the girl?

JEEMS

(considers)

I don't see why not. It won't interfere with our treatment. But if you peep her, she's pretty scared down there. You may not get what you want. Be careful.

POWELL leads him to the door.

POWELL

Don't worry. Back and I will have her under supervision at all hours.

JEEMS

Well I suppose you people know what you're doing. To be honest I can't understand the recent hostility in the media against you peepers.

He nods curtly and exits. Powell closes the door and returns to TRACY D'COURTNEY, who's lying on her belly sucking her thumb and wagging her legs in the air.

ESPER BECK  
Significant last comment.

ESPER POWELL  
Must be Reich stirring it up.

ESPER BECK  
You mean Espers are clannish, can't be trusted, never become patriots, and eat babies...

ESPER POWELL  
I want to go down with her now.

ESPER BECK  
Careful. Not too deep.

POWELL gets down on all fours alongside TRACY.

ESPER POWELL  
I hear you...

A pause. In sharp, low angle she focuses on TRACY who edges a babyish look, her attention captured.

ESPER POWELL  
Hello Tracy

ESPER TRACY  
You...?

Her esperese is dim-toned.

ESPER POWELL  
Remember me?

ESPER TRACY  
Don't know.

ESPER POWELL  
Sure you do

ESPER TRACY  
Go way

ESPER POWELL  
Can't Tracy. I'm a friend.

ESPER TRACY

Don't want to go. Don't want to go  
with you

ESPER POWELL

Where darling, where don't you want  
to go?

The camera is tightening claustrophobically on POWELL and TRACY. The lighting seems dimmer. Beck is no longer evident.

ESPER POWELL

Take me there, Tracy. You know where  
it is.

ESPER TRACY

(vicious)  
Frab off! Stick it up your gibal!

CLOSE - POWELL takes a deep breath. Pause -

POWELL

Help, Tracy, help!

CLOSE - TRACY suddenly whips upright in a listening attitude. POWELL follows. They're like two deer in sync. In all the movements they're about to perform, they're precise, dance-like. Powell is always a three-quarter beat behind Tracy.

ESPER POWELL

Whose voice, Tracy?

D'COURTNEY VOICE (OVER)

"Help! Tracy, help..."

The voice is a sick man's whisper, precisely as it was the night of the murder.

ESPER TRACY

Father!

TRACY, desperate, races to an imaginary door, and is about to open the doorknob. She suddenly freezes and confronts POWELL, behind her about to turn her own imaginary doorknob.

ESPER TRACY

Get out!

ESPER POWELL

How did you know what's on the other  
side of the door, Tracy?

ESPER TRACY

I don't!

ESPER POWELL

You do. You heard it. What did you hear?

ESPER TRACY

He shouted it. He shouted "Help!"

ESPER POWELL

Who did Tracy?

She's puzzled, momentarily.

ESPER TRACY

My...my father.

ESPER POWELL

But he couldn't shout, Tracy. His throat was gone. He couldn't speak above a whisper.

ESPER TRACY

I heard him.

ESPER POWELL

You peeped him. Just like you're peeping me now!

ESPER TRACY

No, I -

ESPER POWELL

You're an esper, Tracy. You have esper vision. Your father cried for help on the telepathic level. You responded. You're one of us.

ESPER TRACY

Who are you?

ESPER POWELL

A friend. Part of you. We're together. We're espers. It's easier together. We're opening the door together. Open your door, I'm opening mine -

A pause. She opens her door. POWELL opens hers. When she sees what's on the other side, TRACY screams horribly.

TRACY  
FATHER! FOR GOD'S SAKE! FATHER!

ESPER POWELL  
What Tracy! What!

ESPER TRACY  
A man!

ESPER POWELL  
Who!

TRACY is still screaming.

ESPER POWELL  
What! What's your father doing Tracy!

ESPER TRACY  
NO! NO!

EXTREME CLOSE - TRACY freaking

EXTREME CLOSE - POWELL screaming, the veins on her forehead bursting as she deep peeps

FLASH - BEN REICH with the pistol stuck in D'COURTNEY'S mouth.

EXTREME CLOSE - POWELL.

ESPER POWELL  
Is that the man, Tracy? Look at the picture! Is that him!

ESPER TRACY  
YES! YES! YES!

FLASH - REICH pulls the trigger and the skull of CRAYE D'COURTNEY blows apart.

EXTREME CLOSE - TRACY slumps screaming to her knees

EXTREME CLOSE - POWELL follows, sharing the loss, clutching herself

INTERCUT BECK terrified, moving towards POWELL on the floor.

ESPER BECK  
Powell! Get up! Holy shit! Powell!

CLOSE - POWELL catatonic. She's dragged to her feet by BECK. Her eyes open and focus -



ESPER POWELL

Where?

ESPER BECK

Your house. I'm Beck. You're Powell.  
You've been out less than a minute --  
on a deep peep with Tracy D'Courtney

POWELL wipes sweat off her face. She's shaken. She looks beautiful.

TRACY suddenly reverts back to being a 5 year-old -- totally unconscious and full of genuine glee.

TRACY

Ooooohweeee!

ESPER BECK

You almost didn't make it back.  
Another few seconds and you  
would've brainpopped.

ESPER POWELL

Felt it going. Jesus -

ESPER BECK

D'you see it?

ESPER POWELL

Yeah -

ESPER BECK

And?

ESPER POWELL

(pauses)

It was Reich. It was clear.

12-11-75  
12-11-75  
12-11-75  
12-11-75

CUT TO:

75. DREAMSCAPE - COURTROOM - BLACK AND WHITE

Wind and stark jerky images.

REICH VOICE TRACK

(whispering)

"Tenser, said the Tensor...Tenser,  
said the Tensor. Tension, apprehension,  
and dissension have begun..."

REICH is in a COURTROOM in handcuffs and thick chains in the prisoner box.

TRACY D'COURTNEY is in the witness box testifying soundlessly against him.

VOICE TRACK

Tension, apprehension...

TATE is whispering something soundless but foul in Powell's ear; the little squealer is pointing his finger at Reich.

VOICE TRACK

Dissension...

POWELL is staring at REICH... JUMP CUT Powell is whispering something in Reich's ears. Reich is tortured and strains at his chains... JUMP CUT Powell is kissing Reich full on the lips... Reich writhes away protesting... JUMP CUT Reich is on the floor and Powell is twisting his leg. The SOUND suddenly comes in and the judge's gavel is pounding. Shadows are moving on the wall.

VOICE TRACK

Eight, sir; seven, sir; six, sir...

REICH is standing in front of the judge's bench in chains pleading soundlessly as the gavel continues to bang.

Pounding the gavel, in judge's wig and gown, is the MAN WITH NO FACE.

SHARP CUT TO:

76. EXTERIOR - WHOREHOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE on REICH startled awake, the camera pulling out to reveal him lying on his side, knees drawn up, next to a trashbin outside Chooka Frood's whorehouse. It's just rained. He's filthy, drenched and shivering. Stunned to find himself like this, he wonders for a moment how he got here. A few WHORES and zombied CUSTOMERS straggle out of the whorehouse. Reich, collecting his senses, thrusts himself erect and strides off - past a revival movie house showing a film from the 20th Century.

CUT TO:

77. REICH HOUSE - SHOWER

REICH, in his increasingly turbulent mind, steams himself clean, cuts off the apparatus, then turns on the AIRWASH. JONAS enters with an up-to-date version of the New York Times on a silver serving tray.

JONAS  
Your Times, sir.

Reich, glowering, cuts off the air wash.

REICH  
Where's Tate? Get me Tate!

He steps into the massage machine. Two pounds of moist salt whoosh over him and the buffers spin.

JONAS  
I'll see to it sir. Is everything all right sir?

REICH  
Don't talk to me! Get Tate!

CUT TO:

78. INTERIOR - COMPUTER DOME - DAY

Underneath an astronomical dome with a magnificent view of the stars above, POWELL and BECK are absorbed in the slow, soothing clack of computer noise.

COMPUTER  
BRIEF #921,088 SECTION C-1. MOTIVE...  
PROFIT MOTIVE FOR CRIME INSUFFICIENTLY  
DOCUMENTED. OF STATE V. HANRAHAN,  
1202 SUP. COURT 19 & SUB. LINE OF  
LEADING CASES.

Powell glances at Beck in astonishment.

ESPER BECK  
Profit motive? Reich killed him  
cause he wouldn't merge. What's  
wrong with this computer?

Powell considers, then starts playing with the computer.

ESPER POWELL  
Check the C-1 again. Reich's merger  
offer to D'Courtney.

ESPER BECK  
All right.

In movement across the dome to another bank of computers. Powell has punched out a new code.

COMPUTER  
 BRIEF #921,088. ACCEPTING ASSUMPTION,  
 PROBABILITY OF SUCCESSFUL PROSECUTION  
 97.0099%

She relaxes.

ESPER BECK  
 Powell...here! Look!

Tension in his voice. She comes over.

SECOND COMPUTER  
 YYJI TTED RRCB UUFE AALK QQBA

ESPER BECK (OVER)  
 The code Reich sent to D'Courtney.  
 It reads -

He punches the scramble code, which flashes.

SECOND COMPUTER  
 SUGGEST MERGER BOTH OUR INTERESTS  
 EQUAL PARTNERSHIP

ESPER POWELL  
 Right -- and D'Courtney refused.

ESPER BECK  
 No.

Powell stares at him.

SECOND COMPUTER  
 WWHG

ESPER BECK  
 D'Courtney's reply to Reich

The scrambler flashes the response.

SECOND COMPUTER  
 ACCEPT OFFER

ESPER POWELL  
 What!

ESPER BECK  
 WWHG. Accept offer. D'Courtney  
 accepted Reich's offer.

POWELL is astounded. A long pause.

ESPER POWELL

Why? It was she answer Reich wanted?

They look at each other.

CUT TO:

79. REICH - STUDY

REICH'S in his robe nervously drinking coffee as he paces in front of the bruised and bandaged magnification of KENZO QUIZZARD'S face on the Vid-phone.

KENZO

Tate took off last night. Probably the moment that Powell popped the girl.

REICH

For the love of God! He'll squeal, Quizzard.

KENZO

Jap your head, Reich! Tate's like an ostrich, he's scared, he'll stick his head in the sand and think.

REICH

Get him!

REICH abruptly cuts Kenzo's image off the Vid-phone and crosses to his wall safe. He punches out the combination on the telephone-type lock and the safe swings open. He reaches inside.

DIFFERENT ANGLE

A blinding flash of light and a dull concussion. REICH throws his arms in front of his face and is hurled backwards. He slams against the wall. Debris rains over him.

CUT TO:

80. UNDERWORLD BAR - DAY

CLOSE on AUGUSTUS TATE, M.D. with a straggly growth of beard, red eyes, rumped clothing. He's drunk and scared in the corner of a dark, seuzzy bar, which is empty except for a few decrepit DRINKERS. Across from Tate is POWELL.

ESPER POWELL

Prove? Come on Tate, you've been at a peeper trial. It's not a court of law. You're in front of a Board full of Firsts, all of them probing you at the same time.

81. FLASH - TATE

in front of a panel of ESPER JUDGES. The men are shadowed, faceless.

82. BACK TO TATE - CLOSE

ESPER POWELL

Maybe you could block two of them Tate. Maybe even three. But all of them at one time? You knew you were finished the moment we got the girl.

83. FLASH - DEMOLITION

The image is violent and subliminal. Something more suggested than seen.

84. BACK TO TATE - CLOSE

He's terrified, starting to simper.

ESPER POWELL

Clever up, Tate, you're terrified of Reich. You know you're expendable...

ESPER TATE

Need help, Powell... when you get involved with a damned psychotic like Reich, you... you get in the same pattern... start identifying... aberration. That's all... I'm sane now. Want to come back into the Guild.

ESPER POWELL

See what I can do -

ESPER TATE

Can't be alone anymore. You know, you know what's it's like -

ESPER POWELL

How'd Reich trap you?

ESPER TATE

Came into my office... a patient.

ESPER POWELL

(surprised)

Patient?

ESPER TATE

A highly disturbed individual. First level peep showed he was locked in a death struggle with D'Courtney. Asked the old man to merge with him. The offer refused. He -

ESPER POWELL

But the offer wasn't refused. D'Courtney accepted.

ESPER TATE

(pauses, puzzled)

No. When Reich was with me, the offer'd been refused. I'm sure.

85. FLASHBACK - REICH

in TATE'S office, gesticulating furious, at that precise moment.

86. BACK TO POWELL

peeping the images. She's bewildered.

ESPER POWELL

Then Reich misunderstood the code or... What else?

ESPER TATE

Well, he... He'd been having nightmares. Peeped that right away. A man with no face.

ESPER POWELL

A man, no face?

ESPER TATE

...Figure buried at the deepest level of his psyche. It's confusing. It's D'Courtney.

ESPER POWELL

So? D'Courtney was his enemy.

ESPER TATE

Yes but past the point of obsession.

ES ER POWELL

Meaning?

ESPER TATE

Well... D'Courtney's dead but Reich is still seeing him, this man with no face. He's...

POWELL whips her head around, her radar sensing death.

ESPER POWELL

WATCH OUT!

KENZO QUIZZARD has stalked into the bar with an immense 50-caliber type lazer blaster, firing.

POWELL swirls and ducks. TATE is still staring as a lazer blast ventilates his belly.

QUIZZARD is demolishing the place, firing hundreds of rounds.

THE BARTENDER is cut in two. Debris falls.

POWELL rolls along the floor, lazer blasts stitching the tables around her, glass shattering. Her lazer blaster is blown out of her hands. She goes for the grenade on her belt.

KENZO sees this, moves fast for his size. FOREFLASH (Precognitive KENZO hurtling behind the bar for safety.

CLOSE - POWELL peeping this, throws the grenade.

KENZO hurtling over the bar

THE GRENADE follows a beat later.

WHITE LIGHT engulfs the bar, followed by a wracking ultrasonic SOUND.

KENZO drops his blaster and slaps his hands over his ears, trembling. He screams, but the SOUND of the light engulfs everything.

WHITE LIGHT rips into his body and three hundred fifty pounds of flesh begin to rip apart. An intestine flies out. A leg explodes. The head and facial expressions split away.

POWELL keeps her hands to her head. The vibrations cease. She stands.



A DRUNK, shocked, steps over and looks down, doesn't believe it.

KENZO QUIZZARD is now a broad red and gray organic puddle of flesh, blood and bones.

POWELL comes to the aid of TATE. His belly is shredded open and his mouth is working soundlessly.

ESPER POWELL

Come on Tate! You can hang on.

POWELL peeps TATE

EXTREME CLOSE - TATE

87. FLASH - Images of earth. A box. Shovel. Dirt.

88. BACK TO TATE

LONG OVERHEAD - POWELL crouched over TATE.

ESPER POWELL

Hang on, Tate. Hang on.

The frame FADES darker, darker... then altogether dark.

CUT TO:

89. REICH INDUSTRIES - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

REICH has assembled his entire BOARD. On the walls are the huge blowups of various Reich Industry subsidiaries.

REICH

...City supervisors will become continental supervisors. Continental supervisors will become satellite chiefs. Present satellite chiefs will become planetary chiefs. Maybe some of you still don't understand, but from now on, Reich Industries is going to dominate the solar system. From now on, in all our corporate structure, we must think in terms of the solar system! From now on...

He falters, alarmed by the blank looks of his STAFF. He glances around, singles out BRULE, the thin, prissy personnel chief seen earlier.

REICH

What the hell's the matter Brule?  
I'm talking about promotions here!

BRULE

(stammers)

We...I...I'm sorry sir

REICH

Speak up! Damn you

BRULE

I'm sorry, Mr. Reich, but as of eleven o'clock this morning, the Esper Guild's ruled Reich Industries on its strike list. Company espionage is unethical.

REICH

What!

BRULE

I'm afraid, sir, no more espers are permitted to work for Reich Industries. We thought...

REICH

It's Powell isn't it! One of her dirty peeper tricks to get me!

BRULE

(precise and offended)

No Mister Reich. I'm afraid it's a Guild by-rule. Peepers must be dedicated to the good of...

Reich grabs him by the lapels and shakes him.

REICH

Shut up you little mind-sucker!  
Get out! Get out of my company!  
I'll destroy your goddam Guild,  
I'll sow all you peepers into the  
wind, I'll make the people rise  
up and destroy your snotty little  
race, I'll...

As he sputters on, six PEEPERS out of the twenty-five PEOPLE assembled, rise quietly and withdraw with dignity, the camera rising to a stark overhead angle.

REICH

Get out! Get out ALL of you!

CUT TO:

90. EXTERIOR REICH INDUSTRIES BUILDING - NIGHT

REICH rushes through the steel portals of his empire, intersecting JONAS the butler, at rest elegantly perusing the Times. The headline reads "Reich Industries Merges With D'Courtney Cartel. Galactic Changes Foreseen. Opposition Mounts."

REICH

Let's go!

JONAS

(quickly catching up)  
Yes sir. Where to sir?

REICH

Home!

JONAS

The jumper is right here sir.

JONAS circles round the sleek, silver black JUMPER with the Reich monogram on it. REICH follows, stopping to gaze up.

91. CITY LIGHTS (MINIATURE) - NIGHT

Towering 200-story office cubes surround him, blazing with light. JUMPERS bob up and down in the skyways like a plague of red-eyed grasshoppers, blinking like Christmas trees. The City is full of hope and light. Everything is possible. Reich's face glows frostily towards infinity.

REICH

God give me time - and the Galaxy  
is mine... You're mine! All of you -  
body and soul.

His eyes shift to terror as -

THE MAN WITH NO FACE crosses a square directly across from him, watching covertly over its shoulder. A figure of black shadows, tall, ominous, and familiar, sparkling with raindrop jewels.

REICH emits a muffled, strangled cry.

JONAS looks over worriedly from the Jumper.

JONAS

Mister Reich? Shall we go?

He presses a switch to kick the ignition and an EXPLOSION of blazing intensity swallows up the poor man.

REICH watches aghast, shielding himself as

THE JUMPER disintegrates.

CUT TO:

92. POWELL LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

POWELL, bandaged in several places from the shootout, plays on the carpet with TRACY D'COURTNEY.

POWELL

What is baba doing?

Tracy is in her pyjamas with a black crayon in one hand, a red one in another, energetically scribbling on the walls. Her tongue between her teeth, her eyes squinting in concentration, she looks older than the last time -- about seven or eight.

TRACY

(lissing)

Drawin pitchith. Nicth pitchith for Mama

POWELL

Really Tracy. Your lissing's beginning to worry me. I wonder if your teeth need bracea.

TRACY

Aga! Aga!

BECK comes from the KITCHEN where he's been making dinner.

ESPER POWELL

Got to go into her Id again.

ESPER BECK

Dangerous. You're exhausted. Later

ESPER POWELL

Can't. We're on the brink... Stay with me.

POWELL (approaching Tracy)

Are you my girl?

TRACY

Yeth

POWELL  
Doesn't my girl always do what  
Mama wants?

Tracy thinks it over.

Yeth  
TRACY

She deposits her crayons. POWELL takes her grubby hands  
in her own and stares into the dark D'Courtney eyes.  
A pause. BECK watches.

POWELL waits. The silence is prolonged. In the silence  
we begin to realize her mind is probing with a very faint,  
sucking staccato sound -- somewhat similar to a small  
sharp intake of breath but of an original nature here.  
It's the sound a brainwave might make if we were able,  
in our concentrations, to perceive the sound of silence.

INTERCUT:

THE EYES of TRACY D'COURTNEY. The camera closes towards  
the surface of the eyes, past the surfaces of skin into  
the MIND. Micro-photographic images of:

SKIN

DISSOLVING TO:

MUSCLE

TO

CARTILAGE

TO

BLOOD FLOW

TO

NEURON MATTER

TO

SYNAPSES that whip and crack in an ongoing electric storm.

TO

CHROMOSOMES

TO

CELLS

OVER this medical footage are a series of broken images and snippets of esper thought.

ESPER POWELL  
Take me to Ben Reich, Tracy

ESPER TRACY  
Who?

93. FLASH -- BEN REICH at the murder of CRAYE D'COURTNEY

94. BACK TO POWELL

ESPER POWELL  
Yes! More!

ESPER TRACY  
No! Please!

The camera, speeding through medical footage of the BRAIN comes suddenly face to face with a minute optical -- LIZZIE POWELL peeping.

POWELL veers back in shock.

BECK senses it.

BECK  
Powell? You there?

The voice fades into microscopic footage of BRAIN MATTER accompanied now by a ROAR on the SOUND TRACK. The atmosphere has subtly shifted from silence to violence and sound.

ESPER BECK (OVER)  
Powell! For God's sake, get out of there!

ESPER POWELL  
Go to hell!

The camera now plunges on through ions, electrons, synapses.

ESPER POWELL  
Reich! Take me to Reich!

Cells are flashing by at incredible velocity. Then suddenly:

95. FLASH - CLOSE CRAYE D'COURTNEY

His face is old and on the verge of death. Blood seeps from his mouth. He turns and bends out of camera. The back of his head is BEN REICH'S face, stretched in a mask of agony.

96. FLASH - ANOTHER ANGLE

the stooped figure of CRAYE D'COURTNEY bending over a cradle of rope on which lie the figures of BEN REICH and TRACY D'COURTNEY - both in their naked adult form. Their bodies are joined at the waist and their legs churn and twist in a writhing red mass beneath.

POWELL jerks back.

ESPER BECK

Powell! Get out of there! You're gonna pop! Get out of there!

A HEART pumping

VESSELS AND ARTERIES expanding

ESOPHAGUS - X-RAY FOOTAGE pounding

POWELL - OPTICAL MINIATURE

She is in black space.

ESPER POWELL

Can't find you?...Beck?

ESPER BECK

(desperate)

Here, here! Come here!

97. BRAIN MATTER, confusing, directionless swirling mass.

ESPER BECK

(fading)

Follow my voice

ESPER POWELL

(weaker)

Where?

POWELL - OPTICAL MINIATURE

She is plunging upwards -- as if pulled.

CLOSE - POWELL moving through limbo space -- fast!

Dark, unrecognizable SHAPES flutter past -- like bats.

UPWARDS ANGLE (OPTICAL CONTINUED) -- POWELL is heading for surface, like light above a lake, but it's blurrier and it's the flesh surface of the body.

ESPER BECK  
Powell?... Powell?

ESPER POWELL  
Yes!

OPTICAL - POWELL MINIATURE breaks the surface of skin.  
A violent EXPLOSION of sight and sound and we

SHARP CUT TO:

POWELL on the floor holding hands with TRACY D'COURTNEY.  
Both women are in trance states.

ESPER BECK  
Powell?

He slaps a cold towel smartly across her face. She's  
quivering. BECK grabs her up in his arms.

ESPER BECK  
Wake up! For God's sake open -  
open - open!

POWELL at last opens her eyes, focus.

ESPER BECK  
Jesus! You almost burned your brains  
out. Two and a half minutes. You  
dumb crazy broad! Love you!

ESPER POWELL  
Beck?

ESPER BECK  
Yes! Here!

ESPER POWELL  
Located the weirdest association  
with Ben Reich. Tracy and Ben Reich.  
Locked at the waist. Siamese twin  
image.

ESPER BECK  
Probably fragments of the Id. Doesn't  
mean anything. Like being in the  
middle of the sun.

ESPER POWELL  
No. Listen to me.

She stops suddenly, staring at the stark image of BEN  
REICH staring down at her through the glass skylane.

CONTINUED



97. CONTINUED

His face is cut, his clothes ragged and chapped from the jumper explosion. He spots her recognizing him and with his laser blaster blasts out the glass ceiling. The concussion is terrifying.

BECK springs for his weapon across the room.

REICH fires -- the lights exploding, furniture ripping apart.

BECK crashes, hurt, into furniture.

ESPER POWELL

No! Beck! No chance!

REICH hurtles down through the shattered skyline - crashing onto the living room floor next to POWELL and TRACY.

BECK freezes

REICH springs up, laser blaster covering the room.

LONG SHOT -- three figures frozen in the room.

POWELL (quick)

Hold it Reich! We got no case against you. Think about it. Think about it!

REICH is tensed, his image disfigured with rage.

FLASH - RAGE STATE -- tiger characteristics appear subliminally in the central hollow of Reich's face... They disappear. He holds the sublazer gun steady. He hesitates.

REICH

What do you mean no case?

POWELL

We had everything. How much you bribed Gus Tate. The gun. Tracy D'Courtney. But no motive. That's the flaw. The computer threw out the case.

REICH snarls his face up into a caricature of a smile.

REICH

You expect me to believe that Powell?

POWELL

D'Courtney accepted your merger offer, why would you have any motive to kill him? Think! Reich! You had every reason to keep him alive!

REICH

D'Courtney rejected my offer!

POWELL

No! He accepted. The computer code. WWHG - Accept!

REICH

Refuse!

POWELL

Accept!

REICH'S momentarily confused.

98. FLASHBACK - COMPUTER CODE WWHG - REICH stares at it, his face setting in rage.

99. BACK TO POWELL in movement, rolling across the floor.

REICH reacting still to the flashback, has lost his concentration.

BECK is rolling at Reich from the opposite direction.

REICH spins his eyes at POWELL, fires.

THE CARPET sizzles. POWELL rolls.

BECK

Reich!

REICH is distracted. Fires at Beck.

BECK rolls.

POWELL has arrived. From the floor, she straightkicks REICH full in the chest. He crashes against the door, staggers, loses the lazer blaster.

POWELL is up. REICH wheels on her furiously.

POWELL fakes to the left, reverses, and closes with a jab to the ulnar nerve.

REICH clinches, punching and swearing.

POWELL hits him with three lightning blows to the nape, the nape, the neck.

REICH crashes to the floor. POWELL scoops up his lazer blaster. A pause. She stares at him.

POWELL

You poor bastard, you think you're the only one who knows how to gut fight?

He's groaning, sick to his stomach, blood streaming from his nose. POWELL scoops up his lazer blaster, as BECK rises in background. She goes over to TRACY, semi-conscious, checks her pulse. Tracy reacts.

TRACY

Hello?

POWELL

All right

TRACY

Had a dream. Bad dream.

POWELL

I know baby. It's over.

She kisses TRACY on the forehead, rises, intersects REICH.

POWELL

Try flexing your muscles a little. Those blocks shouldn't last more than a few seconds -

REICH struggles up, his breath hissing horribly.

REICH

Kill me! Kill me or by Christ I'll kill you!

POWELL

Go on, Reich, get out of here before I change my mind.

BECK

Powell we got him on a homicide intent. For Christ's sake -

POWELL

Too small for him. He'd probably beat that too

(to Reich)

Go on, get out.

REICH

(puzzled)

You mean...? I'm free? What is this Powell, another one of your peeper tricks?

POWELL

Can't you compose yourself without drugs Reich! Can't you understand, you maniac. You got away with the murder. The computer threw out the case. No motive.

REICH

Then why the bombs? Why the boobytraps?

POWELL

(sharp)

What? What bombs?

She suddenly peeps REICH'S confused expression.

100. FLASH - The JUMPER exploding as REICH shields himself.

101. BACK TO REICH

REICH

You mean you don't know? You lousy liar! You stinking -

POWELL

Reich, what are you babbling about bombs?

REICH

As if you didn't know! Course it was you, who'd suspect a peeper of murder - clever, Powell, very...

POWELL, astounded, peeps -

102. FLASH - REICH himself, in a fugue state, plants the bomb in his own safe.

103. FLASHBACK - REICH reaches into his safe. The bomb explodes.

104. BACK TO POWELL - astonished at the glimpse she just saw.

REICH

...clever. Not enough to kill me but enough to make me crack...

(changes expression violently)

Of course! How stupid of me!

105. FLASH - REICH planting the bomb in the engine mechanism of his Jumper.
106. FLASHBACK - the Jumper exploding.
107. BACK TO POWELL - seeing this for the first time.

POWELL

God!

BECK looks.

ESPER POWELL

Explains it!

ESPER BECK

What!

ESPER POWELL

The motive!... He's mad. He's...

REICH

(on his own train of thought)  
...This is probably another trap of yours, isn't it Powell? Anything to get me to confess.

His eyes go paranoid again, darting around the room.

ESPER REICH

(weak track)

"Tensor, said the Tensor. Tensor, said the Tensor... Tension, apprehension, dissension..."

POWELL steps forward and grabs him by the collar, slaps him.

POWELL

Get a hold of yourself!

BECK intersects, passes an ampule. POWELL cracks it open in front of REICH'S nose. Reich tries to resist. Powell holds his face. He sputters.

POWELL

Get this Reich! I didn't try to kill you. You're safe from me - I didn't plant those detonation bombs in your jumper or your safe.

REICH is crazed, thrashing in her grip.

REICH  
Then who? Who did? Who!

POWELL  
You know who, Reich

Sensing the advantage, moving in, staring into his eyes -

POWELL  
Your old enemy. He knows I can't  
hurt you. That's why he'll kill  
you. Cause he knows you're safe  
from me.

REICH  
Who?

POWELL  
You know!

A long moment. BECK stares. TRACY stares.

CLOSE REICH - his paranoia transforming -

POWELL'S FACE into a featureless hollow -- NO FACE,  
staring back at REICH.

REICH  
Agggghhhhhh!

REICH recoils in horror. He screams and wrenches free  
from her grasp. Then staggers out the house as they all  
watch - amazed.

CUT TO:

108. EXTERIOR - ESPER GUILD - NIGHT

The lights are burning late.

109. LIMBO - ESPER GUILD - NIGHT

A BLACK AND WHITE technological space to be worked out.  
It should suggest the highest-level meeting of the Esper  
Guild and provide contrast to the medieval hardware of  
Reich's conference room. Nobody actually is in the  
room. The voices are present, but the bodies are  
incorporate. Occasionally we see pinpoints of light  
(blue, black yellow) flashing, glowing, dashing, eddying  
about the room as would molecules under pressure in a con-  
fined space. The grid of light lines should therefore  
reflect the shifting moods of conversation. POWELL is  
CONTINUED

109. CONTINUED  
 the principle speaker. The President of the Guild, TSUNG HAI, is the secondary. The pace is clipped at the fastest speed yet perceived in the film.

ESPER TSUNG HAI  
 Emergency meeting of the Guild to examine a request for Mass Cathexis with Elizabeth Powell as the energy canal.

SOUNDS of consternation.

ESPER 1  
 Are you mad Powell? What could possibly require such a dangerous and extraordinary measure?

ESPER POWELL  
 An astonishing development in the D'Courtney case. I had no idea how dangerous Ben Reich was until tonight when I peeped him at his deepest psychic level.

ESPER 2  
 And?

ESPER POWELL  
 Reich is about to become a galactic focal point. A crucial link between the positive past and the probable future. He's on the verge of reorganizing the galactic financial system. If permitted to mature, his compulsions will tear down our society and irrevocably commit us to his psychotic pattern.

Whispers.

ESPER 2  
 Hitler?

ESPER 3  
 Bonaparte?

ESPER 4  
 Genghis Khan?

ESPER POWELL  
 Worse! Reich himself is terrified

POWELL (Continued)

He plants bombs in his own safe. In his jumper. Doesn't quite kill himself. Hates himself. Loves himself. Knows he is the deadly enemy of galactic reason. The Anti-Christ. He's come. I call the question.

ESPER TSUNG HAI

Elizabeth Powell -- you're asking us to vote your death?

ESPER POWELL

My death against the eventual death of everything we know. The real Reich is about to awaken and all reality -- Espers, Normals, Life, the earth, the solar system, the universe -- hangs on his heartbeat. He cannot be permitted to awaken to the wrong reality. I call the question.

ESPER TSUNG HAI

Question granted. Those for Cathexis?

At a blinding speed, dozens of lights in limbo space flash and dance.

ESPER TSUNG HAI

Against?

Again the moving lights. The grid is weaker.

ESPER TSUNG HAI

Mass Cathexis request granted. Meeting adjourned.

CUT TO:

110. NIGHT LIGHT SEQUENCE - CITY STREET

POWELL exits the ESPER GUILD building onto a vast backdrop of cubic skyscrapers and the sparkling intersecting lights of a thousand JUMPERS. The street is lonely and stark with edges of Caligari-expressionism in its winding edges, rooftops and chimneys. POWELL stands alone, naked against the city. The first trickle of energy comes now.

THE ENERGY is felt by a singular SOUND on the track and is perceived by a simultaneously flickering of several hundred dots of light in the distant cubic complexes.



POWELL feels it now. Quickly looks at her watch, surprised it's coming so soon.

ANOTHER ANGLE - POWELL walks down the street. She looks around, the SOUND growing.

THE ENERGY spreading across the city backdrop. More light. More sound.

POWELL beginning to transform. Nothing immediately external is occurring as in Jeckyll and Hyde. Rather it's the psyche that's beginning to move and is affecting, slowly, her facial features.

111. MONTAGE - THE ENERGY

FASH CUTS of ESPERS, throughout the city, transmitting their energy in silent moments of thought. A figure in the street, a security guard in a warehouse, a waiter in a restaurant, a group of friends gathered at home, a musician practicing in a quartet, the people we saw in the Esper Guild. These CUTS now speed and build to:

112. POWELL

alone in her street, cracking open a plastic bulb against a streetlight and swallowing a dozen multicolored capsules. She sweats, her face drawn tight as a rubber fist, her eyes narrowing intensely, trying to keep her balance, to focus the onrush of energy. The camera rising in a spacious crane movement with music to -

THE CITY pulsing now with mega-energy. Torrents of flashing lights are sweeping the set. The SOUND has grown to turbine proportions.

WHITE LIGHT flows into the set from the city backdrop, in crackling whips of energy, spitting along the streets like long looping lassos. The beams are growing brighter and brighter as they move, flowing in from all angles

POWELL, transfixed in foreground, her back to camera as the fields of LIGHT converge on her. We now see a thousand different levels of white light flooding and sucking into her.

EXTREME CLOSE - POWELL. Her eyeballs rising into camera, flowing into its power. Her face shows extreme signs of violence and struggle. She is driven forward (stop motion) in a mass of boiling energy, fighting to control the flow -- the camera swirling along the street like a pilot fish in EXTREME CLOSE UP, never letting up. Her nervous

CONTINUED

system is screaming as her mind whirls faster and faster into an intolerable turbine WHINE. She is suddenly slammed and gyrated into the backdrop.

CUT TO:

113. BLACKNESS -- against which flash huge COMPUTER NEON symbols at top speed to the muscular pulsing of an angry ROCK BEAT

ABOLISH THE LABYRINTH  
 DESTROY THE MAZE  
 DELETE THE PUZZLE  
 DISBAND  
 (OPERATIONS, EXPRESSIONS, FACTORS, FRACTIONS,  
 POWERS, EXPONENTS, RADICALS, IDENTITIES,  
 EQUATIONS, PROGRESSIONS, VARIATIONS,  
 PERMUTATIONS, DETERMINANTS, AND SOLUTIONS)  
 EFFACE  
 (ELECTRON, PROTON, NEUTRON, MESON AND  
 PHOTON)  
 ERASE  
 (CAYLER, HENSON, LILLIENTHAL, CHANUTE,  
 LANGLEY, WRIGHT, TURNBUL AND S&ERSON)  
 EXPUNGE  
 (NEBULAE, CLUSTERS, STREAMS, BINARIES,  
 GIANTS, MAIN SEQUENCE, AND WHITE DWARFS)  
 DISPERSE  
 (PISCES, AMPHIBIAN, BIRDS, MAMMALS, AND MAN)  
 ABOLISH  
 DESTROY  
 DELETE  
 DISBAND  
 ERASE ALL EQUATIONS  
 INFINITY EQUALS ZERO  
 THERE IS NO -

REICH VOICE

There is no what!

114. INTERIOR - DUFFY KINCAID BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bedroom is impeccably modernistic with a spectacular view of THE CITY. REICH struggles upwards, fighting the bedclothes and restraining hands.

REICH

There is no what?

DUFFY

No more nightmares

REICH opens and shuts his eyes slowly.

REICH  
I want to wake up.

DUFFY  
(coquettish)  
You say the nicest things. Close your eyes and the dream'll continue.

REICH  
No! I tell you I was awake. I was wide awake for the first time in my life! I heard... I don't know what I heard. Infinity and zero. Important things. Reality. Then I fell asleep and I'm here.

DUFFY  
Correction. For the record. You're awake.

REICH  
I'm asleep!

He shoots up in the bed.

REICH  
Have you got a shot? Anything?...  
Opium, hemp, somnat, lethettes?  
I've got to get back to reality.

Duffy thrusts him back against the pillows and kisses him hard on the mouth.

DUFFY  
What's that? Real?

REICH  
You don't understand. It's all been delusions, hallucinations -- everything. I've got to readjust before it's too late. Before it's too late, too late, too late...

DUFFY  
Listen, Ben, one more word out of you and I call Kingston

REICH  
(sharp)  
What? Who?

DUFFY  
Kingston - like in hospital. Where  
they send people like you. To get  
adjusted.

Reich doesn't seem to remember.

REICH  
How'd I get here?

DUFFY  
You came here

REICH  
What?

DUFFY  
You crashed through the door? Your  
clothes were torn? You grabbed me  
in your arms. You were hungry as  
an animal?

REICH  
You let me make love to you?

DUFFY  
Would I pass up the opportunity?

Reich relaxes for the first time. He grins.

REICH  
Duffy, you once asked to be dragged  
through the gutter.

DUFFY  
I thought I could meet a better  
class of people.

REICH  
Well, you name the gutter and  
you can have it! Gold gutters,  
Jeweled gutters. You want a gutter  
from here to Mars? You got it!  
You want me to turn the Galaxy into  
a gutter? I'll do that too.

DUFFY  
Is this the nightmare or are you  
awake?

Reich bursts into laughter.

REICH

Forget nightmares. Why should I worry about nightmares when I have the whole world in my hands

DUFFY

Seriously Ben, what drug are you on?

Reich laughs again and jumps on the bed, reeling.

REICH

Drug? Sure I'm drugged! Why shouldn't I be? I've beaten D'Courtney. I've beaten Powell. I'll beat them all! Case and Umbrel on Venus. The GCI combine on Ganymede, Callisto, Io -

He staggers down from the bed and crashes his fist down on a torso-shaped side table, smashing it.

REICH

Eaten! United Transaction on Mars.  
Eaten!

Pacing across the room, he kicks the leg out from her vanity table.

REICH

Titan Chemical and Atomies. Eaten!  
Then the backbiters, the lice, the haters, the moralists, the press, the Peeper Guild! Eaten! Eaten!  
Eaten!

He crushes a delicate chair.

DUFFY

(approaching worriedly)  
Clever up Ben. Why waste all that violence? Punch me around a little.

Reich shakes her until she squeals. Then laughs, and lifts her in his arms.

REICH

I own the world, baby! I'm forty years old and I've got sixty more years of owning the world in front of me! You want to look at God? Here I am. Go ahead and look Duffy.

DUFFY

Modest aren't you?

REICH  
How'd you like to start a dynasty  
with me, Duffy?

DUFFY  
How do you start a dynasty with a  
mad genius!

REICH  
You start with Ben Reich. First you  
marry him.

DUFFY  
When?

REICH  
Then you have children. Boys!  
Dozens of -

DUFFY  
Girls! And only three.

REICH  
We'll tear it all down Duffy - and  
we'll start again! You and me and  
the dynasty!

He tears open the door to the terrace and sweeps her  
outside in his arms.

THE SKYWAYS AND STREETS (SET) twinkle with lights and  
Jumpers popping on the skyline. A slender red moon hangs  
pale in the storybook sky.

REICH with DUFFY in his arms roars into the cold wind

REICH  
You out there! Can you hear me!  
Can you hear me!

ECHOES  
Hear me! Can you hear me!

REICH  
All of you... sleeping and dreaming.  
You'll dream my dreams from now on.  
Me and Duffy and the Dynasty. You'll -

Abruptly he's silent. He lets Duffy slide to the floor  
of the terrace. He pokes his head far out into the night,  
twisting his neck to stare up. He draws his head back  
with a bewildered expression.

REICH  
The stars. Where are the stars?

DUFFY  
Where are the what?

REICH  
The stars?

He gestures timidly towards the sky.

REICH  
They're gone.

She looks at him curiously.

DUFFY  
The what are gone?

REICH  
The stars. Look, the sky. Look up.  
The sky. The stars are gone. The  
constellations are gone! The Great  
Bear. The Little Bear. Cassiopeia.  
Draco. Pegasus. They're gone!  
Look!

THE BLACK SKY -- A thick dark canvas without any relief  
except for one pale MOON.

DUFFY  
It's the way it always is

REICH  
Are you mad? There's always, always  
been stars.

DUFFY  
What are stars?

Reich seizes her savagely

REICH  
Suns! Boiling and blazing with light.  
Thousands of them. Billions of them.  
What the hell's the matter with you!  
Don't you understand? There's been  
a catastrophe in space!

Duffy shakes her head, her face terrified.

DUFFY

I don't know what you're talking  
about Ben, I don't know what you're  
talking about.

He thrusts her aside and stalks back into the bedroom.

REICH

About the stars! The Christ almighty  
missing stars!

CUT TO:

115. EXTERIOR - STREET SET

REICH tears out of Duffy's apartment building, clothed,  
and begins to run, staring upward.

THE BLACK SKY (SET) is enigmatic, unrelieved, terrifying.  
It seems to press downwards.

REICH suddenly collides with a bald black HOOKER.

HOOKER

You clumsy toot! Say, you looking  
for a little pickie-pickie?

She's an exquisite-looking transvestite with exotic  
facial jewelry through her nose and lips. REICH grabs  
her by the arm and points up.

REICH

Look! The stars, they're gone!

HOOKER

What's gone?

As she slips her hand into his crotch.

REICH

The stars. Look!

HOOKER

I don't know what you're talking  
about you jeekie jerk but c'mon  
let's us have a bishbash.

REICH

Frab off!

He tears himself free from her claws and runs on.



A JUMPER CAB flickers and swoops in close, REICH waving it down and jumping in.

REICH  
Reich Industries. Jet!

The JUMPER DRIVER is fat and balding.

JUMPER DRIVER  
Right!

THE STREET below drops away as the vehicle rises in one smooth, powerful arc of motion. The lights of the CITY zoom by. The JUMPER DRIVER stares back through a multi-angular mirror.

JUMPER DRIVER  
You all right, mac?

REICH  
(restrained)  
Notice the sky?

DRIVER  
Why's that?

REICH  
The stars are gone

The driver's a good-natured fellow. He laughs.

REICH  
It's not supposed to be a joke.  
The stars are gone.

DRIVER  
What the hell are stars?

REICH  
Damn you! You never heard of stars?  
You never saw a star? You don't  
know what I'm talking about?

DRIVER  
Nope

REICH  
(moans)  
Oh God... Sweet God!

DRIVER  
Now don't warp your orbit, mac.  
You know, being a jumper driver

CONTINUED

DRIVER (Continued)  
gives you a chance to learn a little about psychology. And sometimes I see some folks they get a crazy notion in their head. It's brand new, see. But you think you always had it. Like for instance, that people always had one eye and now all of a sudden they got two.

REICH stares at him, trying to fathom what he means.

DRIVER  
So you run around yelling 'For Chrissakes, where did they all of a sudden get two eyes everybody?' And they say, 'They always got two eyes' and you say, 'The hell they did. I remember when everybody had one eye.' And by God you believe it, and they have a hell of a time knocking the notion out of you... Seems to me, mac, like you're on a one-eye kick.

REICH mutters to himself.

REICH  
One eye. Two eyes. Tension, apprehension...

DRIVER  
What?

REICH suddenly transforms into a hot rage.

REICH  
What the hell do I care about the stars! I got the world! What do I care if a few delusions go with it!

The JUMPER DRIVER beams.

DRIVER  
That's the attitude.

CUT TO:

116. EXTERIOR - REICH INDUSTRIES BUILDING - NIGHT

The public JUMPER lands on the STREET outside.

REICH steps out, snapping to the DRIVER.

REICH  
Wait for me. I'm Ben Reich

DRIVER  
(humoring him)  
There you go mac

REICH runs past the enormous monogram "R" into the building.

CUT TO:

117. INTERIOR - LIBRARY

The library is abandoned. REICH installs himself in a Vid-Phone alcove, punches "Start" -

The COMPUTER SCREEN lights up and a MECHANICAL VOICE responds.

COMPUTER  
Topic?

REICH punches "SCIENCE" -

COMPUTER  
Section?

REICH punches "ASTRONOMY"

COMPUTER  
Question?

REICH whispers into a voice panel.

REICH  
The universe?

The COMPUTER clicks, pauses, clicks again. IBM printouts flash at high speed.

COMPUTER  
The term universe in its complete physical sense applies to all matter in existence.

REICH  
What matter is in existence?

Click, pause, click.

COMPUTER  
Matter is gathered into aggregates ranging in size from the smallest atom to the largest collection of matter known to astronomers.

REICH punches "DIAGRAM"

REICH

What is the largest collection of matter known to astronomers?

The COMPUTER immediately flashes a dazzling picture of the sun

COMPUTER

The sun

REICH

Could there be possibly larger collections of matter, such as stars?

The COMPUTER clicks, pauses, clicks. Then clicks sharply twice.

COMPUTER

Star? Noun or verb?

REICH

Noun!

Click, pause, click.

COMPUTER

There is no information listed under that heading. I suggest you consult new research in the field. Possibly stars are about to be discovered.

REICH

Frab off! What about the moon! Isn't that a star?

Click, pause, click.

COMPUTER

There is no moon

REICH takes a deep trembling breath.

REICH

We'll try it again. Go back to the sun.

COMPUTER flashes the same dazzling picture of the sun.

COMPUTER

The sun is the largest collection of matter...

The VOICE suddenly stops and the picture of the sun FADES to blacker and blacker shades.

COMPUTER

There is no sun.

The sun is black and the MAN WITH NO FACE silently fades onto the blackness.

REICH screams and leaps to his feet, knocking the chair backwards. His face again transforms briefly to a RAGE STATE with its tiger optical fading in and out of the hollow of his face.

REICH smashes the chair into the computer screen and blunders out of the room.

CUT TO:

118. EXTERIOR - REICH INDUSTRIES - NIGHT

REICH plunges back towards the waiting JUMPER. The SET is growing darker and darker.

REICH

Take me to the teleport. Jet!

The DRIVER has his back to Reich.

DRIVER

Where?

REICH

The teleport, you idiot! Paris.  
There's stars in Paris

DRIVER

Paris?

REICH

Paris!

DRIVER

There is no Paris

THE DRIVER turns. He has NO FACE.

REICH screams and tears out of the Jumper which lifts off. Reich stares up.

THE MOON is gone. All is desolate blackness.

REICH  
The moon! Where's the moon!

REICH staggers along the skyway, intersecting PEDESTRIANS.  
He is shaking his fist at the black heavens.

REICH  
You fools! You idiots! Can't you  
see! There's no moon

A RUSH OF LIGHT swoops down the freeway, emerging as a  
JUMPER.

INTERCUT REICH stumbling into its path.

REICH  
Where's the moon! Where's the stars!

The LIGHT blazes with harsh sound. REICH is struck down.

DARKNESS TO:

119 INTERIOR - POLICE STATION

REICH'S eyes open. He's lying on a table in a white tiled  
room. Around him are POLICE and a DOCTOR

DOCTOR  
It's all right. You're all right.

REICH  
Peeper...need a peeper.

DOCTOR  
What?

REICH  
Are you a peeper? I need a peeper.  
Don't care about the price.

The DOCTOR looks at the COPS

COP 1  
What's he want?

DOCTOR  
A peeper...  
(to Reich)  
What's a peeper?

REICH  
An Esper, you idiot! A mind reader!  
What century are you living in!

The Doctor smiles. To the others:

DOCTOR  
He's joking. Good sign.

REICH sits up on the table, about to explode.

REICH  
Listen. I'm Ben Reich.  
Of Reich Industries.  
I want to see Elizabeth Powell,  
Chief Prefect, Psychotic Division.

Their faces are blank.

REICH  
Goddamit! I want to confess to her.  
Take me to Powell now!

COP 1  
Who's Powell?

REICH  
Powell! You ass!

COP 2  
Whaddaya want to confess, mister?

REICH  
The D'Courtney murder!  
I murdered Craye D'Courtney last  
month. In Maria Beaumont's house.  
Tell Powell. I killed D'Courtney.  
I killed D'Courtney!

CLOSE - a whirring tape recording the voice. COP 3 turns  
is off, puzzled.

A long pause. The COPS look at each other.

CUT TO:

120. EXTERIOR - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

REICH is being manhandled out the door

REICH  
You've got to listen to me. I -

COP 1

You listen to me, buddy! There ain't no Elizabeth Powell in the service. There ain't no D'Courtney killing in the books. And there ain't no Ben Reich of Reich Industries! And we ain't taking any slok from your kind. Now... Out!

He hurls Reich into the street and slams the door of the station shut.

121. THE NIGHT STREET (SET)

REICH, lying like a broken doll in the street, peers up a long narrow desolate street with a chill WIND blowing. The Set must convey ultimate despair. The pavement stones are strangely broken. The street lights are dimming. The skyways are extinguished. The Jumpers have disappeared. Great gaps are shorn in the skyline.

REICH fights his way to his feet and lurches down the street, moaning:

REICH

I'm sick. I'm sick.

He hangs on a dark door, but nothing will open to him. The wind, at the far end of the stage, swirls and eddies into weird patterns.

REICH

Jumper! Jumper! Give me a Jumper!

There is nothing. He moans, then breaks into weak singsong.

REICH

Eight, sir... Five, sir... One, sir  
... Tenser said Tensor... Tension,  
'prehension, 'ssension have begun...

He tries another door. Locked.

REICH

WHERE IS EVERYBODY! LIGHTS! DUFFY!  
POWELLI CHRIST! HELP ME! COME  
BACK! FOR GOD'S SAKE COME BACK!

REICH against the BLACK SKY and the endless street and the unfamiliar wind. He moans to himself in an oddly moving way. His voice weak -



REICH

I'm sick. Sick. I know I'm sick.  
 Got to go home. Help me. Somebody  
 help me. I'm sick. Need help.

There is nobody. REICH emits a harsh, fearfully pre-historic yell from his gut.

REICH

SOUND EFFECT

Then in the smallest tones:

REICH

Where? Where is everything?...Powell?...  
 Bring it back. Please...

And then out of the darkening set downstage, the figure of THE MAN WITH NO FACE takes shape, looming over the entire street - as huge as God.

REICH shrivels in terror. He screams and runs.

REICH

SOUND EFFECT SCREAM

He falls into the street, camera closing on him tight as he crawls, looking over his shoulder, terrified.

THE MAN WITH NO FACE is moving closer out of the BLACK SKY.

REICH crawls desperately, shredding his knees, suddenly spotting

POWELL far away down the street, retreating from him as in a dream.

REICH

Powell!...Please? Please?

But she recedes, soundlessly, into the darkness. All is desolation.

REICH crawls furiously after her, suddenly freezing as a black cape stands in front of him. He looks up, terrified.

THE MAN WITH NO FACE stares down at him, with the black sky overhead.

REICH doesn't react, doesn't scream. There is no place left to go. This is infinity. This is now. At last.

Father?                    ESPER REICH

Son.                        ESPER MAN WITH NO FACE

Out of the empty features now swiftly comes the face of CRAYE D'COURTNEY, his expression old and kindly.

It was you                ESPER REICH

The face of Craye D'Courtney fades back to the hollow man, out of which now emerges the features of BEN REICH.

It was us                ESPER MAN WITH NO FACE

Father and son?        ESPER REICH

The face of REICH fades to nothingness and in its place comes the mixed face of BEN REICH and CRAYE D'COURTNEY. A mutant face.

Yes                        ESPER MAN WITH NO FACE

I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry -            ESPER REICH

The face is now that of old CRAYE D'COURTNEY again.

Too late Ben. I tried to warn you.    ESPER MAN WITH NO FACE

We can go back, Dad. You and me.    ESPER REICH

Reich is scrabbling at his father's knees.

There is no going back. It's over, Ben    ESPER MAN WITH NO FACE

We'll find a way. There must be a way...    ESPER REICH

There is no way. It's ended.            ESPER MAN WITH NO FACE

TRACERS of WHITE LIGHT start flashing across the frame.

ESPER REICH

(weakening voice)

... Dad'

CRAYE D'COURTNEY'S image is fading. A terrifying ELECTRICAL SOUND engulfs the track. In that sound there's burning and hissing of flesh and wire.

CLOSE - BEN REICH. Freshly branded across the center of his forehead, with smoking fumes, are the words "DEMOLISH." The eyes are bulging with terror.

WHITE LIGHT blurs him out as the SOUNDTRACK roars with white noise and we -

CUT TO:

122. EXTERIOR - GARDENS - REICH INDUSTRIES - DAY

MOVING OVERHEAD ANGLE reveals a flock of POLICE, Jumper ambulances and TV crews milling around, framed by the immense Reich Industries building.

REICH and POWELL are curled unconscious on a wet lawn -- gripped in each other's arms. Powell's posture is maternal, protective, her face wet, dirty, her respiration lifeless. MEDICS lift and carry her onto the back of a Jumper with a full intensive care unit. BECK attends, intersecting TSUNG HAI who has just arrived with a concerned and questioning ESPER STAFF.

ESPER BECK

She made it... Brought Reich out too.

ESPER TSUNG HAI

Incredible... incredible.

Esper noises. The staff astonished and delighted.

POWELL is placed in the Jumper unit. The hydraulic doors whoosh shut and the vehicle ascends.

DISSOLVING TO:

123. THE COURTROOM

is cathedral-shaped. Shafts of light, suggesting a spiritual link to the judicial, slant down on the gallery packed with hundreds of SPECTATORS and VID CREWS.

POWELL, recuperated and in her most eloquent attire so date, addresses a panel of SEVEN JUDGES, comprising a cross-section of humanity -- sex, color, age.

JUDGE 1

So you thought, Prefect Powell, a Mass Cathexis Measure was necessary for this?

POWELL

Your Honor, it was a remarkably complex case. When we ran our evidence through the computer, we were told the financial motive was insufficient. We were lost. Even Reich told himself he was killing D'Courtney for financial reasons. When D'Courtney accepted Reich's merger offer, Reich was subconsciously compelled to misunderstand the message. He had to. He had to go on believing he murdered for money because he couldn't face the real motive.

JUDGE 1

Which was?

POWELL

D'Courtney was his father.

THE COURT explodes in speculation.

JUDGE 2

His father? Flesh and blood?

POWELL

Yes, Your Honors!

REICH sits lifelessly in a large crystal structure, so be worked out, suspended above the courtroom.

POWELL

Reich's mother, now dead, was D'Courtney's mistress on Mars. When she became pregnant, D'Courtney settled her here on Earth with a large trust fund on the condition she keep her secret. She married Jeremy Reich and when he died, she gave the bastard son of Craye D'Courtney the reins of Reich Industries.

THE JUDGES now push various buzzers and electronic equipment for silence. THE GALLERY hushes.

JUDGE 1

Prefect, is this esper evidence, or is there proof of this?

JUDGE TSUNG HAI

Objection! By inference Judge is maligning the Esper Guild.

THE JUDGES glance at each other.

JUDGE 2

Sustained. Delete the peeper clause. What is the proof, Powell?

POWELL

Well once we peeped this, your honors, we backtracked. We codified the genes of D'Courtney and Reich and found the exact duplications in their DNA codes -- whereas Reich's step-father's chromosomes never matched those of Ben Reich in any single component...

Watching are TRACY D'COURTNEY and BECK. Tracy appears to be in her twenties again, her concentration focused on the proceedings -

POWELL

There were so many other signposts. D'Courtney was driving himself to suicide with feelings of guilt about abandoning his son who he now knew across the economic battleground as Ben Reich. He wanted forgiveness. He wanted merger. But Reich couldn't pardon him.

CUT TO:

224. MONTAGE - VID VIEWERS - NIGHT

In a succession of homes, we see the image of LIZZIE POWELL on various types of Vid-screens.

BOURGEOIS EARTH COUPLE FRED DEAL, the esper in the bank, with WIFE and KIDS

ARTHUR SNIM and CHOOKA FROOD in a BAR of the Kenzo Quizzard variety

EICKLEBERGER, D'Courtney's psychiatrist, on a flight in deep space

DOCTOR JEEMS and MEDICAL STAFF

BRULE, Reich's Personnel Chief

THE PUNK GIRL esper at the PEEPER GUILD

MARIA BEAUMONT at yet another party

DUFFY KINCAID alone in bed

POWELL ON TV

(continuous)

...Then there was Tracy D'Courtney's deep siamese twin image of Ben Reich and herself. And Reich's inability to kill Tracy at Maria Beaumont's house. He knew it also down in his unconscious. He wanted to destroy the father who'd rejected him but he couldn't possibly hurt his own sister...Ultimately these were the bombs he planted against himself.

JUDGE 7

Without self-knowledge?

POWELL

Totally unconsciously. He'd murdered his father and discharged his hatred but when we couldn't stop him, it was his own conscience that punished him at the deepest levels of his psyche.

JUDGE 6

This Man With No Face?

POWELL

Yes. The figure had no face because Reich couldn't accept the truth -- that he'd recognized D'Courtney as his father. So we confronted Reich with the Man With No Face. By mass cathexis, we built a pool of latent energy from every esper in the city. We constructed a common neurotic impulse for Reich -- the illusion that he alone in the world was real. The terror of that solitude is what drove him finally to confront himself and confess the crime.

JUDGE 1

Accepting your argument, Prefec, it would seem Reich is cured and in need of a period of recovery at Kingston?

POWELL

In doing so you would gravely underestimate Ben Reich, Your Honor. I have peeped Ben Reich -- and in his deepest mind, I have seen the world, as we know it, move.

SOUNDS throughout the court.

POWELL

Reich is one of those rare World Shakers that come along once in a generation. He has the power to rock the solar system. If his compulsions are permitted to mature, he'll tear our society apart and commit us to his psychotic pattern. We are dealing here with a tetratonic bomb.

Pointing to REICH. Sounds throughout the Court.

POWELL

Reich must be demolished. His entire psyche must be eradicated.

The Court is in uproar. The camera has ascended to REICH -- haunted eyes, shadows.

DISSOLVING TO:

LONG SHOT - from the rear of the gallery, the SEVEN JUDGES are tiny ants against the massive bench.

JUDGE 1

We the Justices of the United States branch of the Criminal Court on Earth in the matter of Ben Reich versus the Galaxy, do hereby sentence the accused, Ben Reich...

CLOSE REICH standing quietly

POWELL watches

JUDGE 1

- to be demolished until conscious at the Kingston Psychiatric Center throughout the day of June the Second  
CONTINUED

JUDGE 1 (Continued)  
 in the year of our Lord Two Thousand  
 Four Hundred and Ninety-one... May  
 God have mercy on your soul.

CUT TO:

125. WHITENESS

eroding into the visage of BEN REICH

126. DEMOLITION LABORATORY - DAY

REICH is strapped down to a complicated console with cathode-type tubes pointed at the top of his shaven head. He is in the process of being demolished, his features searing.

POWELL, BECK, TRACY D'COURTNEY and COLLEAGUES watch from the observation gallery rising at an incline above the experimental area.

CLOSE REICH -- the power in him building. He is crackling with ELECTRICAL CHARGES now. He's grimacing but his body appears to be absorbing the shock.

CUT OUT TO:

127. TRANSPARENT MAN EFFECT

REICH'S body is turning redder and redder, and the SOUND coming from this raw naked thing is like that of a dying lobster. The body is jerking now, twitching, gibbering as a steady stream of voltage is poured into its nervous system. The body has achieved a shell-like transparency and we can see into the heart, spleen, kidneys, intestine tubing, and brain.

TRACY (agonized)

You're killing him! You're killing him!

BECK (supports her)

No... He's as close as anyone will ever come to dying. But he's seeing and realizing everything.

TRACY

How painful!

BECK

How else?



CLOSE - OPTICAL - the naked eye of BEN REICH spilling tears, watching them, feeling

128. MICRO-PHOTOGRAPHY - BRAIN

Particles of matter crackle and discharge a fluid substance into the cortex of the brain.

129. SPECIAL EFFECT - BRAIN

We have approximately 500 bulbs at differing depths of field in a BLACK LIMBO, with dozens of these bulbs extinguishing simultaneously in different planes as the camera tracks swiftly deeper and deeper into the frame, implying that there is a consciousness of the brain matter extinguishing itself.

130. BACK TO REICH straining

THE STRAPS on the table snap apart and -

REICH suddenly flies up into the WEBBING above the console. He hangs there suspended freak-like in mid-air. WHORLS of ENERGY LIGHT radiate from him as he hops, monkey-like, from one end of the webbing to the other, screeching in agony. The lights in his body are dimming.

THE CHIEF DOCTOR, a gnarled old walnut of a man, intersects POWELL and TRACY. He chuckles on his big black cigar. Under the factory-like noise:

DOCTOR

Frisky little devil. I have great hopes for him. Strong psyche. Hard to destroy. Every memory, every circuit, we got to weed it out. Same time we can't lose the mind.

POWELL

Great mind. Be a shame to lose it.

DOCTOR

Lose it? Me? Never!

POWELL

Three hundred years ago they used to catch people like Reich and kill them. They called it "capital punishment."

DOCTOR

Bosh! Waste! If a man's got the guts and brains to buck Society, you fold on to him! You straighten him out and you turn him into a plus value. Throw him away and all you got left are the sheep.

He starts back.

DOCTOR

We're stepping this character up. Ought to be ready for rebirth in a year.

The camera rising to BEN REICH up in the webbing. He squalls and thrashes. Smoke is coming off him in greater quantities. He is changing now -- assuming the shape of a pink hunk of meat, innocent, infant-like. Electrical SNAPPING is snapping through his body.

131. SPECIAL EFFECT - BRAIN

The 500 bulbs are dwindling to near-nothing. The mind is dying.

132. CLOSE - THE EYE

of the thing that was Ben Reich stares numbly. Smoke curls from the foreground edges of the thing and a strange series of SOUND EFFECTS fly out, wreathed in smoke.

TRACY can't watch, turns away. The camera moving up CLOSE on POWELL who maintains her gaze.

CLOSER - THE EYE of the thing sheds tears of agony.

CLOSE - POWELL, sharing the pain, reaches out with her eyes. She takes an involuntary step towards it.

CLOSER - THE EYE of the thing, enveloped in thickening whorls of smoke, notices her movement, focuses on her.

EXTREME CLOSE - THE THING. The sound effects emitted from its disintegrating nerve system now cease entirely. Pause. The oven-red eyelids shutter thickly closed, then reopen. Intimately:

ESPER REICH

Powell - peeper - friend - Powell  
- peeper - friend

These come in short, explosive fragments -- the tone warm and surprisingly grateful.

POWELL is astounded.

ESPER POWELL  
You, Reich?...an esper?

THE THING blinks.

ESPER REICH  
(fading to incoherency)  
Wait...me...you...wait -

THE CAMERA closing tight on LIZZIE POWELL. She's stunned, disturbed, bewildered -- at a rare loss of control. She reddens - thoroughly. A thought, long lost, flickers across her mind-vid.

ESPER IMAGE -- loss, little girl crying, for something lost...for love. For love.

POWELL brushes a tear away

ESPER POWELL  
(a 'yess' sound, primitive)

EXTREME CLOSE - THE EYE of the infant thing records her image with one long probing stare. Then shoots off in a glorious reverse tumble across its webbing -- floating backwards like a big puff ball, getting smaller and smaller, the music rising to rebirth.

THE END