

ENCRYPT

by Richard Taylor

FADE IN:

THE EARTH

spins in mortal turmoil. A vast spinner of clouds the size of Australia approaches the west coast of North America, lightning flashing, thunder BELLOWING and CRACKLING. The sky glows red and purple, angry and crazy. This is the planet made Gothic by human intervention.

SEATTLE - THE SPACE NEEDLE

is buffeted by hundred-and-fifty-mile-an-hour winds. Plate glass shatters and explodes.

SAN FRANCISCO - THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

quakes before the raging wind. A giant tsunami surges toward the great suspension bridge. When it passes, cables have been wrenched, untwining, and collapse appears imminent.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

The city is a swamp, some buildings on dry ground, others below sea level. Far south and east of its northern cousins, the full thrust of the storm has not struck Los Angeles yet. Smoke from open fires trail skyward like ghosts and spread along the ceiling of the sky even as it bleeds rain everywhere.

A TEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL (MANDY)

runs, terrified, down a decayed city street. She clutches something in her dirt-caked hands, holds it dear to her breast.

The girl slides around a corner on her bottom, stares back.

GIRL'S POV - THE STREET

seems derelict. A flash of lightning reveals men scurrying like rats after her.

RESUME AND FOLLOW MANDY (A MONTAGE)

as she turns and scrambles away. Her pursuers follow her everywhere – around rusting cars, through an abandoned MTA bus, and across the rubble of a building that once dispensed happy meals and toys.

Mandy dives into a burrow beneath piled debris.

One of the men walks directly toward her.

Another scurries, chortling madly, around to her side.

A third man approaches from behind.

Mandy clutches her prize ever-more tightly and prays that they don't see her.

They do.

The leader lifts Mandy from the debris, her naked legs dangling from beneath her torn dress.

LEAD RAT

Lookit what I got!

Mandy struggles and screams. Lead Rat covers her mouth.

Limping Rat snatches the prize from her fingers: A dinner roll, hard as a rock and twice as filthy.

LIMPING RAT

So that's what you're hiding, little girl? Don't you want to share? You want to share, right?

Mandy writhes free enough to say:

MANDY

Take it! Take it! Just... leave me alone!

Chortling Rat arrives. His fingers pinch Mandy's leg.

CHORTLING RAT

This little girl's plump.

Lead Rat drops her to the ground, assesses her.

LEAD RAT

You got family, girl... with anything to trade?

CONTINUED:

Mandy understands immediately.

MANDY

Yes! Yes, my daddy's got canned goods.
And gasoline.

Lead Rat thinks about this. The dinner roll lying abandoned nearby suggests not.

CHORTLING RAT

She'd feed us for a week!

LIMPING RAT

(grinning, of Chortling Rat as
he assesses girl)

I dunno... You still on that diet?

Mandy screams and tries to break away. Lead Rat holds her in a vise grip.

Chortling Rat kneels beside the little girl.

CHORTLING RAT

(of leader)

I never took you for squeamish.

That settles it. Lead Rat produces a huge switchblade. It snaps out, steel catching the light.

Mandy screams.

An arrow slams through Lead Rat's neck. He doesn't move, not believing.

JOHN GARTH (35) STANDS ON A WALL (SCENE),

a hard man with hawk eyes now focused on killing. Even though he is a warrior, there is something humane about John Garth. He knows there is no glory to what he is doing. His rock-like exposed arms hold the bow's tension like the cables of a suspension bridge, and shake with the load. He releases.

Lead Rat faces death and drops.

Limping Rat is already scurrying away, weapon drawn, when Garth's second arrow catches him. He drops.

Chortling Rat, whining fearfully, scuttles around debris, hiding his silhouette. He pulls a nasty looking automatic and looks up to find a target when an arrow slams into him. He falls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Garth drops to the ground, walks to Mandy, who stands sucking air like the price is going up.

JOHN GARTH
Your mother's worried.

Mandy shakes her head crazily. *Yes, I know.*

Garth kneels beside her. Mandy bursts into his arms. He holds her like a father until her sobs diminish.

GARTH
You shouldn't go out by yourself.

Mandy buries her head in his chest, safe now.

MANDY
But I'm hungry, John.

GARTH
I know...

Garth releases her and steps past to harvest the arrow that took Lead Rat's life. He takes the switchblade as well.

Mandy scurries to where the dinner roll lies and retrieves it. She tries to bite into it. Hard as stone.

BESIDE LIMPING RAT'S CORPSE - GARTH

harvests the second arrow, using the switchblade to cut the arrow out.

Mandy staggers to Garth's side. She looks yearningly at Limping Rat. Clutching Garth's leg:

MANDY
It would be a waste to just leave them here.

GARTH
(understanding her meaning)
No.

MANDY
But I'm hungry.

GARTH
You stay here. I have to get my other arrow.

Garth moves to get the arrow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mandy waits nervously near Limping Rat's corpse. When Garth returns, he scoops her up and starts walking away.

Looking back from Garth's arms, Mandy's hungry eyes remain on the corpse.

EXT. SURVIVOR'S CAMP - NIGHT

It's a hovel bandaged with debris. Campfires burn with constant complaint, sizzling embers and hissing wood once shaped by hand. Mist clouds everything.

Men and women guard the ramparts, some with guns, some with bows like Garth's.

A GUARD
Someone's coming.

The men scramble to the walls.

GARTH'S VOICE
(a shout)
John Garth!

A moment later Garth enters the camp with Mandy carried on his hip.

Mandy's mother rushes to take her into her arms as Garth drops her.

MANDY'S MOM
Mandy!

MANDY
Look, Mom... I found some bread.

MANDY'S MOM
Where were you?! I've been worried to death!

GARTH
She's okay. I found her about six blocks south, near Pico.

MANDY'S MOM
Thank you.

GARTH
It's okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MANDY
(showing her prize)
Mom! Look, bread!

MANDY'S MOM
You put that away, now. One of the
hunters found meat. We have stew.

Garth turns at this information. *Meat?*

MANDY
Food?! Mommy, I'm so hungry...

MANDY'S MOM
Come on, sweetheart. I'll get you a bowl.

Garth questions this silently, then turns to head for his
digs.

EXT./INT. GARTH'S DIGS - NIGHT

An often-repaired tent. Garth throws the entry flap back,
enters to find his father, MATTHEW, Garth grown older and
weaker. He lies in a hammock, recovering from a broken leg.

MATTHEW
You're not dead, I see.

Storing his equipment:

GARTH
Not yet. How's the leg?

MATTHEW
I'm hobbling about. Anything happen out
there?

Garth turns to survey his father, pulls three cans of
Campbell's soup from his jacket.

GARTH
I killed six men... three this morning
over these...
(presents the cans)
... three tonight over the Parker girl.

MATTHEW
You found her alive?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH

Alive. She wouldn't have stayed that way long... I hear they've got stew. Did anybody bring you some?

Matthew snorts.

MATTHEW

Rodriguez says he killed a deer. Brought the meat in already butchered... There are no deer left in Los Angeles, not even in the canyons.

Garth understands. *Meat. Of the human variety.* After a moment:

GARTH

How 'bout some Campbell's soup? M'M-M'M-Good...

(reads labels)

Cream of mushroom... chicken noodle... and cream of tomato.

MATTHEW

(smacking his lips)

Chicken noodle. I'll stoke the fire.

GARTH

No, dad. I'll take care of it. You stay off that leg.

Garth pulls his survival knife and begins to open one of the cans.

DISSOLVE:

INT. GARTH'S DIGS - NIGHT

Garth and Matthew lie asleep after their repast, Matthew in his hammock, Garth on a bed made of old clothes.

EXT. SURVIVOR'S CAMP - NIGHT

Guards walk lonely beats behind walls of debris.

Suddenly a brilliant light appears in the night sky. A VOICE from a loudspeaker:

HELICOPTER VOICE

You people in the camp... We're looking for John Garth.

ANOTHER ANGLE - HELICOPTER

hovers a hundred yards from the ramparts, its single directional light bouncing from point to point on the walls.

HELICOPTER VOICE

Is he in there?

EXT. CAMP

Garth exits his digs. His father hobbles after.

A camp citizen climbs to the top of the walls.

CAMP CITIZEN

He's here... What do you want?

HELICOPTER VOICE

We're coming in.

The chopper sets down.

MOMENTS LATER - THREE MEN

enter the camp. Two wear LAPD uniforms, the third a long coat with a detective badge pinned to a lapel, LAPIERE. He's the sort of man who becomes a cop because of one perk - power. One of the uniforms carries a cardboard box marked *Peaches*.

The camp citizens give them a wide berth. Garth stands one row back.

LAPIERE

I'm Detective Lieutenant Oscar LaPiere of the LAPD.

THE CROWD

... he's no cop... no police anymore...
he's lying (etc.)

LAPIERE

Of course there are police left.
(smiling confidently)
We're just like you, trying to survive.
We help when we can.

GARTH

You must be pretty busy... elsewhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lapierre's steady grin belies the heat of his eyes directed at Garth.

LAPIERE
Where's John Garth?

GARTH
What do you want with him?

LAPIERE
I've brought him a gift. Are you John Garth?

GARTH
What gift? Who sent it?

LaPiere allows the question to dangle a moment, then steps aside and gestures to the cop holding the crate to set it down.

LAPIERE
Peaches... Name brand, not the store variety... packed in syrup.

The gasp of camp citizens suggests this might be gold.

GARTH
Who sent it?

LAPIERE
Anton Reich.

Garth kneels beside the cardboard box to check the glue seals. Not tampered with.

LAPIERE (CONT'D)
I take it you're John Garth?

GARTH
Who's Anton Reich? And what does he want with me?

Mandy steps through the crowd and kneels beside the box. She is in awe of it.

LAPIERE
He wants to hire you. He instructed me to tell you – this is a signing bonus.

GARTH
Signing bonus? Then it's not a gift?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAPIERE

Oh no. It's yours. No strings.

Garth considers that, then tears the box open and hands Mandy a can. She can't suppress her joy. Running to her mother:

MANDY

Mommy! Mommy! Look what I got!

LAPIERE

(continuing with restrained disapproval)

You can do with it what you will, of course... Mr. Reich just wants to take a meeting with you.

Garth removes four cans from the box and gives them to his father. Taking one can for himself, Garth shoves what remains of the box into the arms of the camp leader.

GARTH

Share this...
(to LaPiere)
Let's go.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CAMP - NIGHT

The helicopter looks shiny new as Garth, LaPiere and the cops trudge through debris-ridden terrain. Garth uses his survival knife to open the can of peaches.

GARTH

(of chopper)
I didn't think there were any of those left.

LAPIERE

You'd be surprised what's left... if you know the right people.

EXT./INT. THE HELICOPTER - NIGHT

The chopper flies through the rainy night.

Garth pushes the can lid back and drinks thirstily before lifting a peach slice out and swallowing it whole, like a bear with a fish just caught from a stream. LaPiere looks on with amusement. Garth sees his look, offers the can.

LAPIERE

No thank you. I've eaten.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Garth shrugs, digs out another fish.

EXT. UCLA MEDICAL CENTER LANDING PAD - NIGHT

The lights work, even if the sign has been damaged: UCL(A)
M(ed)ICAL CEN(t)ER. The chopper sets down.

Garth, Lapiere and the attending cops exit and make for the big hospital building as Garth tosses the empty can of peaches into an empty wire receptacle.

INT. UCLA MEDICAL CENTER - NIGHT

Garth, LaPiere and the uniformed cops make their way into the building, which obviously is no longer in use as a hospital. Even though it appears abandoned, the lights work.

Garth stops to look around. He hasn't seen electric lights in months.

GARTH

What's powering these lights?

LAPIERE

(moving him along)

Mr. Reich has his residence on the top floor.

INT. UCLA MEDICAL CENTER TOP FLOOR - NIGHT

An immense open bay. At one end are stacked platform after platform of canned goods, ammunition, oil, military weaponry in cases, liquor, medical supplies. At the opposite end, a mansion in miniature with unblemished furniture, Persian carpets, drapes over the windows, stands of famous artworks, paintings, sculpture, and a huge oak desk stolen, certainly, from a rich man's office.

Men in uniform stand guard beside the elevator door, one LAPD, the second MTA. One uniform is as good as another, apparently

The elevator opens. Garth and LaPiere exit, followed by the two cops.

ANOTHER ANGLE - ANTON REICH

is a man of formidable countenance. 50, he wears clothes that in better times might be considered obscenely expensive. He

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

is a leader, a manipulator, and a salesman. He approaches Garth as if welcoming an important client, extending a hand.

REICH

Major Garth, welcome. Anton Reich.

Garth surveys him briefly, the proffered hand, then turns his gaze to the cops.

REICH (CONT'D)

Don't worry. They're not really police.
They work for me now.

Garth's gaze continues to the flats of canned goods and other supplies.

REICH (CONT'D)

Are you hungry, Major?

GARTH

Oh no, I just finished dinner. Steak and lobster, a good chardonnay, and chocolate mousse for dessert.

REICH

(amused)

Better than my table, I'm afraid. But I can have my cook whip up something... Major?

GARTH

I'm not a major.

REICH

No, of course not. Not anymore. Who of us have titles these days?... Sergeant?

LAPIERE

It's Lieutenant, Mr. Reich.

REICH

Mr. Garth and I will have dinner in the residence. See to it.

LAPIERE

Yes, sir.

Lapiere turns and moves for the elevator.

REICH

(to cops)

You two may leave as well.

The two cops follow LaPiere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Reich takes Garth by the arm, and releases him on Garth's look.

REICH (CONT'D)

While we're waiting for dinner, can I get you anything else?

GARTH

Well, Adolph... you can tell me what you want so I can blow this bunker.

REICH

Adolph... not such a bad fellow after all, now was he?... I should think simple logic would answer your question. You have nothing I could want – except skill. Obviously, I want to hire you.

GARTH

I'm not for hire.

REICH

Yes, I'm certain that's so. Do you see that flat of canned goods back there?

Garth looks. A mountain eight feet by eight feet. A fortune.

REICH (CONT'D)

I had it brought up here just so you could see it. I usually leave food down in the pantry... In any case, there are sixty cases of beef stew, sixty of fruit cocktail, sixty cases of peaches – my favorite, I usually have peaches for dessert – sixty cases of deviled ham, sixty cases of hash, sixty cases of tuna, sixty cases of... well, I can give you a manifest.

Garth takes in the vast fortune. He fails to hide his astonishment.

REICH (CONT'D)

Are you still not for hire, Major Garth?

Garth's silence is answer enough.

REICH (CONT'D)

I thought so...

GARTH

Who do you want me to kill?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REICH

Kill? *Kill?! Killing is easy, Major. What I want you to do is much harder. Care for a brandy?*

Reich opens a fresh bottle of Courvoisier, almost fills two snifters, turns to hand one to Garth.

GARTH

stands before one of a dozen paintings, many recognizable, but not this. It's a map of the earth with a vast storm, not unlike the Red Spot of Jupiter, swirling across the world.

Reich presents Garth with a brandy.

REICH

You've found my Nilsson. It's magnificent, isn't it?

Garth takes the brandy, sniffs, and is snatched into enthralled memories.

REICH (CONT'D)

It's called 'The Blue Spot.' It was painted right after they discovered the storm that circles the surface of the earth, like 'The Red Spot' circles Jupiter, returning again and again, wreaking havoc... Nilsson killed himself right after he completed it.

GARTH

Suicide doesn't exactly distinguish him, does it?

REICH

No, not at all. So many people have killed themselves. Still, it's a magnificent piece. Most of these pieces you see here I took into protective custody from the Getty.

GARTH

I thought I recognized some of them.

REICH

Which is why I need you, Major.

GARTH

I told you. I'm not a major anymore.

REICH

yanks a tarp from a table miniature of an estate.

REICH
Come see this.

Garth reluctantly joins him.

REICH (CONT'D)
Do you recognize it?

GARTH
The Vincent estate.

REICH
Yes. It's located across the four-oh-five
from the Getty, in the Sepulveda Pass.
It's nearly as big, too. Are you familiar
with Vincent?

GARTH
Just that he's rich.

REICH
Was rich. No one's seen him in years.
He's probably dead. Still, his estate
remains operative... You may have
wondered how it is that we have electric
lights here, elevators that work and so
on, when the rest of the city has been
reduced to the stone age. It's because
UCLA has a nuke in the basement. It was
installed for educational purposes, but
it's large enough to supply the entire
facility with power...

Reich searches Garth's eyes for understanding. Finally:

REICH (CONT'D)
Vincent installed a duplicate in his
estate. It's fully automated, powering a
specially designed security system.
Vincent intended to convert his estate
into a museum on his death, but the world
fell apart first. I want you to break in,
Major... break in and shut down Vincent's
nuke, so I can take all of Vincent's art
into protective custody.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH
(cynical grin)
Protective custody?

REICH
Oh hell, I could call it stealing, but
the truth is, it'll only be in my hands
until I die, and then the next fellow
will come along and protect it.

GARTH
You could say the same thing about
gold...
(eyes drifting toward the
palets of food)
... while other valuables are consumable.

REICH
(smiling)
Yes, that's true... So, what do you say?

The shadows across Garth's eyes hide deep thoughts.

LATER - GARTH AND REICH SIT AT TABLE

enjoying a sumptuous meal. Candlesticks, wine, dishes filled
with ample portions.

Nearby, the table miniature.

REICH
... thing is, the roof is protected by
surface-to-air missiles, SAMs. Anything
that comes within a thousand yards of the
place is blown up.

GARTH
You tried it?

REICH
Hm, yes.

GARTH
Why not assault it from the side?

REICH
The grounds are protected by miniature
battle units - tanks, in reality,
although they were manufactured to look
like dogs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH

With just the equipment you have over there...

(gestures crates across room)

... you could take out something like that.

REICH

The entrances are made of six inch armor plate, but we could get past that, too. It was proven during the middle ages that any wall may be breached. No, the problem is, I don't want any of Vincent's collection damaged.

GARTH

Go in a window, then.

REICH

You make it sound so easy. I hope that it is. A window, yes. The real problem is not getting in, but staying alive once you're there...

(on Garth's look)

I have much of Vincent's security plans. Some, anyway. He employed a new kind of controller, a sentient computer system.

GARTH

The computer reasons? Like a human being?

REICH

Here. Let me show you.

Reich removes a notebook computer from a briefcase beside the table, opens it. A picture of DIANA LOGAN, 28, appears on the screen. Diana is beautiful, yes, but behind her eyes resides an incisive mind and a depth of feeling unusual in one so young.

REICH (CONT'D)

Twenty years ago this woman, Diana Logan, was dying of cancer. Vincent convinced her to transfer her consciousness into his one-of-a-kind mainframe, which he named EnCrypt. She lives there still, inside Vincent's mansion... a kind of apparition within his computer.

Garth studies the face. It reminds him that once flowers bloomed, that there was hope in the world, that people were young and beautiful. He closes the notebook lid.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH

She controls all of the security systems?

REICH

Yes. As well as maintenance and repair. As I said, the Vincent mansion is fully automated.

GARTH

Is she programmed to kill?

REICH

Oh yes. If necessary.

GARTH

How do I defeat her... *the* system, I mean?

REICH

You defeat each subsystem separately. But in order to defeat the entire system, you must shut down the reactor. It's located in the basement, along with the supercomputer that controls everything. Obviously, this area presents the greatest challenge.

GARTH

Obviously.

REICH

There is one additional thing I haven't mentioned yet... research that Vincent was doing... the last copy of which may be in the computer. I want you to download it before shutting the system off.

GARTH

What kind of research?

Reich considers not telling him. He delays, sipping wine, cutting another bite of meat. Then:

REICH

Vincent was researching weather control... a way to stop the storms — THE STORM — and return the earth to its original weather pattern.

Garth laughs. Redemption? It seems absurd.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH

You want me to save the world?

Reich smiles too.

REICH

Yes. Could you please?... It's probably nothing. Vincent is missing and in all likelihood dead, not an indicator for success, is it? Still, even if his research is partially completed...

GARTH

stands and walks to the window. The city lights are fires consuming furniture and dreams. Reich joins him.

GARTH

The world's dying while you play potentate inside these walls. Hell, it's already dead. What you see out there is nothing more than the death rattle.

REICH

No. What you see out there is a thinning of the herd. From ten billion people to maybe a million... a necessary event... and we who are to survive will need a return to the old weather cycle... and art, too, if we are to remain civilized. Download the data if you can... but shut down that nuke.

The SOUND of a firefight some distance away.

REICH (CONT'D)

My competitor from the South Bay. She pushes north with an army twice the size of mine. She's flush with booty from that shopping center down there, the biggest one in the world. It's made her strong... That's why I'm pulling out, Major, relocating to the Central Coast after the storm passes. I want the Vincent estate before I leave. And I plan to leave the moment the storm clears. That's how much time you'll have, two, maybe three days. After that I blow my way in and take whatever's not destroyed.

FOLLOW GARTH AND REICH

as they walk past the palets of food and supplies.

REICH

I want you to have a good night's
sleep... be at your best before you go
in... Is there anything I can get you?
Companionship, maybe?

Garth stops before the eight-by-eight-foot cube of food.

GARTH

I do nothing... until this is delivered
to my camp.

REICH

(laughs)
Half. The rest when you come out.

Garth gestures assent.

REICH (CONT'D)

(calling)
Sergeant LaPiere.

The elevator door opens revealing LaPiere and two former LAPD
cops.

REICH (CONT'D)

Show the Major to his room... then
arrange to have half of this food
delivered to his camp. Tonight.

INT. GARTH'S ROOM - NIGHT

The room is splendidly attired, subtly illuminated. LaPiere
allows Garth in, then closes the door behind him.

Garth begins to remove his clothes.

Movement in the corner of the room. A WOMAN steps out of the
shadows. She is lovely. Her greek gown insinuates that she
possesses nothing else, just this garment. Clearly, this
situation is new to her and she's afraid.

WOMAN

I'm... yours, if you want me.

Garth doesn't know what to say.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The woman releases the gown and it slips away. The strain of this, the humiliation, tugs on her expression. She steps up to Garth, waiting for him to touch her. She will not cry. No. But the struggle makes the muscles of her face dance with restrained emotion.

Garth pulls the bedspread from the bed and wraps her in it. She clutches the garment about herself, thankful. Finally her brow finds his chest. She sobs. Garth's arms almost close about her, but he hesitates. After a moment:

GARTH
Who were you?

SLAVE
I was... a CPA.

She looks up. Her intelligent eyes search his.

SLAVE (CONT'D)
Who were you?

The question has many answers. Finally:

GARTH
A civilized man.

THE NEXT MORNING

finds the woman asleep beneath the covers, and Garth waking above them. He rises from the bed, begins to dress.

THE DOORWAY - LAPIERE

stands just inside, grinning smugly.

LAPIERE
Forget that stuff. We've got new clothes for you. You can even shower, if you want.

IN THE SHOWER - GARTH

stands beneath the spray of hot water. The feel of it reminds him of clean yesterdays.

LOCKER ROOM - GARTH

exits the shower to find a stack of clothes on a bench, and new boots beneath it. He dresses.

RESIDENCE - GARTH AND REICH

observe his notebook computer screen.

REICH

Have you faced automated defense systems before, Major?

GARTH

Many times.

REICH

Then you know that Vincent Industries supplied much of the world's automated security and combat systems. He made everything from sentry dogs, like these...

INSERT - SCREEN (AND INTERCUT AS NECESSARY)

where the SENTRY DOG lopes onto the screen, then TRANSMORPHS into an animated blueprint. The animal looks like a large bulldog.

RESUME GARTH AND REICH

looking at the screen.

REICH

(continuous)

... to more commercial combat platforms. This particular model can be configured as a strictly urban, house protection system, or it can carry weapons. In the case of Vincent's mansion, the dogs are fully armed. We tested the perimeter to find out.

GARTH

(disdainful)

Who went in? LaPiere?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REICH

No. Unfortunately our man was killed. You knew Captain Leon Vega of the Army Rangers?

The name impacts.

GARTH

I trained him...

REICH

Yes. He mentioned you before he died... Inside the Vincent mansion there are other platforms, several that were on the market, and possibly a number that Vincent was developing but had not yet finalized. Almost certainly you'll find the Ghost.

THE GHOST comes up on the screen. It indeed looks like a ghost, a floating apparition, but it has teeth – weapon barrels, which are shown when the device TRANSMORPHS into an animated blueprint.

REICH (CONT'D)

It fires a mini-pulse bolt that can both stun and kill, depending on the programming. Other weapon configurations are possible. Its design was intended to scare off intruders first, so there is a mercy factor built in.

GARTH

Mercy factor...

REICH

There are other weapons platform possibilities. We've listed all that we know about Vincent Industries equipment in this notebook computer. Take it with you. Familiarize yourself with Vincent's defense mechanisms. My advice, though, is to expect the unexpected.

Garth closes the notebook, considering what he has got himself into.

ARMORY - GARTH

marvels at the array of weapons and combat paraphernalia organized on shelves and attached to walls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Reich and LaPiere watch from nearby as the ARMORER brings what appears to be a metal flak jacket to Garth and fits it to him.

ARMORER

Have you worn force-field body armor before, Major?

GARTH

No.

ARMORER

I'm not surprised. It was just introduced during the last days of the Pentagon... Now, it's battery operated. This read-out...

He places a WATCH-LIKE DEVICE on Garth's wrist.

ARMORER (CONT'D)

... here tells you your count. Generally speaking, the armor is good for approximately a hundred rounds of five-point-five-six, or seventy-five rounds of seven-point-six-two. Grenades and pulse weapons take a toll of anywhere from ten to a hundred points, depending on the proximity of impact. You follow?

GARTH

I follow.

ARMORER

Good. Now this is a battery pack.

The armorer straps a BATTERY BELT to Garth's waist.

ARMORER (CONT'D)

It holds twenty additional batteries. They aren't interconnected for reasons of shorting out or chain reaction. You understand? This armor is electrically operated.

GARTH

I get the concept.

ARMORER

You must change the batteries between firefights, or whenever a battery becomes depleted. Some batteries may provide protection past the hundred mark, but don't count on it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Armorer takes an M-16 off a table and points it at Garth.

ARMORER (CONT'D)
(to Reich and LaPiere)
Gentlemen, you may wish to stand back.
Glancing rounds will deflect.

Reich and LaPiere retreat five paces.

Garth can't believe he's about to be shot at. He steps forward...

The Armorer BEGINS FIRING. The ROUNDS HIT GARTH repeatedly until the magazine empties. EACH ROUND HITTING THE BODY ARMOR CAUSES IT TO 'FLASH' AS IT REPELS THE FIREPOWER.

The Armorer switches magazines as Garth, angered and surprised, attempts to march forward again and take the gun from the Armorer's hands. Garth is again THROWN BACK BY SUCCESSIVE ROUNDS, and then to the floor.

The Armorer reloads, begins firing again as Garth tries to get up, finally succeeds, assaults forward toward the Armorer as he reloads yet another magazine, and begins firing again, throwing Garth back. Garth topples behind the table.

The Armorer switches to an AK-47.

ARMORER (CONT'D)
Switching to a larger round...

These heavier rounds throw Garth back to the wall. MOST ROUNDS HIT THE ARMOR, FLATTEN AND SLIDE TO THE FLOOR, WHILE GLANCING BLOWS DEFLECT LEFT AND RIGHT.

ARMORER (CONT'D)
(shouting over din)
It's advisable that you seek cover when being fired upon. While armor-deflected rounds can't penetrate, the concussive force of the round...
(changes magazine, starts firing)
... can disorient and in some cases render the recipient unconscious. I am avoiding the Major's head area for demonstration purposes. An enemy won't be so lenient.

The Armorer finishes his last magazine and puts the AK-47 down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Garth rises, shaken, and marches for the Armorer, who raises a hand, signalling 'Stop.'

ARMORER (CONT'D)
(big smile)
Just kidding.

Garth stops, trying to control his anger.

GARTH
You son-of-a-bitch, you didn't warn me!

ARMORER
Major, you have just taken eighty direct hits. Under normal circumstances, one would have been enough to kill you. How do you feel?

Garth grabs the smaller man and nearly lifts him off his feet. After a moment:

GARTH
I feel... SWELL.

Garth drops the Armorer and surges past as Reich and LaPiere share a look of amusement.

INSERT - THE RECHARGER PACK

in the Armorer's hands is tugged open, revealing slots that accept body armor batteries, and dials for adjusting the equipment.

INT. THE ARMORY - THE ARMORER (SCENE)

twists the pack for Garth to see.

ARMORER
The pack has its own armor. Don't let it take direct hits if you want to continue supplying power to *your* body armor. The unit accommodates ten batteries at a time, and can recharge them from cold to hot in about an hour. You'll go in with ten batteries charged in here, plus the twenty on your belt. Got it?

This time Garth sneers at him and yanks the pack out of his hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH

How many recharges?

ARMORER

Thirty. Maybe less. Battery technology is freaky... but you can connect to one-ten and recharge the batteries directly from house current, presuming there is house current.

AT THE SELECTION TABLE - GARTH

stands before a number of rifles and pistols arrayed on the table. The Armorer, Reich and LaPiere watch from five paces away.

ARMORER

What do you want?

GARTH

What do you got?

ARMORER

Everything.

GARTH

Then what do you recommend?

ARMORER

Pulse rifle.

He picks up the pulse rifle and throws it to Garth.

ARMORER (CONT'D)

(continuing)

Has the punch of a fifty with almost no recoil. Uses the same batteries as the armor, fifty rounds of decreasing intensity. Has a tendency to start fires. That could be problematical...

REICH

Choose another gun.

Garth looks at him a moment, then:

GARTH

I'll take it. What else?

ARMORER

I recommend an automatic pistol. Two, if you don't mind the weight. This Smith &
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARMORER (cont'd)

Wesson is pretty slick. It holds fifty rounds of five-point-five-six and spits them out at a rate of five hundred rounds a minute.

GARTH

I'll take two. What else?

ARMORER

Grenade launcher -

REICH

Out of the question.

GARTH

What else?

ARMORER

I've got knives... survival... serrated edge... stiletto...

GARTH

The stiletto and the survival knife. What else?

ARMORER

I've got some cowboy junk... combat bow...

GARTH

Too bulky.

ARMORER

(continuous)

... miniature crossbow.

GARTH

Let me see it.

The Armorer removes a metal pen from his shirt pocket, presses a button. The shaft elongates to four times its original length, bow arms pop out at one end, a handle at the other. He places it in Garth's hand.

ARMORER

Carries five shafts inside the tube. No, wait, you twist the eraser... there.

Garth twists the eraser and five tiny metal arrows slide into his palm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARMORER (CONT'D)

You preload the weapon, collapse it, and keep it in your shirt pocket, or clip it anywhere...

Garth mounts a metal arrow in the bow... looks up with an admiring smile... and TURNS AND AIMS SO FAST IT IS ONE CLEAN MOTION. THE ARROW SHOOTS OUT... and PINS THE ARMORER'S SHIRT TO THE WALL. An inch left, neck, not shirt.

Garth walks to the Armorer, who is shaking with fear, and pulls the arrow out with his fingers.

GARTH

Just kidding. How do you feel? Do you feel swell?

(on Armorer's emphatic gesture)

I thought you would.

AUTOMATIC DEFENSE UNIT

on a display table. It is a coffin-shaped box. The Armorer activates a control panel that pops up, switches it on. An automated machine gun rises, its microservos 'whirring' as it revolves left, then right.

THE ARMORER, GARTH, REICH, LAPIERE

observe the weapon. The Armorer is still shaken from Garth's 'joke.'

ARMORER

This is a fully automated night defense mechanism. Turn it on and it will shoot anything moving beyond a four foot perimeter. So you can catch some shut-eye.

LAPIERE

(snide grin)

Hope you don't toss in your sleep.

Garth depresses the 'off' button and the machine gun recedes inside its box with a SNAP!

EXT./INT. FLYING HELICOPTER - DAY

Garth, Reich and LaPiere on the passenger bench. Reich hands Garth a hand radio.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REICH

(above din of helicopter)

Take this. Radio signals are jammed inside the mansion, but you can use it once the power's down... Work your way to the central atrium, then downstairs to the computer, shut off the nuke. Then work your way to the roof and call us. We'll come in. Simple.

Garth grins cynically at the word 'simple.'

Beyond the chopper windows, the Los Angeles basin stretches like a vast archaeological dig, fires rising like pillars to support the smoky sky.

EXT. VINCENT MANSION MOUNTAINTOP - DAY

The chopper maneuvers carefully to avoid the top of the mansion. The structure is huge, a competitor of the Getty itself, three stories high and god knows how many stories below ground, its style inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's Hollyhock House.

The helicopter lands in the field outside the mansion grounds. Garth drops out with his equipment. The chopper rises and speeds away.

FOLLOW GARTH

as he trudges to the mansion's outer walls. They are low, knee-high so as not to block the view of the mansion. Garth stands before them for moments with nothing happening. He picks up a stone and tosses it over the wall.

SENTRY DOGS

appear from either side of the structure and run full-tilt toward Garth. They are mechanized animals that mimic the real thing.

Garth watches them approach, doesn't move, weapons still holstered or strung.

The dogs stop at the wall.

GARTH

Nice doggy... I'm outside the wall. See?

The dogs bark menacingly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Garth removes one of the Smith & Wesson pistols from his belt, holds it casually to his side.

The barking increases.

Garth SHOOTS. ROUNDS SPIT OUT at a rate of five hundred a minute. THE FIRST DOG IMPLODES. The second shoulders to the wall itself, increases its barking.

GARTH (CONT'D)

Can't attack anything outside the perimeter, can you? Ah, the wonderful world of insurance companies.

Garth replaces the magazine. Aims it at the remaining dog. Considers.

GARTH (CONT'D)

Ciao, Fido.

Fires. The dog staggers back beneath the CONCUSSIVE FORCE OF THE STREAM OF BULLETS, then EXPLODES.

Everything is startlingly quiet. Garth replaces the magazine, reholsters the gun, stares out at the grounds.

GARTH'S POV - THE VINCENT MANSION GROUNDS

invites a stroll... a picnic... an afternoon in Elysium.

RESUME GARTH

as he thinks about this.

Garth leaps the fence and enters the grounds.

No dogs. No response. Nothing.

Somehow, Garth was expecting more. He shrugs, moves for the house.

Halfway across the grounds Garth freezes.

THE HOUSE - THE SHUTTERS

slam down one by one— *pomb! pomb! pomb!* — seemingly appearing in place, to cover the windows with reinforced steel plate.

RESUME GARTH

as he realizes his progression across the grounds triggered this defense.

An instant later two more dogs spring from either side of the building and run toward him.

Garth drops to one knee, pulls the pulse rifle off his shoulder, brings it up to fire...

A BULLET HITS DEAD CENTER and knocks Garth off his feet. THE BODY ARMOR FLASHES. A second round hits. A third.

THE DOGS

have Garth bracketed, firing from automatic rifles that have risen from slots located in their backs.

RESUME GARTH

as he stands and runs for the main entrance, the dogs following.

Garth slides into a prone position at the main entrance as THE ROUNDS CONTINUE TO IMPACT.

INSERT - GARTH'S WRIST COUNTER

shows the declining effectiveness of his body armor. 91... 84... 80... 77... 69... (*Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding!*)

RESUME GARTH

as he brings the pulse rifle up, turns to face the incoming rounds, BODY BOUNCING WITH THEIR IMPACT, and fires.

The first dog disappears in a flash.

Garth turns, IMPACTS STILL MAKING HIS BODY QUAKE, and fires.

The second dog EXPLODES WITH A WHELP.

Garth drops the pulse rifle and stands angrily.

GARTH
(hurting)
Damn! Damn it! Body armor hell!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He ejects the battery from the armor, slams a fresh battery into the slot. Then he drops his packs and shakes and twists his limbs to relieve the sting.

A MOMENT LATER - GARTH

stands admiring the main entrance. It is a two-story bronze double-door, with carved Roman figures presenting a battle tableau.

Garth steps back onto the lawn, ten paces away, looks left, then right.

GARTH'S POV - THE WINDOWS

steel plate have none of the elegance of this door, but are formidable nonetheless.

GARTH

paces back to the huge door, removes an explosive charge from one of the packs, adheres it to the lock and steps away.

A small EXPLOSION.

The door swings open.

INT. ENTRANCE OF VINCENT MANSION - DAY

Garth carries his equipment into the room.

The door swings shut behind him.

Garth drops his packs, tests the door with a shove. Locked.

GARTH

Thought that was too easy.

Garth turns to survey the room.

GARTH'S POV - THE ENTRANCE ROOM

is a vast hall that recedes into the shadows. The lights are not on. Doors line the walls to either side, each two-stories tall and each a different shade of green or red.

A statue of the god Jupiter, four times human size, commands the near space.

GARTH

hefts his packs and marches to Jupiter, drops them at the god's feet. He turns to the shadows.

GARTH
(calling out)
Take a potshot at me here, Jupiter is
gonna get a hotfoot!

Nothing. No response.

GARTH (CONT'D)
(softly)
You can come out now, Diana. I know
you're here.

Silence.

Garth shrugs, turns to unload his packs.

A ROBOT

rolls past Garth, who pivots and pulls one of his pistols.

The robot is a jumble of appendages tipped with various devices. It proceeds to the door, which opens to receive it. A welding device begins to make repairs on the main lock.

GARTH

watches for a moment... returns the gun to its holster...
removes a tin of food, pulls out a wafer and takes a bite...
opens the notebook computer.

THE COMPUTER SCREEN

is cards being shuffled. The final card: The welder robot.

GARTH (SCENE)

looks up from the screen at the still welding robot.

GARTH
(reading)
E-sixty-five-thirty... Repairbot...
Secondary weapons platform... No shields,
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH (cont'd)
no body armor... Aggression quotient –
zip.

The robot finishes the repairs. The door closes. The robot rolls past Garth again. Garth continues to eat the wafer and doesn't bother to draw a weapon.

GARTH (CONT'D)
Thanks for the prompt service. See you
soon.

The robot lumbers into the shadows down the vast hall.

A FLASHLIGHT BEAM

searches the high reaches of the ceiling. It finds a television camera eye.

GARTH

keeps the flashlight aimed with one hand, brings a S&W pistol up, aims, fires.

GARTH
A little to the left...
(fires again)
... once more, with feeling...

THE TELEVISION EYE

high above SHATTERS WITH THE BULLET IMPACT.

GARTH

returns the pistol to its holster.

GARTH
Let's see you repair that.

He moves down the hall, shining the flashlight high looking for more monitoring stations. He finds one just as the SOUND of a miniature helicopter whisks past overhead.

Garth pivots and aims the light.

A MINIATURE HELICOPTER

carrying a replacement for the destroyed minicam beneath it, moves for the destruction site in the corner of the ceiling.

GARTH

scrambles back.

GARTH

Shit. Spoke too soon.

Aiming the light with one hand, the gun with the other, he follows the movement of the helicopter near the ceiling.

THE HELICOPTER

flips on its back, bringing the repair module into position for placement.

Garth's rounds begin to impact all around it... then a direct hit. EXPLOSION.

(SCENE) GARTH

lowers the weapon and the light. He turns, quickly surveys the dark ceiling down the hall, then moves.

Garth returns to the second camera site... aims... fires... moves on.

A third site, opposite wall. The same.

A fourth site, same wall. He aims both light and weapon.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT - GARTH FAR BELOW

as four laser beams shoot out from various locations and hit him squarely.

GARTH

is thrown ten feet back and to the ground.

STEAM RISES FROM HIS BODY ARMOR.

Garth's closed eyes twitch.

Slowly he comes to.

He glances at his body armor wrist read-out.

WRIST READ-OUT

Garth's body armor wrist read-out: 09.

GARTH

realizes that another blow like that will penetrate his body armor and kill him.

Should he move?

Carefully, Garth moves one arm back several inches, then the other. A leg rises, seeks footing. He shoves himself a foot farther away from the weapons in the walls and ceiling.

Again. Again. Slowly. Trying not to draw fire. Again.

Garth freezes.

DIANA LOGAN

stands in Garth's path looking down at him. She is not quite real. She is not quite a ghost, either. She wears an outfit – military tunic and slacks – that, while very feminine, is also all business.

DIANA

You are an intruder.

Garth can't quite believe he's not alone. He raises a leg, moves his shoulders, and shoves himself another foot away from the weapons... and into Diana, passing through her. He looks for her source.

GARTH'S POV - THE IMAGE PROJECTOR

is a shoebox with wheels, stopped nearby. A beam of light shoots out, PROJECTING Diana.

GARTH

pushes himself along the floor again. Diana's feet seem to grow out of his stomach.

GARTH

Go away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANA

I have called the police and they are en route... but you haven't caused any real damage yet. Go now and we'll forget this illegal intrusion.

Garth shoves himself along the floor again. He and Diana seem to share feet.

GARTH

There are no police.

DIANA

Of course there are police.

GARTH

Talk to them lately?

This shuts her up.

Garth flips over and begins to crawl.

DIANA

You can get up. You're out of range.

GARTH

Yeah. Like I'm going to believe you.

Diana BLINKS OUT OF EXISTENCE.

The shoebox whisks away, engine WHINING.

Garth continues to crawl... rises to his feet... runs.

AT JUPITER - GARTH

leaps behind the statue for cover. Breathing hard, takes stock of himself. Replaces the body armor battery. (*Chink-hum!*)

BODY ARMOR READ-OUT

goes from *09* to *100*.

GARTH

Pulls a nightscope from his pack, clicks it into place on top of the pulse rifle, brings it to eye level, takes a look.

GARTH'S POV - NIGHTSCOPE - THE HALL

is no longer in darkness. It glows orange.

The IMAGE ZOOMS: Closest sensor in the ceiling.

DIANA'S VOICE

The police have turned up Vincent Drive.
There's still time to get away.

(SCENE) - GARTH

looks up from the scope. Diana stands near him, projected by the shoebox.

DIANA

I don't want you to get into trouble...

Garth swings the rifle around, lazily aims it at the shoebox.

DIANA (CONT'D)

I know a way you can escape. If you'll
just trust-

Garth fires. The shoebox EXPLODES, its parts spinning away.

Diana DISAPPEARS.

Garth brings up the rifle scope.

GARTH'S POV - NIGHTSCOPE - THE HALL

painted orange. The flash of the first round bleeds out vision for a second. When it returns, Garth has moved the sight to the next sensor, and fires.

GARTH

takes out the final three sensors.

Digs out a pair of nightgoggles.

GARTH

Hate these goddamn things.

Pulls them on. Stands.

GARTH'S POV - NIGHTGOGGLES - THE HALL

is bathed in a slightly different color.

GARTH

moves down the hall along one wall, looking up, pistol drawn.

He passes where he was knocked unconscious by the laser beams.

GARTH'S POV - NIGHTGOGGLES - THE CEILING

Laser weapons hang by wiring, destroyed.

GARTH

pulls off the nightgoggles, hangs them by the strap to the unused pistol on his belt, wipes sweat away from his brow.

He moves back toward his camp at Jupiter's feet.

JUPITER - GARTH

drops the goggles back into the pack, sits on the pedestal. Taking a swig of water from his canteen:

GARTH

So, Jupiter, you're a god. What are you going to do next?

(god's voice)

I'm going to Disneyland!

Garth sees the control panel door imbedded in the pedestal.

GARTH'S FINGER

taps the panel open. A switch. He presses it.

THIRTY, EIGHT-YEAR-OLD KIDS

materialize at Jupiter's feet, several occupying the same space as Garth.

Garth stands, walks around the 3-D projection.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A BEAM OF LIGHT from behind Jupiter's head is the source for the PROJECTION, unlike the earlier Diana, the PLAYBACK of a recording.

Diana greets the children. She wears a tunic similar to the previous one, slacks, hair tied back, business yes, but womanly, too.

DIANA

Hello, boys and girls... My name is Diana Logan.

An unseen teacher prompts:

TEACHER'S VOICE

Kids – you know what to say.

THE CHILDREN

Hello, Ms. Logan!

DIANA

I'm the Chief of Security of this wonderful place... and I'm going to be your guide today. Can any of you tell me who Mr. Vincent is?

THE CHILDREN

Me! Me!... I know!... I raised my hand first!

Diana picks a shy little girl who has raised her hand.

Garth moves through the PROJECTIONS as if they're ghosts, or he is.

DIANA

Do you know?

LITTLE GIRL

Theodore Vincent is the richest man in the world.

DIANA

Yes, some people say that... It may even be true... But the Mr. Vincent I know loves art more than anything else in the world. He built this residence so that someday it can be converted into a museum.

LITTLE BOY

Just like the Getty!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Garth stops finally before Diana and studies her. This PROJECTION is obviously a recording, and unaware of his presence.

DIANA

(laughs)

I'm not sure he would appreciate that...
but you're right... someday this
magnificent building will be like the
Getty, a museum for everyone to visit.
Today you're very lucky children, because
I'm going to show you what most kids
don't get a chance to see – the Vincent
treasures.

The children chortle their anticipation. The PROJECTION GOES DARK.

Leaving Garth standing in shadows.

GARTH

So that's what you were like... in life.

No one answers.

Garth shrugs off the mood, moves.

NOTEBOOK COMPUTER SCREEN - THE MANSION FLOORPLAN

The doors to either side of this hall lead to galleries, and beyond, another hall.

GARTH

looks up.

GARTH

Eenie-meenie-minie-moe...

AT BRONZE DOUBLE DOORS - GARTH

drops his pack and rifle, removes an explosive and places the charge against the door, retreats ten feet.

BOOM!

Garth opens the doors to the new gallery.

THE GALLERY

is half as long as the hall. Life-size statues line the corridor at ten-foot intervals.

Garth stands at the threshold, pack, rifle, ready.

Nothing moves in the darkness.

Something in Garth's hands: The remains of the shoebox device.

Garth tosses the twisted metal far into the gallery.

MIDDLE OF GALLERY - A SEALED BEAM

is broken by the rolling shoebox.

DIANA AND HER THIRTY KIDS MATERIALIZE in the darkness.

DIANA

This gallery is called 'The Greek Room' because the antiques displayed here originated in classical times. Does anyone know what 'classical' means?

CHILDREN

I do! I do!... No, me! Me!

GARTH

watches the ghost show thirty yards distant.

GARTH

(sotto)

'Classic' means 50s rock'n'roll.

(begins singing:)

One-two-three o'clock, four o'clock
rock... five-six-seven o'clock, eight
o'clock rock...

(etc.)

Pulls the nightgoggles down over his eyes. Leans in to the farthest line of the threshold, looks up.

DIANA'S VOICE

... yes. 'Classical' means 'pre-Christian,' or before the rise of Christianity.

GARTH'S POV - NIGHTGOGGLES - THE CEILING

Same TV sensors as before. Same laser weaponry.

DIANA'S VOICE

In this room, there are statues and other antiquities that were created by the Greek civilization...

GARTH

removes the goggles. Brings the rifle with nightscope up.
FIRES.

FAR CEILING - CAMERA AND WEAPON

EXPLODE in a hail of sparks.

GARTH

steps back quickly as THREE LASER BEAMS STRIKE the inside perimeter of the threshold.

DIANA'S VOICE

... Agamemnon, whose wife Helen was stolen by Paris, son of Priam, King of Troy, and so started the Trojan War... This piece was fished out of the Bay of Naples in 1887 and is believed to date from the early second century B.C. ... Who knows what 'B.C.' means?
(etc.)

Realizing that the ceiling weapons aren't designed to fire outside the gallery, Garth steps forward to the threshold, brings the rifle to his shoulder and FIRES THREE REPETITIONS.

GARTH

(sotto - as he fires)
B.C?... Before Cher?... Before Cher there was Sonny.

INTERCUT - FAR CEILING - THREE LASER DEVICES

EXPLODE in sequence.

GARTH

lowers the rifle.

DIANA'S VOICE
... that's right, 'Before Christ.'

GARTH
(sotto)
No! Wait! I didn't say, 'Final answer.'

DIANA'S VOICE
Although in recent years some people have begun using the term, 'Before Common Era' or B.C.E. in deference to other cultures or other religious beliefs.
(etc.)

This leaves the two camera/laser rifles located in the ceiling directly above the threshold.

Garth dares to lean out, look up.

A LASER BEAM STRIKES, barely missing his head as he snaps back.

Garth pulls the nightgoggles back over his eyes. Steeling himself, Garth leaps into the gallery.

GALLERY - GARTH

leaps inside, rolling toward the nearest statue as LASER BEAMS TRACE HIS PATH.

Garth pulls himself behind the silhouette of the statue as THE BEAMS CEASE.

DIANA'S VOICE
... believed to be a rendition of Paris, who was so captivated by the beauty of Helen that he absconded with her...

Garth counts silently, then rolls out with a PISTOL AND FIRES into one corner, then the other.

The second round misses.

LASER FIRE STRIKES his body armor.

THE WRIST READ-OUT DROPS FROM 100 TO 61.

Garth drops to the floor and FIRES again.

The laser GOES DARK MID-FIRE.

DIANA

... Hector, the greatest hero of Troy,
who fought Achilles, whose mother made
him almost invulnerable by dipping all
but his heel in a magical stream...
(etc.)

Garth tears the goggles off, sweating, breathing hard.

GARTH

Maybe that's why women think guys are
heels.

Garth replaces his body armor battery with one from the pack.

DIANA

... is Helen, as one ancient artist saw
her...

GARTH

Shut up! Goddamn it!

The shout echoes through the marble hall.

LITTLE GIRL

She's not very pretty...

LITTLE BOY

And she's naked!

DIANA

Well yes, beauty, it's said, is in the
eye of the beholder... and in art, the
human body is often depicted nude...

Gulping water from his canteen:

GARTH

Christ...

DIANA

... have no more questions, I'll take you
to the next gallery, where we'll see...

CONTINUED:

DIANA AND THE CHILDREN DISAPPEAR just as a REPAIRBOT SHOOTS THROUGH THE IMAGE, whisking by to repair the door that Garth just blew.

Garth turns and fires on instinct, sending the REPAIR DEVICE BURNING, SPARKING AND SPINNING OUT OF CONTROL.

GARTH

with the nightgoggles shoved high onto his forehead, walks down the gallery, carrying the pulse rifle lazily in one hand.

The repairbot lies a jumble of twisted metal and smoking circuit boards.

Helen stares down at him from her pedestal.

Garth stops to appraise her.

GARTH

That kid doesn't know anything, Helen...
You're a hotty.

Helen's pose does not change, although the flashlight in Garth's hand shifts her shadows as he moves forward.

Garth crosses the sealed beam that activated the film before.

DIANA AND THE CHILDREN APPEAR.

DIANA

This gallery is called 'The Greek Room' because the antiquities displayed here originated in classical times. Does anyone know what 'classical' means?

CHILDREN

I do! I do!... No, me! Me!

GARTH

Oh, christ, not again...

ONE 3-D IMAGE OF DIANA STEPS THROUGH A SECOND 3-D IMAGE, followed by a new shoebox projection device.

DIANA

The controller is located in that panel.
You can turn the tour off.

Garth is conflicted. Could the panel be boobytrapped?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANA (cont'd)
Well, I can't operate it. That's for
sure.

Garth steps to the wall, opens the panel, presses the 'stop'
button.

TOUR DIANA
... yes. 'Classical' means 'pre-
Christian,' or before the rise of-

TOUR DIANA AND THIRTY CHILDREN ARE SWALLOWED WHOLE BY
DARKNESS.

Garth pivots and marches back to his 'camp.'

Diana, and her shoebox, follow.

DIANA
Who are you?

GARTH
I'm alive. You're dead. That's all either
of us needs to know.

DIANA
I know what I am.

GARTH
You're a program, a doppelganger...
You're not real anymore.

DIANA
I am a disembodied human being. Vincent
Enterprises developed a way to move my
consciousness into this computer... all
of it... me.

GARTH
Are you sure?

Diana has no answer for this.

DIANA
What are you doing here?

GARTH
That should be obvious.

DIANA
Why haven't the police come? Why don't
they answer?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH

I told you – there are no police.

DIANA

What's happened to the world?

GARTH

The same as you... Worse.

Garth begins to gather up his equipment and supplies.

DIANA

If you go any further, you'll wish the police came and stopped you.

GARTH

Is that right?

DIANA

This facility is defended by a non-commercial upgrade of a Vincent Embassy Protection System – VEPS. In case you're too ignorant to know what that means... fully lethal defense systems. Killing machines, Mr. ...

Garth brings the pulse rifle up.

The shoebox retreats into the darkness.

Diana BEGINS TO FADE, lose resolution, as the device retreats.

DIANA (CONT'D)

Please stop destroying my –

Garth fires.

KABLOOM!

DIANA WINKS OUT.

ANOTHER ANGLE – GARTH

finishes gathering his supplies, carts everything down the gallery.

As he crosses the sealed beam mid-gallery:

DIANA

Please stop destroying my mobile projectors.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WHERE THE TOUR DIANA ONCE STOOD, NOW THE CURRENT DIANA IS PROJECTED.

DIANA (CONT'D)
They're inoffensive. They carry no weapons.

Garth looks at her for a long moment.

GARTH
You have a point. Get to it.

DIANA
My point is that I don't want you to die.

GARTH
You care about what happens to me?

DIANA
Of course I do...

GARTH
And your boss, Vincent... he cared when he installed all these killing machines to protect his expensive trinkets?

DIANA
He never expected to need them! He installed them as a deterrent.

GARTH
So he never expected anyone to get killed?

DIANA
Of course not.

GARTH
Or hurt someone, even?

DIANA
No!

GARTH
Then I should be dodging blanks now... You were Vincent's Chief of Security even before you died, right?

DIANA
Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH

You don't strike me as the kind of person who winds up being Chief of Security.

DIANA

It's a little late in my career to start quibbling over qualifications, don't you think?... But I have a masters degree in police science.

GARTH

You and Vincent were friends, correct?

DIANA

You're trying to insinuate something.

GARTH

And you're a good looking woman... or were.

DIANA

(cynical grin)

You bastard!

GARTH

Not a new observation... So you were lovers for awhile... then he rewarded you.

DIANA

I hope your death is quick and painless.

DIANA DISAPPEARS.

Garth grins.

WHAM!

THE GALLERY DOORS

at the end of the hall slam open and a dozen flying mini-helicopters bank through.

GARTH

yanks the nightgoggles down, brings the rifle up.

GARTH'S POV - NIGHTGOGGLES - THE FLYING MACHINES

carry fully functional weaponry from their undercarriages.

(SCENE) GARTH

STARTS FIRING even as he leaps toward the statue of Helen.

PULSE BEAMS BEGIN FLASHING all around him.

CHOPPERS BEGIN FALLING, SPIRALING, EXPLODING AS THEY ARE HIT.

Garth hugs the base of the statue, believing that its presence will protect him.

Until a pulse beam from a helicopter SLICES THE STATUE IN TWO.

Garth is without cover as the statue disintegrates above him.

Garth's weapon is on full automatic: *Boom-boom-boom-boom...*

GARTH'S POV - NIGHTGOGGLES - THE MINI-CHOPPERS

continue to swoop down, firing pulse beams. There are seven left.

GARTH

checks his wrist read-out: *04*.

Garth slams another battery into his body armor.

A PULSE ROUND SLICES THROUGH HIS ARM before the power jerks on. He grimaces in pain.

Garth's rifle is empty. The read-out, in red: *0*.

Garth tosses the rifle and pulls both S&W autopistols.

He swings the fully automatic pistols together, creating a minigun, AND FIRES.

The remaining HELICOPTERS EXPLODE within the sweep of bullets.

Silence.

Garth shakes marble dust from his clothing, kicks chunks of Helen away. Part of her face lands on his shoulder. On his look:

GARTH
Must be a fake.

(SCENE) - RIFLE - GARTH

staggers out from the destroyed statue of Helen, retrieves the weapon.

GARTH

Now that wasn't so bad, was it?

Takes stock. His left arm is bleeding. Clothes ripped. Hungry. Tired. Thirsty. Licking his dry lips, he turns to retrieve his canteen -

WHEN A STREAM OF BULLETS HITS HIM, slip-sliding his body uncontrollably across the floor.

THE TANK

is little more than treads with a machine gun mounted on it, now wheeling through the far open doors.

GARTH

slides behind the statue of Achilles. It must be real. The bullets stop.

Garth pulls himself from a stupor, takes stock.

Arm still bleeding. Clothes still torn. Fingers move. Feet, too.

Wrist read-out: 03. Another battery shot.

Garth reaches to pull a fresh battery from his belt, exposing an arm WHERE BULLETS RIDDLE THE WALL AN INCH TO THE RIGHT.

Carefully now, he replaces the body armor battery.

The movement causes the machine gun to track him. Up-down, left-right, servos whining. Only the statue keeps the unit from firing.

DIANA'S SHOEBOX

rolls up behind the tank, halts as if concerned about being shot by Garth, then advances.

DIANA MATERIALIZES

near Garth.

DIANA
You're hurt.

GARTH
Go away.

DIANA
You should apply direct pressure to that.

GARTH
I said... GO AWAY!

DIANA
I know who you are.

Garth tries to stop the flow of blood by applying direct pressure. He winces.

GARTH
(preoccupied)
You do?

DIANA
You're Major John Garth, United States
Army Rangers. You were born in Pasadena,
California, in March -

GARTH
So you found my goddamn records!

DIANA
Why is an honorable man like you breaking
into a private residence?

GARTH
There are no more honorable human beings
- just hungry ones.

DIANA
Is that all? You're hungry? I can tell
you where there's food. Tons of it.

GARTH
Tons of it?

DIANA
Earthquake supplies. Wafers; cakes; MREs
- meals-ready-to-eat; bread; water;
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANA (cont'd)
coffee – instant; coffee – drip; you name
it.

Garth moves slowly, watching the weapon track him.

GARTH
And you're going to show me how to get at
it... without getting my dick shot off.

Diana says nothing for a long moment. Then:

DIANA
If you drop your weapons, VEPS won't take
action against you.

GARTH
You mean... if I surrender, I can walk
around here without being shot at?

DIANA
No... You'll be taken into custody, held
for –

GARTH
The police.

DIANA
That is the procedure.

GARTH
There is no police.

DIANA
So you say.

Garth shifts. The machine gun follows him, servos whining.
The statue continues to provide cover.

GARTH
Why don't you just... turn the machines
off?

DIANA
I can't do that.

GARTH
Aren't you the Chief of Security? Aren't
you the soul of the machine? Why can't
you just stop shooting at me?

DIANA
It doesn't work like that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH

Your mind controls everything, doesn't it?

DIANA

Yes, but... the defensive equipment is linked to my autonomic nervous system. I can no more stop the defensive units than I can stop breathing.

GARTH

You aren't breathing. You're a goddamn ghost.

Diana thinks about that for a second. Yes, that's exactly what she is.

DIANA

My mind works the same way as when... I was alive. That's why Mr. Vincent gave me this opportunity, to remain... alive... inside EnCrypt.

GARTH

Where is Vincent, by the way?

Diana turns away, considering the question.

(SCENE) GARTH

throws the spent battery.

The tank gun tracks the flight of the battery into the darkness.

Garth leaps out from behind the statue and lands on the tank.

The tank gun barrel tries to find Garth, who stands above it, beyond its tracking range.

Garth pulls a survival knife, begins to pry open the tanks's metal access plate.

The tank's treads SQUEAL as it accelerates toward the nearest unadorned wall. Garth hangs on, prying with the knife.

The tank slams into the wall, almost throws Garth, backs up, slams into the wall again.

Garth clings to the machine gun barrel, yanks off the access plate, stabs the knife deep into a row of circuit boards.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The tank SPITS SMOKE AND SPARKS, DIES.

Garth removes the ammo feeder, tosses it into the darkness.

Sucking for wind, sweat cascading from his skin, Garth eyes Diana warily as she slowly walks to the tank.

DIANA AND GARTH

study one another for a long moment before:

GARTH

If you can't shut the damn things off...
maybe you can warn me.

DIANA

Warn you?

GARTH

You know where everything is, don't you?
You know which machines are operational,
which ones are in stand-by mode, which
ones—

DIANA

Really, this whole question would be a
moot point... if you just surrendered.

GARTH

So you can hold me for the police?

DIANA

Certainly. You have less to fear from
them...

(looking back toward the
darkness)

... than me.

GARTH

That might be a long wait.

DIANA

So you say.

GARTH

You might save my life... if you briefed
me on what to expect.

Diana considers that possibility for a moment. Then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANA

This is not the pattern of a burglar. A burglar would have taken something and gone.

Garth merely looks at her image as it moves.

DIANA (CONT'D)

If there really is no police, as you say... then you've come to cut the power and take everything. That...

(surveys him)

... is why I won't help you.

GARTH

If I cut the power, what becomes of you?

DIANA

I will become what you say I already am.

GARTH

Death as a blackout. I've feared worse things.

DIANA

Go now. Take whatever you find back there. If you go forward, you won't survive.

Garth retrieves his rifle, slides a fresh battery into it. It HUMS.

GARTH

Yeah, I've heard that before, too.

Diana considers this exchange a moment, then DISAPPEARS.

DIANA'S SHOEBOX

whines away into the darkness, passing through the opened double doors at the end of the corridor.

GARTH

gathers up the rest of his equipment, drinks from the canteen, limps back to the pack.

AEROSOL SPRAY SKIN

flows onto Garth's wound, sealing everything. Garth tosses the can away, rips open a low-tech field bandage, gently places it on the wound in his arm.

IN A CORNER OF THE GALLERY - GARTH

crumples against the wall. Depleted, he must rest.

An afterthought, he pulls the Automatic Defense Unit from the pack, opens the panel, flicks it on.

THE GUN

rises from its coffin-shaped container and enters 'ready' mode, barrel poised to fire at any target that presents itself.

GARTH

makes sure that he's within the four-foot fire-free zone around the gun, then removes the gunbelt and makes himself comfortable. He searches the pack for fast energy food. The bite-sized snacks fall through his fingers like coins.

GARTH

(reading labels)
Chicken gumbo... (tosses it)... Steak
Tartar with red dye number seven...
(tosses it)... allergic to red dye number
seven... Brandy Mousse...
(unwrapping the plastic)
Combat is getting elegant.
(chews - reacts)
Think ya got enough sugar in there,
Butch?

MOMENTS LATER - GARTH

lies sleeping, head propped against the wall.

THE HALLS OF THE RESIDENCE

are long and dark.

CONTINUED:

Debris of combat gives way to shining floors and pools of purple nebulae.

FLOAT THROUGH THE CORRIDORS

past Garth sleeping on the floor... into the gallery of paintings... through opening doors into the gallery of jewels... through more doors into other realms of historic order... until a woman waits at the end of the gallery.

ELAINE is beautiful, with long, flowing red hair and skin the color of porcelain. Her green-green eyes glow like emeralds, her red lips not tainted by makeup but truly red, teeth as perfect as creation before the end of Eden.

GARTH

stands before her. He is not wearing torn combat clothes, but a suit styled by future hands.

ELAINE

John... how I've wanted to hold you again.

GARTH

Elaine, let me take you home.

ELAINE

(shaking her head 'no')
I have a different home now... Do you know what became of me?

This is a question he would rather not contemplate.

GARTH

I searched for you, Elaine, I did!

ELAINE

There was no food, Garth. There was nothing. Our son was hungry. I kept waiting for you to come, but... you didn't. So I went out looking for food... The market was empty. There were men there, Garth. They raped me. Then they butchered me and took my flesh to their homes and fed their families with me. This last thing I didn't mind. I saved a child's life. At least, my body did.

Garth can take this story no more.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH
Elaine! God, no!

The pain is more than he can bare. Garth drops to his knees, tears and snot and saliva spewing from him as he bellows his pain.

ELAINE
(reaching to touch, but unable)
Don't mourn me, John. What's done is done. But you're still alive.

GARTH
I'm not alive, Elaine. None of us is alive anymore!

ELAINE
Yes you are. You owe it to those of us who are dead – stay alive, John!

INT. GALLERY

Garth snaps awake beside the wall. Nothing has changed from when he went to sleep. Except a haunting SOUND drifting from a far place. Garth turns off the Automatic Defense Unit, grabs his rifle, moves for the far double doors.

GALLERY OF PAINTINGS - GARTH

stops at the threshold, snaps the nightgoggles down, looks in.

GARTH'S POV - NIGHTGOGGLES - THE GALLERY OF LANDSCAPES

No sensors. No weaponry in the ceiling.

GARTH

pushes the goggles up, considers.

The haunting SOUND is closer, but still not close.

Garth leaps into a run down the gallery toward the noise.

As he passes a closed beam mid-gallery, DIANA AND HER THIRTY CHILDREN APPEAR as 3-D projections.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANA
This, boys and girls, is the Gallery of
Landscapes...
(etc.)

THE GALLERY OF PORTRAITS - GARTH

stops at its threshold, flips the nightgoggles down, looks.

GARTH'S POV - NIGHTGOGGLES - GALLERY OF PORTRAITS

Again no sensors, or weapons.

GARTH

advances into the hall. The SOUND is closer now, a haunting,
otherworldly wail.

Gath brings the pulse rifle up, checks the charge (100 in
green), advances.

The SOUND grows louder, louder yet, increasing in volume and
emotion, a noise so terrifying that its existence seems
impossible.

A GHOST

floats through the far doorway and turns, heading toward
Garth. It is the corpse of a man, arms and legs dangling,
eyes glowing red, the wordless wail rising from its throat.

GARTH

grins.

GARTH
Ah, a ghost...

Garth brings the pulse rifle up, takes his time aiming. He
FIRES.

The ghost TWISTS IN THE HOLD OF SUCCESSIVE ROUNDS, writhing
and bellowing its unearthly, artificial SOUND until its
DISGUISE AS A GHOST LOSES DEFINITION AND THE MACHINE BEHIND
IT CAN BE PERCEIVED. It begins to falter.

ANOTHER ANGLE - GARTH

is so preoccupied with the ghost that he doesn't see the man-sized robot roll toward him from behind. The robot grabs him with huge pincer-arms, causing Garth to drop the pulse rifle.

The robot's momentum carries them past the sealed beam which ACTIVATES YET ANOTHER DIANA 3-D projection.

DIANA

Okay guys, this is the fun gallery, at least for me... These are all portraits of real people from history...
(etc.)

Garth writhes in the hands of the robot, its STEEL FINGERS CLOSING ON HIS BODY ARMOR, WHICH SPARKS WITH RESISTANCE.

Garth's single free hand slams against the robot's metal skin, without effect.

Garth pulls the survival knife, rams it into a crevice in the robot body, jerks it, snapping off the tip of the blade.

The robot turns with Garth's splayed body, moving for some dark destination.

A last ditch effort, Garth slams the broken blade into one of the paintings as they pass. The blade digs deep into the canvas and is dragged an inch before the robot halts.

(SCENE) THE ROBOT'S SOULLESS EYES MEET GARTH'S

in crystal understanding: If the robot continues, Garth will destroy the painting.

Moments pass as Garth's lungs suck air and sweat cascades from his brow.

The blade moves a millimeter in the canvas flesh, a woman's bosom.

The robot's eyes move to the painting, back to Garth.

One robot hand relaxes. On Garth's movement, the other.

Garth slowly pulls himself from the robot's grasp, steps down.

While the steel hands are empty, GUN BARRELS LOCATED IN THE ROBOT'S CHEST follow Garth's every movement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Moments pass. Garth reaches for the fallen rifle.

The robot watches.

Garth's fingers almost make contact with the weapon. Will he have to release the knife in order to retrieve the rifle? Garth gives up, withdraws his hand... and extends a leg, makes contact with the rifle.

The robot whirls and accelerates down the gallery, its tracks squealing in retreat.

Garth releases the blade and retrieves the rifle, brings it up to shoot.

The first round hits the retreating robot as IT WHISKS THROUGH THE 3-D IMAGE OF DIANA AND HER CHILDREN like an aircraft through clouds.

Garth FIRES AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN...

PULSE BOLTS STRIKE the robot repeatedly. It explodes in fire and wanders off track, finally stopping altogether.

An unearthly SOUND makes Garth spin around.

MORE GHOSTS

float across the threshold of the far gallery, each different in its horrific representation – a child, a crone, a woman, a man...

(SCENE) GARTH

begins firing immediately.

So do the ghosts – PULSE BOLTS THAT STRIKE GARTH'S ARMOR AND FLASH.

The FIRST GHOST IS DESTROYED, the child.

The SECOND, the crone.

The THIRD, closing with Garth, DIES IN AN EXPLOSION of metallic flesh.

But by the time he turns the pulse rifle on the fourth, the woman, the rifle is depleted. Garth retreats.

(SCENE) FOLLOW GARTH AND THE GHOST

as they move through the Gallery of Landscapes to the Gallery of Roman Statues, Garth MERE FEET AHEAD OF THE SCREAMING BANSHEE, SOMETIMES DODGING, AND SOMETIMES NOT DODGING THE PULSE BOLTS the machine spits at him.

(SCENE) GALLERY OF STATUES - GARTH

dives for his waiting S&W pistols as the GHOST CONTINUES TO FIRE PULSE ROUNDS at him.

Garth brings the PISTOLS UP AND STARTS FIRING.

The ghost ABSORBS THE ROUNDS AGAINST ITS METAL SKIN, its 'ghost' persona fading to reveal the stainless steel monster beneath.

Both weapons are emptied of bullets.

The ghost floats menacingly before Garth for seconds, THEN DROPS LIKE SCRAP TO THE FLOOR.

Garth sags to his knees, finally begins reloading the weapons.

ELAINE'S VOICE

No, don't, silly! No... No!

3-D ELAINE,

wearing jean cutoffs and a pull-over, STRUGGLES WITH AN UNSEEN PERSON WHERE DIANA'S 3-D PROJECTION TOURED WITH CHILDREN MINUTES AGO. This is not the idealized Elaine of Garth's dream, but the real woman, capable of soil, sweat, anger and tears.

ELAINE

(laughing)

Don't you dare!... You would not dare!...
Don't you do it!

Garth is too surprised to realize that this is a 3-D PROJECTION. He twists, moves toward her.

GARTH

Elly?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A garden hose APPEARS IN THE FILM PROJECTION... then a younger Garth himself, who sprays Elaine. They are both laughing.

ELAINE

Damn you, John Garth!

A LITTLE BOY RUNS UP with a bucket of water and splashes his mother with it.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

Oh no! You! I'm going to get you!

Elaine chases her son farther into the backyard.

DIANA'S SHOEBOX AND DIANA

EMERGE THROUGH THE 3-D PROJECTION of Elaine and her family.

DIANA

The National Security computer in Arlington, Virginia, is still up... Mr. Vincent has a key... The satellite communication system is still working.

Garth cares about none of this. Seeing Elaine again is far more important than anything Diana could say.

DIANA (CONT'D)

During your last security clearance review... they placed you under surveillance... shot some film of your family.

The 3-D film of Garth's backyard is REPLACED BY A TREE-LINED WALK. The boy runs ahead as Elaine and Garth stroll, hand-in-hand.

DIANA (CONT'D)

You two look... wonderful... together.

Younger Garth and Elaine stop walking and steal a kiss.

DIANA (CONT'D)

What happened?

The images of Elaine and his son draw Garth's flesh forward, where he topples to his knees beside them. Tears well in his eyes. Finally:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH

When the breakdown occurred... we were visiting Elaine's mother in Santa Monica. My father is dying of cancer. He lived in Burbank. I went to get him. There were riots, people killing each other, fires... I was gone days. When I finally got back... there was no one there.

DIANA

You don't know what happened to your wife and child?

GARTH

No.

The 3-D FILM ENDS.

GARTH (CONT'D)

Is that all there is?

DIANA

Yes.

GARTH

Play it again!... PLAY IT AGAIN!

DIANA

No... unless you stop what you're doing and -

WHAM! Garth FIRES AT DIANA'S SHOEBOX sending the device flying in parts. DIANA DEMATERIALIZES.

GARTH

Bitch!

Garth sits on his knees for moments, sweat and tears commingling, breathing hard, trying to fathom what has become of everything and everyone he loved.

DIANA REAPPEARS, projected by the tour lenses that previously showed Elaine and Garth's son.

GARTH (CONT'D)

Now *you* know.

DIANA

I was able to link with the national weather satellites through the Arlington computer... Yes, now I know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH

Lower your security systems. Let Reich steal all your trinkets. I'll take the food, for the people... then you can go back to what you –

DIANA

No.

GARTH

Why not?

DIANA

Because I can't. I told you. The security devices are controlled through my autonomic nervous system. They are as automatic as breathing.

GARTH

Then show me how to defeat them.

DIANA

No.

GARTH

Why not?

DIANA

Because I'm not here to be your doormat.

GARTH

That earthquake food... it could feed a lot of people, save a lot of lives.

DIANA

So you say...

GARTH

So I say? SO I SAY?! People are *eating* each other out there!

Diana is stunned by this revelation, made mute by it.

GARTH (CONT'D)

When was the last time you were hungry?

Diana can't answer that. *So long ago, it seems forever...*

GARTH (CONT'D)

I'm going to take this place, like any military objective – one obstacle at a time... then I'm going to bring my people up here and we're going to live off those

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH (CONT'D)
earthquake supplies until...
(dreaming of it, thinking of
it)
... until...

DIANA
Until what?

GARTH
Until I can think of something! We're not
going to die, not all of us! We're not
going to die!

But he is speaking to darkness. DIANA HAS GONE.

(SCENE) GARTH'S EQUIPMENT

lies in piles. He moves to retrieve it.

Slams a new battery into the pulse rifle.

Returns the pistol belt to his waist; slides the pistols into
holsters.

Shoves the Automatic Defense System into the pack.

Hefts everything, moves for the door.

GALLERY OF LANDSCAPES - GARTH

trudges through, makes an immediate right.

DIANA APPEARS BEHIND HIM.

DIANA
John Garth... why are you going that way?

GARTH
Because all of the doors are unlocked...
(gestures toward Diana)
... *that way.*

FAR GALLERY DOUBLE DOORS - GARTH

drops his pack, removes an explosive, places it at lock-
level, stands back.

The EXPLOSION trips the lock. The door swings open.

Garth pulls the nightgoggles down, steps to the threshold.

GARTH'S POV - NIGHTGOGGLES - THE GALLERY OF LIGHT CARVINGS

is unlike the other galleries. The statues glow. They are lifelike, carved by laser light, an intermingling of photography and sculpting, here magnified a thousand times by the goggle's infrared.

GARTH

quickly shoves the nightgoggles from his eyes and rubs them.

DIANA MATERIALIZES before him, projected by a new shoebox.

DIANA

This is the Gallery of Laser Carvings. Everything in here is very fragile. If a bullet were to hit a carving and cause a short...

GARTH

I sometimes feel the same way when a bullet whizzes past my head.

Garth pushes through her into the gallery.

GALLERY OF LIGHT CARVINGS - GARTH

quickly checks the ceilings for sensors or laser rifles. None.

Garth grabs his equipment, begins moving forward.

THE STATUES

are 3-D projections of light carved by an artist to represent life and projected up from a base. Think Kodachrome. Some of the statues are modern and geometric. Others are almost indistinguishable from life - a fawn, a waterfall, a soldier in combat, lovers holding hands, others.

A STATUE OF A NUDE WOMAN

catches Garth's attention. He moves for the exhibit.

The statue is twice life size. She is gathering flowers to her breast, a garland of flowers in her hair. Her expression is one of rapt beauty, a representation of a woman at peace in a peaceful world.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It is Diana.

DIANA AND GARTH

look up at the light carving.

DIANA
(unconvincing)
I'm not ashamed of it.

Garth drops his packs, circles the statue, saying nothing.

DIANA (CONT'D)
I was a graduate student at UCLA... Mr.
Vincent was one of the pioneers of laser
carving.

GARTH
You can stop calling him 'Mr.' now.

DIANA
(an outburst)
I'll call him any damn thing I want!...
(controlling herself)
... He pursued me to model for him.
Finally, I relented.

GARTH
Was he that good... or were you that
good?

Diana looks away angrily. Then:

DIANA
Mr. Vincent's interest in me... exceeded
the professional. He was in love with me.
I never returned the affection.

GARTH
You're lying.

DIANA
What?

GARTH
He bought you. He bought you with a job
and he bought you with a laser statue.
You want me to believe he didn't buy the
rest of you too?

DIANA
You son of a bitch!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH

Vincent's not the kind of guy who doesn't get what he wants... unless...

DIANA

Unless what?

Garth considers not going on. But:

GARTH

When you were diagnosed as terminal, did you get a second opinion?

DIANA

Of course I got a second opinion!

GARTH

Not one of Vincent's doctors?

DIANA

No! What are you implying?

GARTH

He won you after all, didn't he? I mean, he got to keep you, young and beautiful, in his one-of-a-kind supercomputer... never to grow old... never to die... immortal and his, forever...

Diana charges Garth. Just as HER 3-D HAND WOULD MAKE CONTACT with his face, SHE DISAPPEARS.

THE NEXT GALLERY DOORS

are also locked. Garth places the explosive, steps aside, and the lock EXPLODES.

Garth flips the nightgoggles down, glances in.

GARTH'S POV - NIGHTGOGGLES - THE HALLWAY

is unadorned and relatively narrow, a real passageway.

No sensors in the ceilings, no weapons that can be seen.

GARTH

hefts his equipment and enters the hallway.

A FLASHLIGHT BEAM

slices the darkness. More doors, more hallway.

The flashlight swung in the opposite direction reveals shining metal doors: An elevator.

GARTH

moves down the hall toward the elevator, flashlight beam leading the way.

He drops the pack, surveys the elevator controls.

THE ELEVATOR CONTROLS

require both a key and a key card.

GARTH

drops the pack, removes the computer, runs a line from a rear port to a card, inserts it into the card slot adjacent to the elevator.

The computer begins running numbers through the card key.

Garth finds a small case in the pack, opens it: *Burglary tools*.

Garth begins to pick the standard lock.

DIANA APPEARS BESIDE GARTH

DIANA

So you're a common burglar after all?

GARTH

(working)

Uncommon. For the CIA.

DIANA

Fair play's poster children.

GARTH

I'd argue the point... but it doesn't really matter anymore, now does it?

Diana allows the vitriol to recede. Then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANA

John, I don't want you to do this.

GARTH

John, is it? I hadn't realized we'd become so chummy.

DIANA

(wryly)

Well, you've seen me naked. I thought that would count for something.

GARTH

Get on with it.

DIANA

If you go downstairs... I can't protect you.

Garth turns, gives her his full attention.

GARTH

Protect me?!

DIANA

You don't really think you've defeated all of our security systems by yourself, do you? What if I had sent them all at once?

GARTH

Bullshit.

DIANA

No. It's not... John, listen to me – downstairs is different. Mr. Vincent's residence is there, the computer room, the weapons storage bays... There's a stand-alone system down there, fully automated, a terrible killing machine that –

GARTH

(returning to work)

Bullshit.

DIANA

It's called The Rook. It was designed to replace soldiers on the battlefield. It's dormant now, in a state of suspension, but as soon as your heat signature is read on the bottom floor, The Rook will activate and it will kill you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Garth searches her eyes for any signs of deception, then realizes that he is looking at a machine projection. He shrugs and returns to jimmying the lock.

The elevator door slides open.

Garth steps back. After a moment:

GARTH

You're lying... First, your defense mechanisms were designed to deal with terrorists – plural – more than one. They're set to activate individually, as needed. That's why you didn't send them all at once... Second, you'd say anything – *do* anything – to keep me from going down there. Am I right?

Garth gathers his equipment, turns away from the elevator.

DIANA

Where are you going?

GARTH

That elevator opened too easily... and you control it.

THE HIDDEN DOOR

is a panel in the wall. Garth finds it, presses it. It opens. A stairwell leading down.

Garth flips the nightgoggles down, takes a look:

THE STAIRWELL

hides no weapons.

GARTH

hefts his equipment, enters.

STAIRWELL - GARTH

descends the steps quickly, flashlight beam leading the way.

At the landing, Garth tries the door. Locked. He'll have to blow it.

THE LOCK IGNITES

and the door swings ajar.

GARTH

swings the door open with the barrel of his pulse rifle,
revealing:

THE VINCENT RESIDENCE

is a cavernous room, a vast "pleasure dome" to compare with
Kublai Khan's. Laser statuary, nudes mostly, illuminate the
shadows, a glowing Christmas tree effect. Fountains and ponds
divide the real estate, a waterfall across the room defines
it. There are park benches, grassy knolls, trees hanging low
with weighted boughs, jutting boulders, and room enough to
live forever unencumbered by petty problems.

DIANA'S SHOEBOX

rolls to the open door. Diana's IMAGE PROJECTS out.

Garth remains across the threshold.

DIANA

Don't do this. The moment you enter, The
Rook will be activated.

Garth snorts with disbelief and enters.

Dazzling lights flash on the moment he crosses the threshold.

THE VINCENT ARMORY - A ROOK,

a humanoid creature with steel skin lies immersed in a wall
tableau, art and war meeting in bas relief.

Its eyes open, red pupils scanning.

THE VINCENT RESIDENCE - GARTH

drops his packs, lowers the rifle to the floor, dazzled by
the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH

Vincent certainly knew how to live,
didn't he?

Diana says nothing, but her image follows him.

GARTH (CONT'D)

Where'd he sleep?

Diana gestures: *Over there.*

THE VINCENT BEDROOM

is not delineated by walls. A huge bed seems to grow out of a giant oak, its mattress almost like a meadow of green. Overhead, man-made stars twinkle even in room light.

Garth wanders up a lane toward it, eyes taking in everything.

THE VINCENT ARMORY - THE ROOK

moves minutely as below it a computer screen flashes: ROOK INITIATING PROTOCOL - INTRUDER ALERT.

THE VINCENT BEDROOM - GARTH

touches the oak bed. It feels like real wood, with no rough edges.

Diana's shoebox projector follows, as does she.

GARTH

When you have this kind of money... this kind of power... I guess you can have anything you want.

DIANA

Mr. Vincent was known for his imagination.

A quarter-sized statue of a nude man and woman in embrace stands near the bed. Garth touches it and the two come to life and begin to make love.

GARTH

You didn't pose for this one too?

Coital cries erupt from them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANA
(uncomfortable)
Touch it again. Please.

Taking a close look at the woman's body.

GARTH
She looks a little like you... here and there.

DIANA
(exasperated)
Touch it again! Please!

Garth touches the light statue and it returns to its starting point and freezes.

GARTH
(gesturing other statuary)
Who were all these people?

DIANA
Mr. Vincent had many lovers.

GARTH
The man in the sculpture... that was Vincent?

DIANA
No... maybe... I don't know! Please leave here! Now! I'll do what I can to stop anything from happening to you, but you've got to get out of here now.

GARTH
For a woman who's spent the last twenty years inhabiting this place, you don't seem to know a lot about it.

DIANA
I don't spend that much time in the residence.

GARTH
Why not?

DIANA
(turning away)
Privacy. A matter of privacy.

GARTH
Yours... or Vincent's?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANA
BOTH! You've got to go!

Garth merely looks at her.

DIANA DISAPPEARS.

THE VINCENT ARMORY - DIANA

MATERIALIZES beside the Rook. Mist flows from around the creature, which was in cryogenic stasis. Its body temperature is rising.

DIANA
EnCrypt, this is Diana One Seven One Six
Theta Theta Six. Rook activation
override. Cease activation immediately.

ENCRYPT VOICE
You are not authorized...

DIANA
Emergency override! Cancel activation
now!

ENCRYPT VOICE
You are not authorized.

DIANA
Damn it!

VINCENT'S RESIDENCE - GARTH

has reclined on a knoll, drinking and eating.

DIANA MATERIALIZES beside him.

DIANA
The Rook is activated! It's coming!

Garth observes her coolly for a moment. Then:

GARTH
If you're so concerned about my welfare,
then tell me how to protect myself
against this machine.

DIANA
I can't! I can just warn you to go!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH

Why should you care so much about me?

DIANA

You're a human being, aren't you? You're alive. You can't appreciate life until you've lost it.

The admission impacts Garth. He sits up.

GARTH

If you can't tell me how to defeat this thing, then tell me about it.

DIANA

The Rook is a fully autonomous combat operative. Its body armor is five times more effective than the obsolete armor you wear. This model has been programmed to kill with its hands, to protect property. It will tear your head from your body.

GARTH

What are its weaknesses?

DIANA

It has no weaknesses!

A BOOM SOUNDS distantly.

A HALLWAY - THE ROOK

slams through a set of doors moving fast.

RESIDENCE - GARTH

stands, retrieves his rifle, the pack.

HALLWAY - THE ROOK

is running now, inexorable, unstoppable.

(SCENE) RESIDENCE & STAIRWELL - GARTH

moves quickly to within ten feet of the entrance to the stairwell. The shoebox and Diana follow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Garth retrieves several bricks of C-4 from the pack, tosses the pack through the door, begins kneading the plastique together.

DIANA

Run now! Do it! Leave!

Garth finishes kneading the C-4 into a glob the size of a baseball, tucks it away in a pocket, brings the rifle up.

A BOOM SOUNDS, closer.

The Rook enters the residence at full run, already targeted against Garth.

Garth brings the rifle within his sights and BEGINS FIRING at full automatic.

Boom-boom-boom-boom! The pulse BOLTS STRIKE THE ROOK without effect.

The Rook leaps obstacles and continues forward with inexorable power.

Garth's pulse rifle empties.

The Rook hits Garth at full tilt, slaps the rifle away, shoves him back, fingers reaching for Garth's throat.

Garth resists the creature's hands. His BODY ARMOR SPARKS as it cycles toward depletion.

Momentum carries Garth through the doorway and into the stairwell.

The Rook pushes Garth into the wall, fingers encircling his neck, ARMOR SPARKING.

Garth struggles to bring his hand containing the C-4 up. The plastique falls.

The compressive force of the Rook's hands begin to strangle Garth through the armor.

Garth struggles, reaching for the C-4 on the ground. It's inches away.

The Rook's red eyes bore into Garth, programed hatred.

Garth begins to gag.

The shoebox scoots into the stairwell. DIANA PROJECTS. She sees Garth's fingers reaching for the plastique.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Diana's eyes lock with Garth's. An empathy passes between them impossible for the Rook to understand.

The shoebox accelerates into the C-4, sending it rolling into Garth's hand.

Garth slaps the C-4 onto the Rook's back.

His other hand reaches for a battery in his backpack.

Garth's BODY ARMOR WRIST READ-OUT: 33... 26... 19... 15... 11...

Garth's fingers pull a battery from the backpack.

The Rook's red eyes bore in.

Garth slaps the battery into the C-4.

A LIGHT WRENCHING EXPLOSION.

STAIRWELL - DIANA

seems to kneel beside Garth.

Garth pulls himself up to his elbows, checks his body armor.

INSERT - BODY ARMOR WRIST READ-OUT: 00.

GARTH

retrieves a battery from his belt, renews the body armor - HUMMM - tries to stand, slips, finally reaches his feet.

GARTH
Where is it?

Diana gestures toward the end of the stairwell.

Garth staggers several steps in that direction, stops.

(SCENE) THE ROOK

pushes debris from his body and sits up.

Garth draws the two Smith and Wessons. By the time HE'S FIRING the Rook is moving on him.

Garth retreats up the steps.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Its body armor blown, the Rook's chest RECEIVES THE BULLET ROUNDS like darts through Playdough.

Garth EMPTIES THE PISTOLS, has no time to reload.

The Rook grabs Garth's ankles and crawls up his fallen body.

Garth plunges his damaged survival knife deep into the Rook's bullet-pocked chest. No effect.

The Rook's hands close around Garth's neck.

Garth slams the knife repeatedly into the machine's body. Nothing.

Beneath the Rook's flesh bio-mechanical devices ooze and revolve, levers pushing limbs.

Garth's fingers reach for the railing, something to push against, to rise. No.

The Rook's fingers close about Garth's neck.

Garth has lost control of the knife, which sticks from the Rook's chest, its metal blade fostering sparks inside the machine.

Garth grabs the knife handle, pulls, loses it, pulls again, again, finally dislodging the knife.

The Rook squeezes Garth's neck, twisting, trying to wrench his head from his body. Garth gags.

Garth's body armor wrist gauge reads 23... 17... 14... 09...

Garth raises the knife and plunges it deep into the Rook's head.

The Rook's eyes go wide, then fail.

The Rook falls from Garth's body, tumbles down the steps, bursts into flames.

GARTH

gasps for air, sucking oxygen into his lungs like water through a busted dam. After several long moments he staggers to his feet and descends the stairs, stepping carefully around the Rook's burning torso.

Diana waits at the foot of the steps.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH

Are there any more where he came from?

Diana looks at the carnage a moment before:

DIANA

None that are on line.

GARTH

Then I've defeated every security device?

DIANA

In the residence, there was only this one...

Garth steps past her.

EXT. NIGHT - A BATTLEFIELD - MEN AND WOMEN

are advancing from debris hole to debris hole, weapons readied, some FIRING, as EXPLOSIONS pound the earth around them.

AT THE RAMPARTS - THE POLICE

among others are returning fire. Clearly, they are outgunned.

EXT. NIGHT - A PROMONTORY - REICH'S HELICOPTER

sits tied down against the wind. A man makes his way to the chopper, pulls the door open: LaPiere.

INSIDE THE CHOPPER - REICH

looks up. The cockpit is filled with an operatic aria. Turning it down:

REICH

What is it?

LAPIERE

Dodge reports the Conlan woman is moving against him. He thinks its the main force. He doesn't think he can hold... They could be here in two hours.

REICH

You tell Dodge he has to hold! Get every hand to stand by. We'll wait for Garth to

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REICH (cont'd)
radio in, but one way or the other, we're
taking Casa Vincent tonight!

INT. NIGHT - THE RESIDENCE - VINCENT'S BED

provides a landing spot for Garth's body. His equipment lies
nearby.

Diana's image seems to sit down beside him. After a moment of
recovery:

GARTH
You're on my side now, is that the idea?

DIANA
Is that all you've come to do, steal?

Garth considers the question a moment.

GARTH
Vincent was supposedly on the verge of a
discovery that would return the earth to
its original weather pattern. Do you know
anything about that?

No.

GARTH (CONT'D)
That secret is supposed to be contained
in Vincent's computer... in you.

DIANA
I'm not the computer. I just live in
it... But no, I'm not aware of anything
like that.

GARTH
Can you access the computer?

DIANA
There were things Mr. Vincent didn't want
me to know... business secrets,
accounting spreadsheets, his personal
correspondence. Other things.

GARTH
Look.

Diana's eyes shut. When they open:

CONTINUED:

DIANA

Nothing about any research on weather.
There are vast amounts of files that are
encrypted.

GARTH

Can you decrypt them?

Diana would rather not answer the question. She's
obfuscating:

DIANA

No... I can't.

GARTH

Maybe I can...

DIANA

No. You wouldn't stand a chance. Let me
take you to the earthquake supplies.
There must be a ton of food. It's located
in the subbasement.

Garth realizes that she's holding back. He stands, gathers
his equipment.

DIANA (CONT'D)

It's this way...

But Garth strides out in the opposite direction, deeper into
the residence.

WALK WITH GARTH

as Diana comes up to parallel him.

DIANA

You're going the wrong way.

Garth slams through the doors leading to a corridor.

On the left, the armory, behind locked doors.

IN THE ARMORY

cool as a mausoleum in the shadowy dark, where there are row
upon row of weapons systems, dormant but operable.

HALLWAY - GARTH

presses on.

DIANA

You mustn't go in there.

Garth ignores her.

DIANA (CONT'D)

If you go in there you'll set off the
final defensive system! Listen to me!

THE DOUBLE DOORS

are massive. A sign reads: *EnCrypt*.

Garth drops his pack, removes the notebook computer, begins
picking the locks.

MINUTES LATER - THE DOORS

swing open.

Diana stands in Garth's way.

DIANA

Please... I'm begging you, don't...

Garth pushes through her.

THE COMPUTER ROOM IS VAST

A machine of a million parts, pulsing, alive, a sentient
thinking machine.

At its center is a couch preformed to accommodate the human
body.

In it, THE CORPSE OF A MAN.

ANGLE - DIANA

stands by the corpse.

Garth approaches, stunned.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH
Vincent?

Yes.

GARTH (CONT'D)
Tell me what happened.

Tears well in her eyes. She fights them.

DIANA
I... murdered him.

GARTH
Why?

Diana looks away. Moments fall like broken glass to the floor.

GARTH (CONT'D)
(a shout)
WHY?

DIANA
Over the months that he was a recluse here, he... changed. I know why now. He never told me about the collapse... out there. He never said, "Diana, the world is ending." I thought Mr. Vincent had accepted the fact that I wasn't attracted to him...

FLASHBACK: VINCENT'S LAB - VINCENT

sits working at a computer station, fingers rippling across the keyboard. He stops.

DIANA PROJECTS nearby.

DIANA
Mr. Vincent, you asked for me?

Vincent turns to look at her appraisingly, foot to head.

VINCENT
There's just the two of us now, Diana...

DIANA
Sir?

Thoughts cascade through his mind and out onto his expression. Finally:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT
What are you wearing?

Diana looks down at herself. Tunic. Slacks.

DIANA
Business clothes. As usual.

VINCENT
Take them off.

Stunned, for some moments Diana can say nothing.

DIANA
Mr. Vincent, this wasn't part of our agreement.

Vincent's fingers return to the keyboard.

DIANA'S CLOTHES DISAPPEAR.

RESUME DIANA IN PRESENT

as she recounts the story to Garth.

DIANA
I was a disembodied human being...
Vincent could recreate me any way he
wanted inside the computer... make me *do*
things... make me *feel* things... Even so,
it wasn't enough.

FLASHBACK: THE VINCENT LAB - VINCENT

types data into EnCrypt.

DIANA'S NARRATION
Vincent intended to transfer his
consciousness into the computer, to bring
us together.

Diana pleads with Vincent.

DIANA
Don't do this! You'll die!

VINCENT
(cynically)
Sweet Diana - always the humanitarian!
What you don't know - I'm dead already!
But in there...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT (cont'd)
(gestures EnCrypt)
... I'll be immortal and I'll have you
forever!

DIANA'S NARRATION
I knew by this time what he meant by
'have' me. He would rape and debase me
for all eternity.

Finishing the preparations, Vincent lies down on the
recliner, pulls the pincer nodes down so they touch his brow.

DIANA'S NARRATION (CONT'D)
Vincent allowed me full control of the
operational functions of EnCrypt... so I
overloaded the system. I murdered him...

The EnCrypt MACHINE GOES WILD, SPARKS FLITTING. Vincent
fries.

RESUME PRESENT - DIANA

continues to remember the night she killed Vincent.

GARTH
You didn't murder him... You protected
yourself. Justifiable homicide.

Diana listens. She's not so sure.

DIANA
I'll help you get what you want, just...
you have to promise me something.

GARTH
What?

DIANA
When you're done... you'll kill me.
(on Garth's searching look:)
I've been alone for twenty years. I can't
stand to be alone any longer, so kill me.

GARTH
That was the plan from the beginning...
Show me how to access Vincent's files.

GARTH OPENS VINCENT'S DEAD HAND

to reveal a detailed tattoo.

Diana watches from five paces away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANA

Put it palm down on the scanner. The system requires both the image and a DNA match. His DNA may be dusty, but it's there.

Garth must twist Vincent's body out of the couch for the hand to reach the nearby scanner.

A band of light reads the drawing.

A 3-D PROJECTION OF A COMPUTER SCREEN

fills the room. File names scroll down.

Garth approaches the screen. Bars of light like venetian blinds cross his features.

GARTH

Do any of these names mean anything to you?

DIANA

Do a 'Search.' These are Vincent's files. I can't do it for you.

Garth faces the keyboard, types in *SEARCH*:

GARTH

Search for what?

DIANA

Try 'weather.'

Garth types in *WEATHER*.

VINCENT ARMORY - TWO VATS OF INERT LIQUID,

one green, one yellow, rest above an empty container.

The LIQUIDS SUDDENLY EMPTY into the container, mixing.

Three LASER BEAMS JET OUT to warm the liquid.

The liquid begins to move.

RESUME COMPUTER ROOM - GARTH

watches new files list on the screen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARTH

Here we go.

Diana looks over his shoulder.

DIANA

Wait. What's that?

She points.

THE SCROLLING WORDS - A NAME

among many others: PRAETOR

GARTH AND DIANA

GARTH

What's Praetor?

DIANA

Not what - who. My doctor. Bring up the file.

Garth types in *PRAETOR* and presses RETURN.

A RECORDED IMAGE FILLS THE SCREEN:

EXT. DAY - A SIDEWALK CAFE - VINCENT & PRAETOR

sit at a table. DR. PRAETOR is a man whose persona sings confidence and believability. Vincent looks 20 years younger than he did in Diana's last recounting.

PRAETOR

Let's get right down to it - I won't do this.

VINCENT

Do what?

PRAETOR

You damn well know what I mean. Diana Logan. This is tantamount to murder. It's unethical and I won't be a part of it.

Vincent's gaze drifts about, looking for a camera... until he looks DIRECTLY AT YOU.

Vincent smiles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT
I'm aware that you're recording this.

PRAETOR
I won't do it!

VINCENT
You will bring me the disc.

PRAETOR
There's nothing wrong with her!

VINCENT
You'll bring me the disc... or you'll pay
the price!

PRAETOR
She's not sick! She's not going to die!

VINCENT
BRING IT TO ME!

The recording ends.

GARTH WATCHES AS DIANA

staggers back.

DIANA
There was nothing wrong with me...

Diana looks over at Vincent's mummified cadaver, hand
reaching out as if beckoning for her.

DIANA (CONT'D)
You were right... *You were right!*

GARTH
Diana...

DIANA
He murdered me... I was a young woman. I
wanted children. I wanted a life...

GARTH
You took your revenge on him.

DIANA
No... NO! He deserved what I did to him.
I didn't deserve THIS!

The hollow SOUND of the computer lab echoes her words.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANA DISAPPEARS.

VINCENT ARMORY - A CREATURE

is forming in the vat. Amoeba-like. Constantly changing. A tentacle becomes an arm... becomes a hand reaching for the lid... pushes it away... it clatters to the floor... the beast rises.

COMPUTER ROOM - GARTH

stands alone in the cavernous room. Diana is gone. Shaken, he gradually turns to the computer.

Garth reviews more files.

One catches his attention: CONGRESS.

Garth activates it.

THE PROJECTION OF VINCENT

that Garth stares up at is twice life-size. Vincent's luxurious office can be seen behind him.

VINCENT'S IMAGE

Ladies and gentlemen of Congress... the plan you are about to review, if implemented, will return the earth's weather pattern to what it was forty years ago... Vincent Industries has invested countless hours...

(shared amusement)

— and my substantial fortune — in developing a new kind of flora, a plant with an unusual by-product...

VINCENT ARMORY - THE AMOEBIC CREATURE

overflows the vat and lands with a splat onto the floor. It begins to undulate.

THE COMPUTER ROOM - GARTH

continues to observe the Vincent presentation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT'S IMAGE

... a hydroflourocarbon-eating micro-organism transmitted by the wind and capable of returning the ozone layer to its previous state within a decade. Once the ozone layer is re-established...

VINCENT ARMORY - THE BEAST

pauses at a door, its pulsating globular flesh hesitant... before it rises and reshapes itself into an imperfect mimic of a human being.

THE COMPUTER ROOM - GARTH

watches Vincent.

VINCENT'S IMAGE

... global warming will be reduced, and gradually the storms which have plagued our planet will decline in potency... (etc.)

DIANA APPEARS beside Garth.

DIANA

John, something's coming.

GARTH

What? What something?

DIANA

I don't know. I've never seen it before.

VINCENT'S IMAGE

The glaciation which has increased in recent years in the far northern and southern hemispheres due to the increased cloud cover will...

GARTH

What do you mean you've never seen it before?

Diana has no answer.

GARTH (CONT'D)

Where?

DIANA

In the armory.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT'S IMAGE

... gradually recede. Now there is a price to be paid for these miracles. The Vincent plant will affect agriculture. The plant is aggressive and can't discern between wild and cultivated land...

GARTH

What does it look like?

DIANA

Like a man... then not.

GARTH

Let me see it.

Diana sends the video feed to a monitor.

MONITOR - THE AMOEBIC CREATURE

stands like a man before the door, barely seen in the shadows.

RESUME COMPUTER ROOM - GARTH & DIANA

stare at the screen.

GARTH

It's a man.

Suddenly the creature TRANSMORPHS into something ghastly and inhuman, and reforms as a man.

GARTH (CONT'D)

Vincent has another weapons system, one you don't know about.

DIANA

Well, fuck him!

THE GALLERIES - PORTALS

open and disgorge flying miniature helicopters, ghosts, tanks and robots which move quickly in a single direction.

FOLLOW THE CHOPPERS

as they careen through the galleries... down the corridor toward the elevator... bank left down the stairwell... and into the residence.

Ghosts, tanks and robots follow.

VINCENT ARMORY - THE AMOEBIC CREATURE

flings a globular portion of itself at the door.

The door BEGINS TO CHANGE, RIPPLING AND UNDULATING... then opens itself before collapsing. The globular residue returns to Mother.

THE COMPUTER ROOM - GARTH

retrieves his rifle and equipment as Vincent's projected image continues its presentation.

VINCENT'S IMAGE

... lack of concentrated crops means a decline in yield of over fifty percent lasting for more than two decades. However, this change is temporary. The new plant has been bio-engineered to self-destruct after thirty generations...

Garth sees that Diana is standing absolutely still, her eyes staring far off, elsewhere, directing the battle in the armory.

VINCENT ARMORY - THE AMOEBIC CREATURE

turns as dozens of miniature helicopters veer into the room and head for it.

The CREATURE DISSOLVES TO THE FLOOR and separates into dozens of smaller globules, which dash for every corner of the room.

THE COMPUTER ROOM - GARTH

reaches out to almost touch Diana.

GARTH

Diana?

CONTINUED:

Nothing.

THE VINCENT ARMORY - THE CHOPPERS

fire at the small globular creatures, which respond by flinging portions of themselves back.

A CHOPPER

is slimed by the Ameobic creature. The chopper begins to alter immediately. Its blades warp and slow, its metal sag, and it drops from the sky.

THE BATTLE

The choppers FIRE. PULSE BEAMS CRISS-CROSS THE ROOM.

The AMOEBAS FLING BACK.

Ghosts join the melee.

Robots and tanks wheel into the room.

COMPUTER ROOM - DIANA

stands in a trance, concentrating every resource at commanding the battle.

VINCENT'S IMAGE

... small price to pay for a return to a normal Earth in less than fifty years - one trillion dollars... in gold... in advance.

VINCENT ARMORY - THE BATTLE

continues to rage. CHOPPERS CAREEN AND CRASH. GHOSTS HOVER AND EXCHANGE FIRE WITH THE GLOBULES. ROBOTS ROLL OVER THE SMALL MASSES OF GOO AND ARE TRANSFORMED BY THEM. LASER BEAMS CRISS-CROSS THE ROOM.

MOMENTS LATER

the final chopper crashes.

The final ghost falls from the air.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Silence.

AN AMOEBA

joins another. Then another. Then another.

THE CENTER OF THE ROOM

where the beast rejoins and rises into a mockery of a human being, imperfect as Frankenstein's monster, ghastly.

COMPUTER ROOM - DIANA'S

eyes focus on the here and now.

DIANA

I failed.

VINCENT'S IMAGE

Now I know that Congress is busy currently... Cities are burning... there's rioting in the streets... but I must demand an immediate response.

GARTH

I watched on the monitor.

DIANA

It's coming, John.

VINCENT'S IMAGE

I am prepared on notice of your commitment to release a billion bio-engineered seeds into the next passing storm...

Garth turns back to the computer station.

GARTH

Did he release the seeds?

DIANA

I'm locked out. Release his data to me. Here, input this command.

Large symbols appear in front of Vincent's projected face.

Garth inputs the code.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCENT'S IMAGE

I await your confirmation...

File names reel up past Vincent. THE FILES BEGIN TO OPEN, ARE DISCARDED, ARE REPLACED BY OTHERS, COMPUTER FAST. DOCUMENTS, FILMS, BLUEPRINTS.

DIANA

The seed pods are located on the roof...
They haven't been activated.

GARTH

The federal government collapsed before
it could respond... Why didn't he release
them?

Diana doesn't say.

GARTH (CONT'D)

(a shout)

WHY?

DIANA

Because the bastard wasn't paid!

GARTH

He allowed the world to be destroyed...
because he wasn't paid?

Diana's expression almost asks: *He allowed me to die, didn't he?*

DIANA

Yes!

GARTH

Maybe there's something wrong with the
seeds. Check his data.

DIANA

John, the creature is approaching...

GARTH

I DON'T CARE!... Check the files.

Diana's eyes close. The HUM of the great computer's synaptic circuits fills the room. ON THE PROJECTED SCREEN, file names stream down at an unreadable rate. Graphs, blueprints, representations of the new plant's DNA flicker into and out of existence. Then:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANA

According to the research, the new bio-engineered plant should work as advertised.

GARTH

Release the seeds! Now!

DIANA

John, the creature is just outside that door.

Garth rushes the command console.

GARTH

I'll do it! Show me how!

Diana pulls her gaze away from the door just as its color begins to change.

DIANA

I can't. It's a temporary device. Vincent didn't integrate it with the rest of the systems. You'll have to set it off manually, from the roof.

THE DOOR

changes color, ripples, opens as it sags. The amoebic globules that deteriorated the door reunite with the creature.

COMPUTER ROOM (SCENE) - GARTH AND DIANA

react as the creature slithers/walks into the room. The creature struggles to hold its human form, twisting, undulating until... VINCENT'S EVIL GRIN appears on its face. Startled, Diana almost screams.

Garth switches his rifle to full auto and sprays the amoeba, causing it to splatter against the far wall.

GARTH

It was Vincent!

But Diana sees this awful creature for what it is.

DIANA

No... Vincent must have used a subset of his own DNA to create it. Nothing that

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANA (cont'd)
small could carry the entire
consciousness of a human being.

The amoeba begins to reform, the splattered matter oozing
across the dark floor and down the distant walls to
reassemble.

GARTH
Diana – stairs to the roof?

DIANA
Far end of the room. Go!

Garth grabs his equipment, turns to leave:

GARTH
Shut off the surface to air missile
batteries on the roof.

DIANA
Why?

GARTH
Just do it!

Diana gestures assent. They share a brief moment eye-to-eye,
then Garth turns and rushes for the far reaches of the huge
room.

DIANA

turns to face the reforming creature. She disappears and the
shoebox rushes for the amorphous biomass slithering toward
her.

The shoebox slugs into the mass and is swallowed whole.

GARTH

slides to a stop beside the door, twists its knob, finds it
locked and jams his survival knife deep into the wood of the
jamb. It splinters.

Garth rises and slams through the door.

STAIRWELL - GARTH

reels through the door and up the stairs.

There is a another door at the next landing blocking his
path.

COMPUTER ROOM - THE AMOEBIC CREATURE

undulates toward the open door to the stairs, moving with incredible speed.

STAIRWELL DOOR - GARTH

stabs his survival knife into the door, smashing the wood.

STAIRWELL LOWER LANDING - (SCENE) - THE CREATURE

oozes through the door... THEN SPURTS A PORTION OF ITSELF up the well.

Where Garth has just slammed the door behind him.

The ooze lands on the door and begins to commingle with it.

STAIRWELL - GARTH

wedges the survival blade into the jamb, securing the door.

Garth quickly ascends the steps to the next landing.

Below, THE DOOR GARTH SECURED BEGINS TO WAFFLE, its constituents weakened by contact with the creature. It sags open and the creature enters.

AT THE NEXT LANDING - GARTH

blows the doorknob off the door just as A SMATTERING OF GOO thrown from below SPLATTERS ONTO HIS BODY ARMOR WITH A HISS.

Garth ignores the goo and leaps through the door to the final landing below the roof.

BELOW - THE MOTHER GOO

begins to "slinky" up the steps toward the gaping door.

THE NEXT LANDING - GARTH

staggers to a stop as the GOO SLIDES UP OVER HIS EYES.

CLOSE - GARTH'S EYES

reveal that the SPARKLING BODY ARMOR IS KEEPING THE GOO INCHES AWAY from really contacting him.

RESUME GARTH

as he stabs his fingers through the goo, trying to remove it from blocking his sight.

He reaches for a battery from his pack, finds the last one, pulls it, SPITS ON ITS CONTACTS AND THEN RAMS IT INTO THE GOO.

The GOO SHRIEKS AND LEAPS AWAY.

Garth pulls the hand radio from his pack.

GARTH
(radio)
Reich, come in.

EXT. THE CHOPPER LANDING SITE - NIGHT

Reich returns to the chopper to take the mike.

REICH
(radio)
Garth, go ahead.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. THE VINCENT ROOF - NIGHT

Garth leaps through the door onto the roof. The STORM IS ALMOST UNBEARABLE. Above the noise of the wind:

GARTH
(radio)
Reich, bring your people in!

Reich throws LaPiere a '*I told you so*' look.

REICH
Okay! Let's go! You heard the man.

GARTH

surveys the roof looking for the seeding devices.

GARTH'S POV - THE SEEDING DEVICES

are globes twenty feet across located at each corner of the roof.

GARTH

moves for the closest globe as, in the distance, Reich's chopper begins to wing in.

Garth opens the control panel.

INSERT - CONTROL PANEL

where a remote activation device is imbedded beside the programing keys.

GARTH

takes the remote controller out, snaps it onto his belt, then studies the seeding device controls as Reich's chopper lands near the center of the roof.

Reich, LaPiere and six men with weapons exit the chopper.

REICH

You did it!

GARTH

The last defensive device is coming up those stairs right now. Send your people to take care of it.

REICH

(gesturing to LaPiere)

Go!

LaPiere and the six men move for the stairwell.

LAPIERE & THE SOLDIERS

slam open the stairwell door and fire on full automatic into the pit. Once everyone has emptied one clip, they reload and descend.

REICH OBSERVES GARTH

as he prepares to activate the controls.

REICH
What are you doing?

GARTH
You were right. Vincent developed a way to fix the weather. I'm setting the timers that will blow the roof and seed the incoming storm.

Reich thinks about this a moment.

REICH
No shit? Reverse the weather?

INT. STAIRWELL - LAPIERE

allows the troops to take the point as they descend.

The lead trooper runs into THE AMEOBIC CREATURE, WHICH ENVELOPES HIM. Blinded, his body armor sparking, the soldier spins madly, screaming.

LAPIERE
Back off! Back off!

He and the remaining troops retreat up five steps.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Reich watches Garth type in '5:00' in the timer.

REICH
What are you doing? You're not going to activate it, are you?

GARTH
Of course I'm going to activate it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REICH

Don't you realize what this is, you
idiot?! This is more than wealth – this
is power!

IN THE STAIRWELL - LAPIERE

and the remaining troops watch as the SOLDIER IS CONSUMED BY
THE AMOEBIC CREATURE. His skin turns powder-white before he
is spat out like a dust devil to the floor below.

LAPIERE

Kill it! Shoot it! Shoot it!

They OPEN FIRE, FULL AUTOMATIC.

ON THE ROOF - REICH AND GARTH

stare at one another, Garth's finger poised above the
activate button.

REICH

All I'm asking is... just think about
this a minute, will you?... We could evac
all this equipment up to the Central
Coast and set it off when the time is
right. We could... reunite the country.
Hell, the entire goddamn world.

GARTH

With you as emperor, I suppose?

Reich grins. *Emperor is too strong a word...*

Garth presses the 'activate' button, bringing this globe on
line.

IN THE STAIRWELL - LAPIERE

and his remaining men RETREAT UP THE STEPS AS THEY FIRE.

The ROUNDS SPLATTER THE CREATURE for seconds before it
reunites.

The creature FLINGS A PORTION OF ITSELF UP THE STAIRWELL,
CONNECTING WITH A SOLDIER. He screams in fear, the goo
beginning to eat through his body armor.

LaPiere reaches past his men to shove the wounded man at the
creature below, to buy time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAPIERE
(gesturing up)
Let's go, let's go!

ROOF - GARTH

runs for the next machine as Reich follows him, pleading.

REICH
Look, look... I'm not a greedy guy. We'll
do it your way. Any way you want.

GARTH
My way is now.

REICH
No! No, don't you see, there's no margin
in that. We can't use that.

Garth opens the next controller, taps the 'on' button, begins
to program.

STAIRWELL - LAPIERE

is the last to be slimed. Men below him are already burning,
being eaten by the goo flung by the mother creature.

LAPIERE
Goddamn it, goddamn it!

LaPiere peels the body armor belt off. The goo sticks to the
electromagnetic shield. LaPiere tosses it into the darkness
below and retreats up.

INTERIOR - AT THE ROOF DOOR - LAPIERE

is almost out the door when the amoebic CREATURE SLAPS ONTO
HIM, PULLING HIM BELOW. LaPiere begins to bellow and cry,
shrieking with fear.

ON THE ROOF - REICH

fires his automatic pistol at the sky, stopping Garth, who
turns slowly to face him.

REICH
Let's be reasonable... You're alone. I
have troops.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Garth's expression says, *I wouldn't be so sure...*

REICH (CONT'D)

I want to help mankind, too. Just like you. But at the right time. If we set it off now, no one can take credit, but if we wait, spread the word, rally people to our side, and then set it off — there's no limit to how strong we can become.

GARTH

No. Now.

REICH

No. Later. When I say so.

Garth shakes his head 'no.'

REICH (CONT'D)

You're a tough nut, Major...

Something slaps Reich behind his head. *What's that?* Keeping the weapon aimed at Garth, HE REACHES BACK WITH HIS LEFT HAND, FEELS SOMETHING ON HIS SKIN, brings the fingers before his eyes so he can see.

REICH (CONT'D)

What the hell?

Garth pivots and runs.

THIRD SEEDING DEVICE - GARTH

slides home, flips open the controller and begins tapping in the activation delay. Behind him, in the distant background, REICH SPINS MADLY, SCREAMING.

Garth activates the device, then stands.

Reich's VOICE GOES SUDDENLY SILENT.

Now there's only Garth and the creature left on the roof.

And one remaining pod to be programmed.

Garth leaps into a run toward it.

RUN WITH GARTH

as he jumps cables and ventilators. In the distant, and then less so distant background unidentified items are tossed into the air as the creature approaches quickly.

Garth freezes.

THE CREATURE (SCENE)

slowly undulates up into a mound, then a miniature peak, then a crude mimic of humanity, and finally into a monster of a man. Vincent's awful face draws into a smile.

Garth draws the Smith and Wessons and BEGINS FIRING, leaping away.

A PORTION OF THE CREATURE, JUST FLUNG, SPLATS against a roof brace behind where Garth stood and slithers down.

The creature LOSES VISCOSITY AS THE STREAM OF BULLETS HITS IT and it collapses.

Garth leaps across the puddle and runs on.

THE FOURTH POD - GARTH

drops to his knees, opens the control box and begins programing the device.

A dark form rises behind him.

Garth accidentally programs in '50:00' rather than '5:00'.
Cursing:

GARTH
Goddamn it! Goddamn it!

He must start all over again.

The form behind him is larger.

Finished, Garth stands. He notices the dark form behind him. He turns.

REICH

stands there, HALF HIS BODY CHALK, SHAKING WITH THE CERTAINTY OF HIS DEATH. He reaches out an arm at Garth but it falls, like a cigarette ash, to the floor and disintegrates.

What remains of his living flesh turns chalk-white and disintegrates TO REVEAL:

THE CREATURE

standing behind him.

Goo from REICH'S BODY DRIBBLES AWAY, THEN SCOOTs to the Mother Goo.

GARTH

retreats a step, removes the remote control from his pocket, presses the 'activate button' and tosses it into the darkness.

INSERT - THE CONTROLLER PANELS

light up and begin a countdown from 5:00.

RESUME SCENE

as Garth takes a step to the left.

But the creature ignores him, looking instead toward the pod.

CREATURE'S POV - THE TIMER

continues to count down: 4:33... 4:32... 4:31... 4:30...

RESUME SCENE

as Garth waves his hands at the creature, trying to draw its attention away from the pod.

GARTH

Hey! Hey! This way, slime ball!

The creature looks at him briefly, then moves for the pod.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The creature FLINGS A WAD OF ITSELF at the pod timer mechanism.

The MECHANISM BEGINS TO CHANGE, darken, weaken.

GARTH

leaps to the pod, breaks a faceplate, stabs *ACTIVATE NOW*.

THE TIMER

goes from 4:17 to 10, then 9... 8... 7... 6...

GARTH

leaps away.

THE EXPLOSION

sends the pod ball high into the sky, where it BURSTS APART, sending the seeds gusting high into the wind.

GARTH

runs for the next pod. He slides headfirst into the mechanism, pops the cover open and breaks the face plate. Finger on the *ACTIVATE NOW* button, Garth looks back over his shoulder.

GARTH'S POV - THE CREATURE

undulates toward him like a shark smelling blood.

RESUME GARTH

as he presses the button and moves.

THE CREATURE

FLINGS ITSELF at the pod just as it EXPLODES.

The pod ball rises into the sky, repeating the previous EXPLOSION.

GARTH

is running for the next pod when the flying goo SLAPS HIM ON THE SHOULDERS and back. The goo causes the BODY ARMOR TO SPARK.

Garth checks his wrist read-out:

INSERT - WRIST READ-OUT

reports 27... 24... 21...

GARTH

reaches for another battery in his belt. Empty.

Garth hits the buckle, snapping the armor loose, and throws it aside, the GOO CLINGING TO IT as it falls away.

THIRD POD - GARTH

nearly falls over it, drops to a knee, opens the cover, smashes the faceplate and presses the *ACTIVATE NOW* button.

The pod BLOWS just as Garth leaps away.

THE SEEDS

are whipped up and away by the stiffening wind.

GARTH

removes the last two clips for the pistols, loads one, then the other.

He stares off across the roof.

GARTH'S POV - THE CREATURE

is making its way toward the final pod.

(SCENE) GARTH

draws the Smith-and-Wessons and advances.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Garth begins FIRING ON FULL AUTOMATIC as he runs.

The BULLETS DISPERSE THE CREATURE. Goo flies everywhere.

Garth reaches the pod first, opens the cover, smashes the faceplate.

ANOTHER ANGLE - THE CREATURE'S

amorphous tentacles grip Garth and pull him back.

His reaching hand is jerked away from the *ACTIVATE NOW* button.

Garth bellows in pain as the GOO ABSORBS INTO HIS SKIN. White blotches begin to appear.

Garth's boot catches a cable line and holds as the creature pulls on his prone body.

Garth reaches for a pen in his pocket. It's the miniature crossbow seen earlier. Arms spring out, a trigger. The bolt snaps into place with a flick of his wrist. Garth aims... aims... and fires.

THE POD CONTROLLER - THE *ACTIVATE NOW* BUTTON

is pressed home by the flying bolt.

GARTH AND THE CREATURE

are blown back by the explosion.

Garth lands ten feet away. The GOO IS SLOWLY PROCEEDING UP ONE ARM, changing his flesh, killing it. Garth rubs it, as if to return circulation, but it doesn't help.

Garth sees the creature reforming, moving toward him. He tries to move but he's been hurt far more than he thought. He sags, waiting death.

A DAMAGED ROBOT

from an earlier confrontation with the creature surges forward. In its hands, a cable whose end has been stripped, revealing naked wires. The robot spears the creature with the cable. SPARKS AND SIZZLING FLESH. Moments pass as the CREATURE CONTINUES TO LOSE VISCOSITY, sagging finally into bags of amorphous jelly, and then decayed pools of chemicals.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Diana APPEARS, imperfectly due to damaged projector lenses, on top of the robot, which drops the cable.

DIANA
Are you all right?

GARTH
(coughing)
I'm dying.

DIANA
No you're not. I can save you.

GARTH
(laughs - bubbling blood)
No. I don't think so.

The robot scoops him up, pivots and moves for the stairwell door, DIANA PROJECTED ON TOP and seeming to tend to Garth.

THE TRACKS OF THE ROBOT

pass over puddles of ooze, which cling.

EXT./INT. THE STAIRWELL - (SCENE)

The robot carrying Garth, crazily descends the steps, dropping from step to step.

Smashes through the second landing door.

Crashes through the third.

Careens around the corner and through the final door.

THE ROBOT'S TRACKS

are beginning to SMOKE AND HISS as the creature transforms the metal.

GARTH AND DIANA

almost tumble from the robot as it throws a track and grinds to a halt.

Garth's left arm is almost ash.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANA

You must get up!... Get up!... Get up,
goddamn it! GET UP!

Garth is almost out. He looks questioningly at Diana, as if to ask, *Why?*

DIANA (CONT'D)

Get to the computer! John, listen to me,
you can still live... if you just get to
the computer!

Garth understands. He tries to lift himself from the robot's arms, falls back, tries again.

Garth tumbles to the floor, tries to stand but his LEFT LEG HAS BEEN CONVERTED TO WASTE MATERIAL. No living flesh there.

DIANA (CONT'D)

Focus, John! Focus on me. You can do it.

DIANA'S IMAGE FLICKERS in the darkness, a wavering ghost. She is tethered to the damaged robot, unable to go with him.

Garth begins to crawl.

DIANA DISAPPEARS FROM THE ROBOT and REAPPEARS, A BETTER PROJECTION, near the computer where Vincent's lifeless body lays.

DIANA (CONT'D)

Fifteen feet, John. That's all it is.
Just fifteen feet.

(SCENE) THE CREATURE

surges through the door.

Diana snaps around to look, as does Garth.

The creature too is not what it once was. The beast fights to retain its form and motion, but moves forward.

Garth tries to crawl faster, but can't.

DIANA DISAPPEARS from the computer, and REAPPEARS at the robot. Standing on its top, she directs it to turn around. The remaining track spins the machine around.

Garth forces himself to go faster.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Diana commands the robot's arms to snap menacingly. This is the only weapon that remains.

The creature advances.

Garth uses furniture to pull himself forward. He's on his knees now.

The robot's arms snap as the creature advances.

The robot and creature meet. The snapping arms are meaningless. The CREATURE SWALLOWS THE ROBOT as DIANA'S IMAGE WAVERS, CRACKLES, AND DISAPPEARS.

(SCENE) DIANA

REAPPEARS beside the computer.

She watches with mute horror as the creature absorbs the robot, rises to its full height, and then FLINGS A PORTION OF ITS MASS AT GARTH.

The GOO HITS GARTH just as he rises to push Vincent's body from the couch. The body topples onto the floor as Garth screams in pain.

The GOO SETTLES INTO HIS BACK, sizzling.

Garth loses control of his body, collapses to the floor.

Portions of his back, waist, one leg, one arm are already lifeless.

DIANA

I can't do this for you! You must get up
onto the couch! Now! NOW!

Garth shakes the grogginess away as A SHADOW FALLS ACROSS HIM.

(SCENE) THE CREATURE,

its mass increased by conquest, has risen to its full height less than five feet away.

Garth rises on one leg as the other drops away from his body, a fallen cigarette ash.

One last Herculean effort, Garth jumps up onto the couch.

The CREATURE FALLS UPON HIM, swallowing him whole.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Diana gasps in surprise and regret.

Garth's GOOD HAND JUTS UP THROUGH THE GOO, pulls the temple probe down to where his forehead is located beneath the creature.

The vast computer's HUM increases.

The outline of Garth's body jumps, then shakes in death rattle.

Diana throws the full power of EnCrypt into the chair making contact with the amoebic goo. EnCrypt's dormant synaptic power rises to a terrible HUM. The creature fries, this time not dissolving but burning. Pieces fly away, ashes fallen from a bonfire. A BELLOWING MOAN rises from the creature as it crumbles into hot dust.

SLOW DISSOLVE:

EXT. A MEADOW ABOVE THE OCEAN - DAY

Wild flowers are in bloom. The sea wind gusts gently.

Garth stands staring out to sea. He wears casual clothes, clean, carefree.

A hand reaches out for him. Garth takes it.

PULL BACK to reveal Diana. Wearing a sun dress and holding a hat on her head against the wind. She smiles.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL that this is a television screen in the EnCrypt computer room.

PULL BACK TO THE CEILING... THROUGH THE CEILING... THEN THE NEXT, AND THE NEXT... TO THE ROOF... TO THE SKY, WHERE THE STORM IS RAGING AND THE POD SEEDS ARE SWIRLING... ABOVE THE STORM...

PULL BACK TO THE EARTH ITSELF, SPINNING ON.

FADE OUT:

THE END