

EXT. SKY-DAY

A Black B-1 Bomber banks steeply exposing its underside to us.

MAN (V.O./FILTERED)

Slingshot this is  
Watchdog. Rabbit's home.

Rolling out of its bank, the bomber begins a steep climb revealing the fact that it is carrying a small delta winged shuttle on it back. The bomber's wings slide back.

BOMBER PILOT (V.O./FILTERED)

Roger watchdog.  
Understand we are go for  
crossbow.

Suddenly a rocket engine on the back of the modified bomber fires thrusting the plane into steep climb.

INT. B-1 FLIGHT DECK-DAY

THE PLANE VIBRATES. The pilot and co-pilot are busy in their seats. Behind them sits a third pilot wearing a space suit. He gives them a thumbs-up signal, rises and crawls to the rear.

BOMBER PILOT

(into the mike/  
over the roar)

Watchdog, Slingshot. let  
us know when the rabbit's  
in the hole.

EXT. A CROWD-DAY

A blond haired, blue-eyed man with a small walkie-talkie is standing in the midst of a group of cheering Central American peasants and townsfolk. He is disguised as one of them.

ANGLE ON VILLA BALCONY

The uniformed President of this formerly sleepy, now strategically critical nation is waving to his people. He is flanked by military guards. He turns and walks into the villa.

EXT. B-1 BOMBER-DAY

The bomber approaches the top of it's arc.

ATHERTON

The shuttle pilot climbs  
into his seat, straps in  
and checks his  
instruments.

SHUTTLE PILOT

All systems check.  
Crossbow is armed.

BOMBER PILOT (V.O.)

Roger, Ignition sequence,  
start, separation in  
five...

EXT. TOP OF THE BOMBER

The explosive bolts blow on the shuttle  
mount.

INT. BOMBER FLIGHT DECK

The pilot pushes his yolk forward.

EXT. BOMBER

As the bomber falls way, the shuttle's  
booster ignites with a roar, thrusting it  
toward space.

EXT. SPACE-LOOKING BACK

We see a tiny glowing speck coming towards  
us. very quickly it gains in altitude and  
we see that it is the shuttle. Suddenly it  
is upon us and blasts over our heads.

ANGLE FROM BEHIND

We follow the shuttle. The engine stops.  
There is a small explosion, which pushes  
the booster rocket away. Small maneuvering  
rockets fire and the shuttle establishes  
itself in a nose down altitude.

SHUTTLE PILOT (V.O. FILTERED)

Crossbow is established.

BOMBER PILOT (V.O./FILTERED)

Roger, we have ground  
confirmation. Reference  
grid seven. Check  
pathfinder, on.

SHUTTLE PILOT (V.O. FILTERED)

Roger, I'm going on the  
scope. Moving Target  
Indicator, engage.

Behind and above the cockpit a large hatch  
opens and a large circular spinning mirror  
rises and locks into position.

INT. SHUTTLE

The pilot reaches above him and pulls down  
a viewfinder and begins looking through  
it.

EXT. THE SHUTTLE.

A target sighting lens moves from right to  
left, stops, and then moves back but this  
time with the mirror moving in unison.

INT. THE SHUTTLE

While still looking through the  
viewfinder, the pilot manipulates the  
targeting controls.

INSERT

PILOT'S POV OF THE SCREEN

Crosshairs, a grid patten and digital, rangefinder readouts appear over various parts of the Earth's topography as the pilot searches for his target. Then it steadies on a polarized image of a group of people. One of the images seems to stand out brighter than the others.

EXT. VILLA PATIO-DAY

The president and his aide are chatting with a group of visiting dignitaries. There is a jovial atmosphere as they order drinks from a waiter. The president is proudly displaying one of his medals to his guests. it has a very unique jewel-like object in its middle.

INT. THE SHUTTLE

The pilot is watching through the viewfinder.

PILOT

(into mike)

Scanner on. Target  
locked. Tracking locked.

EXT. THE SHUTTLE

The mirror and sighting lens adjust as they track the target.

EXT. VILLA PATIO

The President is served a cup of coffee. He asks the waiter for sugar. The waiter turns back to his cart.

INT. THE SHUTTLE

The pilot puts his hands on the joysticks and flips open the trigger covers.

PILOT

Nice and easy does it.

EXT. THE SHUTTLE

Dead silence, then the mirror erupts in brilliant light and sends an incredibly bright beam toward the Earth. Behind the shuttle we see exhaust gases venting in giant plumes into space.

EXT. VILLA PATIO

The beam strikes the president like the finger of god. He vaporizes. The waiter turns back with the asked-for sugar to find a smoking hole where the President once stood.

EXT. SPACE

The shuttle finishes its work and the beam shuts down. The mirror folds away and the shuttle arcs across the screen preparing for re-entry, firing small retro rockets.

PILOT (V.O)

I'm coming home. Just  
like shooting ducks in a  
barrel.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

INT. A HIGH-LEVEL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE ROOM-NO  
WINDOWS

A large screen at one end of the room  
continues to show the re-entry.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

The Crossbow Project.  
There's no defense like a  
good offense.

In the middle of the room is a giant donut  
of a round conference table. Another  
circle hangs above and casts light  
downward in such a way as to light the  
table-top but caser those sitting around  
it in shadow. We can see them but not  
well. There are SIX MEN in suits. The look  
is sinister as Hell; but the talk is for  
Rotary Club meeting.

A MAN, sitting at three o'clock, wearing  
an Air force major's uniform, points at a  
remote control device at the screen and  
stops the film. The lighting does not  
change. he turns to the man sitting at  
twelve o'clock.

CARMICHAEL

Nice little weapon isn't  
it, Dave?

DECKER

Well, I guess so, but  
gosh, Don, it's a movie.  
You want me to start  
buying weapons from  
George Lucas?

Polite laughter all around.

CARMICHAEL

Now that would be  
somethin', wouldn't it?

DECKER

Well, sometimes I think I  
might as well.

(to one of the  
others)

What do you think of what  
you saw, Roy?

ROY

I think there weren't  
enough girls.

More polite laughter. Then Roy turns ice  
cold in a flash.

ROY (CONT'D)

Is this thing for  
biological targets only?

CARMICHAEL

No, Sir, this thing would  
take the skin right off,  
of Air Force One if you  
wanted. Not that I'm  
saying we'd ever want to  
kill our own President,  
but, you know, for  
example.

ROY

Our studies indicate that  
this type of weapon is  
totally useless for  
warfare.

DECKER

It's not intended for use  
in your kind of warfare,  
Roy. This is a perfect  
peace time weapon.

ROY

What's the kill  
potential?

CARMICHAEL

As soon as the size-to  
power ratio is licked  
we'll have about seven  
bangs for the buck.

ROY

When that?

Carmichael shrugs the sign for "who  
knows?"

DECKER

Seriously, Don, I have to  
report to the Secretary  
that everything's on  
schedule. We have plans  
for your little ray's gun  
this summer.

CARMICHAEL

(Trying to cover)

As I understand it, guys,  
there's some major  
practical difficulties.  
I'm pushing as hard as I  
can.

DECKER

Well, Don, you tell those  
geniuses you've got until  
the end of the next

fiscal quarter to come up  
with a working model or  
I'm pulling the plug on  
the funding.

CARMICHAEL

(very nervous)

I'm assured they're on  
the verge of a major  
breakthrough.

DECKER

Good. Just as long as we  
get a working weapon out  
of it by June. Right,  
general?

ROY

I wouldn't know, Dave. I  
haven't had a working  
weapon since Korea.

DECKER

Right.

(to assistant)

Larry, let's see the film  
on blinding techniques,  
then we'll have some  
lunch, all right?

INT. EXHIBITION HALL -DAY

WE OPEN on a sign: "Effects of marijuana  
on Rodents." A cage is divided in half.  
One side is marked "NO Marijuana." A  
chinchilla is running furiously on a  
treadmill. The other side is marked  
"Marijuana." A chinchilla is lying in a  
little hammock.

DOLLY BACK TO WIDE SHOT. We see we are in  
a large hall. There are dozens of booths  
and exhibits. A banner strung across the  
hall lets us know that this is the  
"WESTERN REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL WINTER  
SCIENCE FAIR."

ANGLE ON a pretty female student at a  
booth standing in front of a clear glass  
cylinder that has vacuum hoses connected  
to it. There are two colored gases inside  
the cylinder. A sign behind her says: HOW  
TORNADOS ARE FORMED." A small group of  
boys stand watching her in as sexist a way  
as possible.

GIRL

It doesn't seem to be  
working; but if it was,  
these gases would be  
going around.

A BOY

We don't care.

ANGLE ON another part of the hall. Two blond-haired, male twins stand proudly in their booth. "THE GRAVITATIONAL PULL OF HEAVENLY BODIES." A large, crudely painted diorama of the Milky Way is in the background. Several painted balls are suspended in front, labeled "Mercury," "Venus," etc. The sun is represented by a large electromagnet. All the "planets" ANGLE ON a booth near the entrance. A ROBOT attracts a crowd. It has a video screen for a face which reads: "Hi, my name is Harry. Let me guess your weight and age." With jerky motions he extends his mechanical arms and shakes hands with passersby. He is speaking to a small KID.

HARRY

Hi, my name is Harry. Let me guess your weight and age...midget mutant; weight...

The kid shoots it in the neck with a toy space gun. The ROBOT SHORT CIRCUITS: sparks shoot out, its arms fly in circles until a FUSE BLOWS and it SIZZLES to a burning stop.

WE PAN OVER TO the door just in time to see the entrance of DR. JERRY ATHERTON, professor of physics at Pacific Tech, and a popular host of a PBS television show about science. His manner and bearing mark him as a classic anal retentive. He is a perfect cross between Carl Sagan and Jerry Brown. Brilliant, intense, seemingly sincere but, in fact, incredibly manipulative. There is an intentional aura of superiority surrounding him. We FOLLOW him in and down an aisle where he draws the attention of the crowd in the manner of the celebrity he is. An OLD LADY stops him. He beams a smile at her.

OLD LADY

Are you Dr. Atherton?

ATHERTON

Yes, dear.

OLD LADY

I just love your television show.

ATHERTON

Well, thank you. We try.

OLD LADY  
What's Albert Einstein  
really like?

ATHERTON  
Dead.

OLD LADY  
Oh, I thought you had him  
on.

ATHERTON  
No, that was just an  
actor.

OLD LADY  
Is everyone an actor,  
then?

ATHERTON  
(beginning to  
tire of this)  
No, I'm a physicist.

OLD LADY  
But Einstein isn't?

ATHERTON  
(dismissing her)  
Nice talking to you.

He walks away.

ANGLE ON a booth where we meet MITCH  
SIMON, aged fifteen. Mitch is a genius.  
He's known that since he was old enough to  
understand the word, which was on his  
first birthday. He was doing college level  
work by the time he was in the fourth  
grade. Although he's intellectually  
precocious, he's still only 15 years old  
and has all the problems of any average  
adolescent. His shyness and intellect have  
always made him feel different and  
uncomfortable in social situations.  
He stands with his PARENTS near a  
demonstration table. Unlike some of the  
other exhibits we've seen, there is  
nothing amateurish about this one. In  
fact, it is an impressive display of a dye  
laser. We can see the beams of multi-  
colored rays bouncing between mirrors,  
moving through liquids, combining with  
gases.

MITCH is trying to explain his work to MR.  
SIMON, who is a nice enough guy but who  
pretty much regards the fact that his son  
is gifted as a pain in the butt.

MITCH  
See, Dad, it's coherent  
light.

MR. SIMON

It talks?

MITCH

No.

ATHERTON APPROACHES. He is seen by MRS. SIMON, who greets him.

MRS. SIMON

Dr. ATHERTON, what a surprise.

ATHERTON

Hello, Mrs. Simon. How are you?

MR. SIMON

No problem with Mitch's test scores or anything, is there?

ATHERTON

No, no. I just thought I'd stop by, bring you the good news myself. I just got word from the admissions committee. We did it. Mitch is in.

MRS. SIMON

Isn't that wonderful.

ATHERTON

(to Mitch)

Hello, Mitch.

MITCH

(shyly)

Hi.

ATHERTON

Nice little display?

MITCH

Thanks

ATHERTON

What's your medium?

MITCH

Just Argon. But I have it all structured for HF if I could get some.

ATHERTON

That would be interesting.

MITCH

It's all theoretical at this stage, but I have the power supply completely worked out.

ATHERTON

Very nice.

MITCH

(a kid again)

Thanks.

ATHERTON turns to Mitch's parents.

ATHERTON

You must be very proud.  
he's the first student  
we've ever accepted for  
winter term entrance at  
Pacific Tech.

MR. SIMON

I image he's the  
youngest, too.

ATHERTON

No, actually. The  
youngest we've had was a  
twelve, but he cracked  
under the pressure within  
six months so we don't  
really count him.

MRS. SIMON

(almost in tears)

Fifteen year old and off  
to college. Image.

MR. SIMON

Listen Doc. This  
scholarship thing, does  
he get any kind of whatya  
call it, signing bonus  
sort of thing?

ATHERTON

(hoping this is  
not going to be a  
problem)

Well, no...but by  
allowing Mitch to  
progress at an  
accelerated rate we give  
him the opportunity to  
fulfill a far greater  
portion of his remarkable  
intellectual potential.  
Don't you agree?

MR. SIMON

Yeah, I guess. It's just  
that athletes get, you  
know, cars and stuff.

ATHERTON

(polite for  
Mitch's sake)

Well, I guess we  
scientists are a little  
different than athletes.

MR. SIMON

Cheaper.

ATHERTON

Smarter

MR. SIMON

Not when it comes to  
getting cars.

MRS. SIMON

We just want the best for  
Mitchie.

(changing gears)

Dr. Atherton, I saw your  
show the other night,  
about radioactive  
isotopes, and I have a  
question for you.

ATHERTON

Oh, yes?

MRS. SIMON

Is that your real hair?

MR. SIMON

Well, I wondered that,  
too.

ATHERTON

(struggling for  
manners)

Well, interesting  
question, when you  
consider the  
philosophical aspects of  
whether anything on  
television is "real" or  
actually just an "image"  
being broadcast.

MR. SIMON

Didn't look real. Anyway,  
listen, I got to get  
something to eat or I'm  
gonna die.

MRS. SIMON

Come on, let's look for  
something.

They start away.

MRS. SIMON (CONT'D)

I saw over there one of  
the kids was doing an  
experiment with insect  
protein.

MR. SIMON

Did you see anyone doing  
anything with corned  
beef?

They exit.

ATHERTON

Your parents...

MITCH

Yes?

ATHERTON

They're...nice

MITCH

They're Okay. They just sometimes don't have any idea of what I'm talking about.

ATHERTON

I'm sure of that. Afraid you're going to miss your friends?

MITCH

No. I don't have any. I think I intimidate other kids.

ATHERTON

Good boy.

MITCH

I don't want to.

ATHERTON

Remember, compared to you, most people have the IQ of a carrot. We're different than most people, Mitch, but you should be proud of that. I mean, look around. From now on, you'll BE amongst peers, colleagues. I suppose I might as well tell you now, I've put you on my personal research team. Some of the finest minds on campus, not the least of which is, of course, my own.

MITCH

It sounds great.

ATHERTON

Well, now, I'm expecting great things from you, my boy. This is only the second time I've given this honor to a freshman. The first was...

MITCH

Chris Kinsley.

ATHERTON

You know Chris?

MITCH

No, but he's a legend in  
the Physics Club.

ATHERTON

Well, you're going to  
become a legend yourself.  
You'll be working with  
Chris. He's a senior now  
but he's still on the  
team and still as  
brilliant as ever.

MITCH

Wow.

INT. PACIFIC ELECTRONICS INSTRUMENTS-DAY  
We see CHRIS KINSLEY, Chris has on his  
head a pair of those jiggling antennae-  
like things. WE PULL BACK to reveal that he  
is on a tour of the facilities.  
A huge hanger-like room filled with  
workers constructing and assembling  
scientific instruments. This place has the  
look and feel of the Big Time.  
Workers put the finishing touches on a  
communication SATELLITE. Passing through  
this Disneyland of Science is a well-  
dressed executive. ROBERT JENSEN, who is  
guiding Chris on the tour. Chris was  
heralded as one of the smartest people to  
ever enter Pacific Tech. He proved to be  
even smarter than many of his professors.  
He also proved to be one of the most  
outrageous people to ever enter Pacific  
Tech. his antics are legend. Unimpressed  
with authority, pomposity and bullshit in  
general., Chris dresses on the sloppy side  
of life. Currently he's wearing a sports  
jacket that's seen better days, over a  
faded sweatshirt that has the logo "I ?  
Toxic Waste."  
They approach a second  
executive/scientist, MIKE DODD, who is  
wearing a lab coat, and a beautiful public  
relations executive named SHERRY NUGIL,  
who is also wearing a lab coat but in a  
whole new way.

JENSEN

(as they approach  
the couple)

Guys, I want you to meet  
Chris Kinsley. Chris,  
this is Sherry Nugil, my  
assistant, and Mike Dodd.

CHRIS

Dr. Dodd?

JENSEN

He's the man who just  
designed the new Telcom  
Satellite here.

CHRIS

I know. Nice to meet you  
Dr. Dodd. Isn't the  
Telcom raining debris all  
over Europe?

DODD

(smiling, but  
angry)

That was a launch  
problem, not a design  
problem. Why are you  
wearing that toy on your  
head?

Chris takes the thing from his head.

CHRIS

Oh, this. Sorry, I was  
worried that people would  
think I was stuffy, You  
know, no fun; all brain,  
no penis,

JENSEN

Pardon?

CHRIS

I'm sorry, it's just an  
infantile response to  
authority.

JENSEN

(confused)

Yes. you are Chris  
Kinsley, aren't you?

CHRIS

No. Well, yes. I mean, I  
used to be. Now I'm  
Mhavishnue Kinsley.

JENSEN

(relieved)

I see. You are being  
funny.

CHRIS

Well, I just can't help  
it. You're such a fun guy  
yourself.

JENSEN

Oh yes. I think you'll  
find we all are, right  
Mike?

DODD

No.

JENSEN

Now Chris, Sherry is  
going to show you around  
the place. She can answer  
any questions you might  
have about fringe  
benefits or dress codes  
or anything and I'll see  
you back upstairs when  
you're done, okay?  
Sherry, take good care of  
this young man. He's one  
of the ten finest minds  
kin the country.

CHRIS

Someday I hope to be two  
of them.

JENSEN

See you later.

Jensen and Dodd exit.

CHRIS

You are very beautiful.

SHERRY

You don't act like one of  
the top ten minds in  
America.

CHRIS

Oh, really? How many of  
them have you met?

SHERRY

(with a really  
dirty look in her  
eye)

Seven.

CHRIS

Really?

SHERRY

You'll be eight. Six was  
Professor Hostetler at  
M.I.T.

CHRIS

Old Professor Hostetler? Isn't he dead?

SHERRY

He is now.

INT. ANOTHER PART OF THE PEI FACILITY- ALITTLE  
LATER

Sherry and Chris stare intently into one another's eyes.

SHERRY

And so, coupled with full insurance coverage and bonus plans, you find it adding up to a fairly sizable perks package.

CHRIS

I have a pretty sizable perks package right now.

SHERRY

Also, we understand that you people don't care too much for rigid timetables, and that's pretty rare in private industry.

CHRIS

So are you.

SHERRY

Is it true that school of yours keeps getting smarter and smarter kids every year?

CHRIS

Yup! I mean no!

INT. YET ANOTHER PART OF PEI- A LITTLE LATER.

SHERRY

You see the funding associations are the same. Our theoretical work is in the Blue Sky sector as well.

CHRIS

You have no idea how much I need that kind of continuity in my life right now.

INT. CATWALK ABOVE A HUGH LAB- A LITTLE LATER  
STILL

SHERRY

You just belong here, Chris. We have several of Dr. Atherton's former students and they're all doing quite well with us.

CHRIS

What number was he?

SHERRY

Two. One of his other students was four.

CHRIS

You're wonderful.

SHERRY

I know.

CHRIS

Can we go somewhere?

SHERRY

Yes.

EXT. ROOF OF HANGER-DUSK

The giant dish of a huge radio telescope  
faces heavens.

SHERRY (O.C.)

(between kisses)

Talk smart to me.

CHRIS (O.C.)

What?

ANGLE ON CHRIS AND SHERRY

They are lying in the middle of the dish.  
Passion mounts, fingers cope with belts  
and buttons, clothing falls away; my god,  
these people are having sex.

SHERRY

Please I need it. What  
was your favorite course?

CHRIS

I guess right now I'd  
have to say Fluid  
Mechanics.

SHERRY

Ooooooooooh...

CHRIS

(responding to  
something  
interesting  
Sherry just did  
with her hips)

And Gym.

SHERRY

Please.

CHRIS

Sorry.

SHERRY

What's your research with  
Artherton?

CHRIS

Ultra-high power laser as  
an energy force for  
fusion. Tremendous boon  
to all mankind. And  
womankind, too.

SHERRY

Fusion, more fusion.

CHRIS

It's the process for  
obtaining enormous  
amounts of energy from  
forms of hydrogen, like  
Deuterium and Tritium.

SHERRY

Oh, my God, more.

CHRIS

Extracting the fuels is  
no problem.

SHERRY

Hmmmm.

CHRIS

Getting them to combine  
and release the energy is  
the problem.

SHERRY

Oohh, yes

CHRIS

It takes temperatures of  
100 million degrees  
Celsius.

SHERRY

Oh, God.

CHRIS

So, I'm...

SHERRY

Yes.

CHRIS

...building...

SHERRY

Yes.

CHRIS

...a laser...

SHERRY

Oh, yes.

CHRIS

...that pulses...

SHERRY

Hmmmmmmmm.

CHRIS

...very hot...

SHERRY

Ohhh...

CHRIS

...and causes...

SHERRY

Yes.

CHRIS

...Fusion...

SHERRY

Ahhhhhhhhhhh.

EXT. PACIFIC TECH CAMPUS-DAY

It is an impressive campus of older California Spanish building mixed with modern architectural marvels. This is the Sunday before the beginning of the Winter Term.

We pick up MITCH SIMON and FOLLOW him as he crosses campus. He is wearing a tie and jacket, which only adds to his general sense of being out of place. He is carrying a map which he stops to consult every now and again. He stops an upper classman and asks him a question while pointing at the map. The older asks him a question while pointing at the map. The older student takes great delight in turning the map right side up.

EXT. PRESIDENT'S HOUSE-AFTERNOON

The tasteful and elegant official residence of the university's President. DR. EUGENE MEREDITH. MITCH approaches the open front door, where he is greeted by MRS. MEREDITH.

MITCH

Good afternoon. I'm  
looking for  
    (reading from the  
    invitation in his  
    hand)  
the President's Freshman  
Tea.

MRS. MEREDITH.

(leading him  
inside)

Oh, good. I'm so glad we  
have one then. Who are  
you?

INT. THE HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

They pass through on their way to the  
backyard.

MITCH

Mitch Simon.

MRS. MEREDITH.

Oh yes. You're the  
special case. I know Gene  
wants to meet you. You're  
just in time for his  
traditional talk. Would  
you like a glass of  
sherry?

MITCH

I'm a minor.

MRS. MEREDITH.

Aha, well of course you  
are. That would explain  
your height.

They exit out onto the patio.

EXT. THE PATIO AND GROUNDS OF THE HOUSE-  
CONTINUOUS

The returning freshman class has gathered  
for a social. Mitch is the only one in a  
tie. He stands on the patio with Mrs.  
Meredith whose husband, the apparently  
ever-jovial professional academic  
administrator, is about to speak to the  
assembled.

MEREDITH

People, if I might get  
your attention.

The din begins to quiet.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

Welcome back, freshmen! I  
take it you all put the  
Christmas break to good  
use?

There is good-natured jeering.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll indulge  
me, I'd like to speak  
seriously for a moment.  
You will recall that when  
I welcomed you to the  
Pacific institute of  
Technology a few short  
months ago I spoke of how  
we are one of the finest  
scientific institutions  
in the world. I think the  
finest. I mentioned our  
six Nobel Prize winners,  
our members of the  
national Academy of  
Sciences, and our members  
of the National Academy  
of Engineering. This is  
an intellectual oasis of  
technological achievement  
in the dessert of general  
academic mediocrity we  
see inmost colleges and  
universities today.

There is some applause and good-natured  
banter. Mitch is truly moved. This

environment is exactly what Mitch has hoped for all his life.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

I also spoke of the fact that you are the finest freshmen class we have ever had here.

There are cheers and applause.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

I say this to every freshman class. Each year we raise our entrance requirements and each year there is a group of students like you who meet and surpass those requirements.

Almost jubilant cheering and clapping.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

As you have no doubt already noticed by now, over a third of you are gone. By the end of the year another third of you will have followed them out of Eden and into mediocrity.

The crowd goes deathly silent as Meredith continues in his cherry manner.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

We want only the best. Hard work and high standards are expected of everyone. And if you aren't up to it Cal tech or M.I.T. might take you, but you don't fit in here.

MEREDITH (CONT'D)

Let me remind you that this place is an opportunity, not a right; a chance not a gift; a working lunch, not a picnic. Welcome back.

Several waitresses begin serving tea but the despair of reality creeps over the students and they begin to disperse. Mitch stands waiting for the approaching Dr. Meredith.

MRS. MEREDITH

Gene, this is Mitch  
Simon.

MEREDITH

Oh, yes, Professor  
Artherton's bright star.

MITCH

Yes, sir.

MEREDITH

And I understand you're  
already on his project.  
I'm assured you're going  
to do great things.

MITCH

I hope so.

MEREDITH

Let me give you some  
advice.

MITCH

Thank you.

MEREDITH

Don't screw up.

MITCH

Okay. I guess I better go  
now.

He walks away.

MEREDITH

(watching Mitch  
with  
satisfaction)

I think the young people  
really appreciate my "  
getting down" verbally,  
don't you?

MRS. MEREDITH

Absolutely.

EXT. CAMPUS-LATER

Once again Mitch, map in hand, must ask  
another student for directions. This one  
also turns the map right-side up and then  
points to the building they are standing  
in front of. As he heads for it he passes  
a bronze bust of one of the founding  
fathers, DR. BRADFORD. The students have  
decorated him with a muffler, earmuffs and  
carrot nose to look like a snowman.

INT. APPLIED PHYSICS BUILDING-MOMENTS LATER

Mitch walks down a long corridor. He  
passes several open doors that reveal  
laboratories with all kinds of scientific  
equipment all over them.

Mitch stops in front of a closed door. He  
checks the number, then looks down at a

card in his hand. He turns the card right-side up. He OPENS the door to REVEAL a darkened lab. In the darkness there is a veritable light show of laser beams. A voice calls out from the darkness.

VOICE (O.C.)

Hey!

MITCH

Yes?

VOICE (O.C.)

Come in here.

INT. LAB-CONTINUOUS

Mitch ENTERS quickly and shuts the door behind himself. In the instrument glow we can make out the forms of three other students. They are: KENT, CARTER and BODIE, members of Dr. Atherton's research team.

KENT

Just leave the sandwiches and go.

MITCH

Me?

KENT

No, Yoda; yeah, you.

MITCH

I don't have any ah...

CARTER

Brains?

MITCH

No, sandwiches.

KENT

Well then, what good are you?

CARTER

What are we supposed to eat?

MITCH

(getting a little fed up)

How about my shorts.

KENT

Hey! Who do you think you're talking to?

The laser snaps off and the lights snap on. The glare is a little intense at first.

KENT (CONT'D)

Are you from the restaurant or not?

With the lights on we get a chance to have a better look at the team. Kent is an

elitist, intellectual snob with very little imagination who likes to think of himself as Atherton's prot<sup>g</sup>. He wears braces on his teeth because he knows how important a proper smile can be in the marketplace.

MITCH

No. I'm Mitch Simon. I'm a student. Dr. Atherton told me to come up here.

KENT

Oh, you're the new stud, are you. Or is it dud?

MITCH

How do you mean?

BODIE

Stud. Hot shot. Brain. You're the twelve-year-old, right?

MITCH

I'm fifteen.

CARTER

Does your body know that?  
Mitch attempts a good-natured laugh. It's not a great attempt.

MITCH

Are you expecting him or...

KENT

Sure. Can I get you something? A balloon?

MITCH

Are any of you guys Chris Kinsley?  
They all freeze.

KENT

No, Thank God.

CARTER

Hey Kent, I hear Kinsley got that PEI job all locked up.

KENT

Damn! I wanted that job.

MITCH

Why?

KENT

Why? Because it starts at fifty thousand a year, that's why. Plus travel, car, stock options...

MITCH

Oh. Well, I'm supposed to have a look at your work up to date. Check it over.

KENT

Check it over.

MITCH

Yes.

KENT

For what?

MITCH

Mistakes, I guess. He said you guys are stuck.

The room goes rigid. Evidently this little punk of an upstart needs to be told what Christ died for.

KENT

Let's get something very clear here. Everything you've heard about the supportive student body and the honor code might hold for the rest of the campus, but it doesn't count for squat in here. Which means when jerry's not here, you do what I say. From God to Jerry to me, get it?

Atherton ENTERS.

KENT (CONT'D)

Hi Jerry.

ATHERTON

I've told you before, Kent, you don't get to use my first name.

KENT

Did I?

ATHERTON

(to Mitch)

Good to see you, Mitch.

ATHERTON (CONT'D)

(to the group)

I'm sure you're all going to become fast friends.

KENT

We're well on our way already.

ATHERTON

Good, because after Mitch is brought up to date, I want the rest of you to

take your cues from him.  
He'll be in charge of the  
group.

KENT

What? I mean, good  
choice, Jerry.

ATHERTON

You're doing it again,  
Kent.

KENT

Am I?

ATHERTON

Where's Chris?

KENT

He didn't bother to come  
in today.

BODIE

He said he didn't feel  
like it; and then I said  
'you better'; and then he  
said 'or what?'; and  
then I said 'or he'd get  
the heck,' and then he  
said 'jam it, it's  
Sunday' and he looks for  
God on Sundays; so I said  
'okay, but I'm telling.'

ATHERTON

Thank you Bodie. I notice  
you've stopped  
stuttering.

BODIE

Yes, I've been giving  
myself some sock  
treatment and it's  
working.

ATHERTON

Good.

(to Mitch)

I'm sorry he isn't here.  
I wanted you to meet your  
hero.

CARTER

Hero? That clown? Look at  
this.

He points to a table full of laser  
equipment comprised of various angled  
mirrors and gas cambers and drib units.  
The others gather around it.

CARTER (CONT'D)

We heard he wasn't coming  
in. Kent and I figured

we'd go ahead and run his section without him. And we started getting picosecond ratings that aren't even in the ballpark.

KENT

It looks like it'll take at least a week to re-do all this and start again.

Mitch is carefully studying the equipment and checking some notes that were on the table.

KENT (CONT'D)

Another costly mistake.

ATHERTON

Are you sure?

CARTER

Positive.

KENT

Positive.

MITCH

(reading from notes)

Negative.

(innocently, to Carter and Kent)

There's a mistake all right, but I think you guys made it. Look, you inverted the last two steps.

CARTER

(grabbing the notes)

I don't make mistakes...

(reading)

...Usually.

ATHERTON

Damnit, don't touch other people's things.

MITCH

(adjusting the equipment)

This shouldn't take too long to fix.

ATHERTON

I'm glad that you were here, Mitch.

KENT

Yes, thanks for pointing  
out Carter's mistake,  
Mitch.

ATHERTON

Don't bother with that  
now. I'm sure you want to  
go get settled.

MITCH

(relieved)

Well, it has been kind of  
a long day.

Atherton starts to leave.

ATHERTON

Oh, I forgot Kent, I need  
your help.

KENT

Anything, Jerry.

ATHERTON

Stop it.

KENT

What?

ATHERTON

Get copies made of  
everything so young Mitch  
here can get started  
checking everything  
tomorrow.

KENT

My pleasure.

ATHERTON

And then, on your way  
back, stop at my  
cleaners.

KENT

Don't give it a thought.  
I enjoy it.

ATHERTON

(to Mitch)

Shall we?

MITCH

Sure.

Atherton exits, followed by Mitch.

BODIE

I guess it goes from God  
to Jerry to you to the  
cleaners, right Kent?

EXT. DORM HALL- LATE AFTERNOON

Mitch enters the arched column portico of  
this dormitory building.

INT. ROOM

The room is small, cramped, and more than  
a little disheveled. PEI, NASA and science

fiction posters hang on the ceiling and wall, over and around one of the two beds. Junk food and soft drink containers are littered everywhere. In one corner is a fully-stocked Frito Lay Chip display. Mitch crosses to his bed and sits. He is exhausted and depressed. The door opens and Mitch see a strange, tall, bulkily-built, hermit-looking kind of a guy enter. He is carrying a McDonald's bag. He stops when he see Mitch and stares at him in a quirky way for a second, then crosses to the closet, opens the door and exits into it.

MITCH

Hello?

Getting no response, Mitch rises, goes to the closet, opens it and looks in.

MITCH

Hello?

There is no one there.

MITCH

What kind of place is  
this?

Mitch crosses to his luggage. he opens a bag and, to his surprise, he finds it empty. he then looks in the other bag and find they've all been cleaned out.

Puzzled, he shuts the bags.

Suddenly, the door swings open and CHRIS KINSLEY , who we saw earlier at PEI, ENTERS. He's dragging a large piece of mechanical equipment. it is, in fact, a baseball pitching machine.

CHRIS

Hi.

Mitch stares.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Hey, you just gonna sit there admiring the room or are you going to help me with this?

MITCH

What is this thing?

CHRIS

It's a penis stretcher.  
You want to try it out?

MITCH

No!

CHRIS

Oh really? Well,  
congratulations, then,  
No, It's an Iron Mike.

MITCH

What?

CHRIS

A baseball pitching  
machine.

Chris is setting it up.

MITCH

I was here for a second  
this morning...

CHRIS

(frightened)

You didn't straighten the  
place up, did you?

MITCH

(looks around at  
the mess)

No.

CHRIS

Good. 'Cause all my  
filth's in alphabetical  
order.

Chris puts on a baseball cap and grabs a  
bat.

MITCH

Anyway, I dropped off my  
luggage and now all my  
bags are empty.

A ball is pitched. Chris connects and the  
ball smashes through the window.

CHRIS

I put your stuff away for  
you.

Another pitch. He smashes a ball into a  
wall.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

It's all in the bottom  
drawer. Shirts, pants,  
underwear, shoes. I had a  
little trouble with your  
sport jacket, so I threw  
it out. Nah, only  
kidding. This one's for  
you, little Johnny.

He whacks another pitch. He does a crowd  
cheer and circles the bases.

CHRIS

What a game. I'm Chris  
Kinsley.

MITCH

Oh, no.

INT. MOVING CAR- SAME TIME

Dr. Atherton is riding in a rental car with DON CARMICHAEL, a government contract monitor. These two guys are part of an old boy network involved with research and development.

CARMICHAEL

We're falling way behind, Jer.

ATHERTON

Well, we're not making cheese sandwiches here, you know, Don.

CARMICHAEL

That's a good one. I'll have to remember to use that, Jer.

ATHERTON

The new boy is quick.

CARMICHAEL

He better be because the company needs a practical working model within four months.

ATHERTON

You can't dictate innovation.

CARMICHAEL

Let me put this another way, Jer. You know all that money we've been spending for development?

ATHERTON

Yes

CARMICHAEL

Well, when a project gets cut off, the finance boys always run an audit.

ATHERTON

I see.

The car pulls up to Atherton's house, where there is a great deal of construction going on. Once the work is completed, this is going to be beautifully restored, rather large Victorian home.

CARMICHAEL

(looking out)

Having a little work done on the old place, are you? Looks nice.

INT. MITCH'S ROOM-THAT NIGHT

Mitch is gathering up some books. He looks at a chart on the wall.

MITCH

Library... library...205.

The door to the room opens while Mitch is looking the other way. We catch a glimpse of the same tall, bulkily-built man opening Mitch's closet door and disappearing inside. Mitch turns just in time to see the door close. he goes into it, opens it and looks inside. Nothing. he goes to the door of his room. Mitch opens the door, steps into the hall and slips, landing on his ass. His books go flying.  
INT. HALLWAY

The hall floor is covered with ice wall-to-wall. Skating MUSIC is playing on a cassette somewhere. A few students, dressed for winter, are skating. Chris skates over and helps Mitch to his feet.

CHRIS

Welcome to Pacific Tech's  
"Smart People On Ice."

He whirls away, leaping from wall to wall, sliding quickly down the ice. He stops in front of a short, roly-poly kid of Japanese descent, MARK ICKAGAMI, better know as ICK. Ick is a bio-chemist who spends a great deal of time in his lab experimenting with various fun compounds that do things ranging from making artificial ice to increasing memory.

CHRIS

(with a  
proletariat  
accent)

Ice turned out real good,  
Ick.

ICK

Yeah, it worked., didn't  
it?

CHRIS

What did you use?

ICK

(teasing)

Oh, sure, I tell you then  
you tell somebody else,  
and the next thing you  
know we're in the middle  
of another ice age.

CHRIS

(yelling down the  
hall)

Come on, people. Nobody's  
skating.

A STUDENT (O.C.)

Just 'cause you're a  
slack, Kinsley.

CHRIS

Moles and trolls.

MITCH

What?

CHRIS

Moles and trolls. Work,  
work, work, work. I plan  
this for weeks. I go to a  
lot of trouble and all  
they want to do is study.  
I'm hurt. I know that's  
it's not like me but I'm  
sorry. I'm starting to  
get discouraged, people.  
We had nobody at the  
mutant hamster races, one  
entry in the Madame Curie  
look-alike contest, and  
he was disqualified  
later. Why do I even  
bother?

Chris skates off.

MITCH

(to Ick)

How does he do it?

ICK

Well, I'm not an expert,  
but I think he puts one  
foot in front of the  
other and pushes.

MITCH

Not skating. The horsing  
around. The never  
studying. I know he's  
smart. but nobody's that  
smart.

ICK

I don't know how smart he  
is. Before he even came  
here he invented a solar  
battery, which laid the  
groundwork for the system  
that provides the energy  
for Amarillo, at half the  
cost. He'd be a

millionaire today if he  
been smart enough to make  
them pay for it. How he  
pulls the grades, I don't  
know.

Just then, ROARING down the hall, face  
down on a sled, comes JORDANS COCHRAN. She  
is an advanced engineering student with  
great theoretical and mechanical skill who  
can never seem to pitched energy of a  
hyper-kinetic kindergarten class. She  
crashes at Mitch's feet. He reaches down  
to help her.

MITCH

You okay?

JORDAN

No, not emotionally, no  
I'm not. I'm  
disappointed... not  
terribly, but still, it  
should have gone much,  
further, much faster.  
It's okay, though, I know  
what the problem is,  
that's simple, it's  
obviously the drag  
coefficient, I'll just  
have to re-design the  
blades. I can do that,  
that's easy. I can do  
that here; but I have to  
cut then after they're  
designed, that takes  
tools, that takes time.  
How long is this stuff  
going to last, do you  
know?

ICK

Maybe another half an  
hour.

JORDAN

That's great, that's  
good. I can do that, no  
problem, lots of time.

(to Mitch)

What's your name?

MITCH

Mitch

JORDAN

Thanks for the help. See  
you.

And in a flash she is gone.

MITCH

Your welcome.

(to Ick)

Who was that?

ICK

That? that was...

Jordan rushes back.

JORDAN

(to Mitch)

I'm Jordan, I realized  
I'd forgotten to tell you  
my name, it's Jordan. I  
heard there was going to  
be someone new this term,  
are you a freshman?

MITCH

Yes.

JORDAN

Do you have a bed?

MITCH

Yeah.

JORDAN

Oh, I was going to make  
you one if you needed it  
but you don't so that's  
okay. Well, I gotta go,  
I'll see you later,  
probably. See you Ick,  
see you Mitch.

As she races off, KENT enters carrying  
several binders.

KENT

What's all this suppose  
to be?

CHRIS

This? This is new kind of  
shovel.

Mitch finds this very funny and reacts  
accordingly by laughing.

Kent can't stand to be laughed at.

KENT

(Dumping the  
binders into  
Mitch's hands)

This should keep you busy  
for awhile. This, plus  
your regular class load  
should turn your brains  
to mush in a month.

MITCH

Aw! Kent, we were going to name you King of the Winter Carnival.

KENT

Ha ha.

(to Ick)

I suppose you're in on this, too. Did you make this stuff?

ICK

I'm not saying.

KENT

Who's going to clean it up?

ICK

Don't have to. It's going to go from solid form directly to gas.

KENT

(impressed by this fairly uncommon phenomenon)

Really? What is it?

ICK

I'm not saying. But I can tell you that it's fairly rare, and very unstable.

KENT

You're all a bunch of degenerates.

CHRIS

We are? What about that time I caught you naked with a bowl of Jello?

KENT

(flustered)

I...you... I was hot and I was hungry. And anyway...Look, Kinsley, you're not number one anymore.

CHRIS

Number one what?

KENT

(pointing to Mitch)

Mighty mouse, here, beat your placement scores by over twenty points.

CHRIS

Really? I guess you think  
you're pretty hot stuff?

MITCH

(uncomfortable,  
unsure if this is  
real)

Well...no, I mean

CHRIS

Hey! Maybe you are  
smarter than me, but, can  
you do this?

Chris pushes himself off backwards and  
slides along the ice in an attempt at a  
fancy figure skating move. Just as he's  
about to finish he crashes to the floor at  
the precise moment that the floor turns  
into a cloud of rising gas. Chris  
disappears in the cloud.

ICK

(excited)

It worked!

MITCH

That's neat.

ICK

(teasing)

Now if we can just keep  
it from exploding.

Kent runs away.

CHRIS

(from inside the  
growing cloud)

Hey, Ick. Is it okay to  
breathe this stuff?

(beat)

Ick?

(beat)

Ick?

The cloud fills the screen.

INT. CHRIS AND MITCH'S ROOM-THE NEXT MORNING

Perfect morning light streams through the  
window, making even this dump look  
beautiful. Chris is asleep in a strange  
position on his bed, proving that even  
asleep he is eccentric. We Pan across the  
room to Mitch. He has obviously fallen  
asleep while reading the binders that Kent  
had given him the night before. We HEAR  
the sound of the door opening, followed by  
some heavy footsteps. This causes Mitch to  
wake up. it takes him a second to realize  
where he is. He sits up.

MITCH'S POV

Again we catch just a glimpse of that same mysterious figure opening the closet door. He is holding a "McDonald's" bag. He closes the door behind him.

ANGLE ON MITCH

To say the least, he's thrown by this strange intrusion.

MITCH

Hello?

He waits a beat, listening. Nothing happens so he gets up and crosses to the closet, looks inside.

OVER MITCH'S SHOULDER INTO CLOSET

There's nothing in there but clothes. Mitch pushes the garments aside and finds just a wall.

ANGLE ON MITCH

He shakes his head. This is getting frustrating. He exits the room.

INT. BATHROOM

Mitch crosses to the urinal. Just as he is about to relieve himself, the door opens. Jordan enters. This is an experience Mitch has never before and as a result he is one uncomfortable fifteen-year-old.

JORDAN

Hi, good morning, I thought I saw you come in here, you must be an earlier riser, we met last night, I'm Jordan, remember? I had a sled with me, I made you a sweater.

She holds out a sweater. He leans into the urinal, trying to hide himself the best he can.

MITCH

Last night?

JORDAN

yeah, it's just something I do with my hands while I'm reading. I hope I got the size right, I'm pretty sure I did, I have a brother so I use him as a sizing comparison, and I have a pretty good eye for that sort of thing, so I just went ahead and made you one because I

was, you know, up.  
Peeing?

MITCH

Yeah.

JORDAN

I never sleep. I don't know why. It drove my roommate nuts. I mean really nuts, they had to take her away in an ambulance and everything, she's okay now thought but she had to be transfer to an easier school but I don't know if that part has anything to do with being my fault, but still, anyway, if you ever want any help studying at night or just let me know, okay, 'cause I'm just a couple of doors down from you guys and I'm usually up and I wouldn't mind, okay?

MITCH

Thanks, I will.

JORDAN

Are you finished yet?

MITCH

I can't start.

JORDAN

Because I'm here?

MITCH

I think so.

JORDAN

Isn't that weird? Well, I have to go.

MITCH

Me, too.

JORDAN

Right, well, don't forget what I said, I'll put the sweater in your room, see you later, tell Chris that if he wants one I'll be happy to make him one but nit today because after classes I'm going to rebuild the back part of my room, you should

come down and see it  
later, I have to go, bye.  
She exits.

MITCH  
(stunned)

bye.

INT. THE LOBBY AREA OF THE DORM- A LITTLE LATER  
Mitch is coming down a hallway into the  
area. He is dressed in his tie and jacket  
and has books under his arm. As he crosses  
past the self-serve vending machine he  
spots Chris entering the kitchen. Mitch  
follows him inside.

MITCH  
Something strange  
happened to me this  
morning.

CHRIS  
Was it a dream where you  
see yourself dressed up  
in kind of sun god robes  
standing on top of a  
pyramid with all theses  
nude women throwing  
little pickles at you?

MITCH  
No

CHRIS  
Why am I the only person  
who has that dream?

Before Mitch can ask another question,  
Chris open the freezer compartment and  
takes out a large thermos-like container.  
He takes it over to the cutting board,  
then takes from his pocket a pair of  
calipers, a pair of tweezers, and a little  
box that looks like a dental floss kit. He  
opens the container which immediately  
starts pouring thick steam.

MITCH  
Liquid nitrogen?  
Chris uses calipers to extract a length of  
tubing from inside the container. he puts  
it down on the board and, using the  
tweezers, pushing out a cylindrical mound  
of ice from inside the tube. Then, from  
the dental floss kit, he pulls out a  
length of very fine wire, which he uses to  
cut the ice into a number of thin "coins"  
and slides then into the lid of the  
container, which he picks up and takes out  
the door with him. Mitch follows.

INT. VENDING MACHINE AREA

CHRIS

Coffee?

Using the tweezers, Chris picks up an ice coin and puts it into one of the machines. There is a high-pitched squeak. To Mitch's astonishment, the machine accepts the bogus money and a cup drops down and fills with coffee.

CHRIS

So, what's happened?

MITCH

Oh. There's a guy living in our closet.

CHRIS

You've seen him too?

Chris puts his coins in several of the machines and retrieves from them junk food junky's treasure trove of goodies.

MITCH

Who is it?

CHRIS

Hopsfield.

MITCH

Is he... safe?

CHRIS

So far.

Chris exits. Mitch stares after him.

SCHOOL MONTAGE:

A quick series of shots moves us through the next two months of time, accompanied by an original song.

INT. LECTURE HALL-DAY

An older professor is lecturing, pointing to a complicated algebraic problem on a blackboard, Mitch is in the last row of this student-filled, multi-tiered classroom. Everyone else listens intently and makes notes while Mitch thumbs quickly through a textbook, then closes it and makes a note in a loose-leaf binder.

INT. ATOM SMASHER ROOM-DAY

Mitch stands with a group of other students watching an instructor explain the intricacies of nuclear fission. Mitch opens a notebook and starts writing furiously.

INT. ATHERTON'S PROJECT LAB-DAY

Mitch is using his notes and some pieces of equipment to explain something to the rest of the team. Chris is impressed. Kent shakes his head in disagreement until

Atherton nods his approval, at which point Kent also agrees.

INT. CHRIS AND MITCH'S ROOM-NIGHT

it is late but Mitch is still hard at the books. Hopsfield goes by and disappears in the closet. Mitch doesn't even notice anymore. There is a knock at the door and Jordan enters. She has brought Mitch a device that she just built which holds textbooks and turns the pages automatically.

INT. LECTURE HALL-DAY

Mitch, dressed more informally, is in the same room with the same professor as in scene 54. This time, however, there are several empty seats. The people have been replaced by cassette tape recorders. Mitch takes notes.

INT. CHEMICAL ENGINEERING LAB-DAY

Mitch enters with another student to find a teddy bear waiting for him at his place.

INT. ATHERTON'S LAB-NIGHT

Mitch and Chris work alone. it is obviously very late. Using a variety of exotic-looking devices, they put the laser through its paces and make notes.

INT. LECTURE HALL-DAY

This time, Mitch is the only student. Tape recorders sit in front of every seat. The professor drones on, apparently oblivious to what he sees in front of him.

INT. WAVE TANK ROOM-DAY

A very attractive instructress is demonstrating a dye trace experiment in a huge wave tank. Mitch takes notes.

INT. DINING HALL

Mitch and Ick are carrying trays of food, looking for a place to sit. They pass a seated Kent, who points out a place for Mitch, who looks to see a highchair at the end of the table.

EXT. LIBRARY-MORNING

Mitch comes down the stairs with several books under his arms. He stumbles and drops one of the books. As he struggles to recover it, it is handed to him by none other than Hopsfield. By the time Mitch realizes who it is, the mysterious figure is once again gone.

EXT. STREET-DAY

Mitch is crossing the street carrying a huge load of books. Suddenly a yellow

Citroen pulls up behind him and honks its horn causing Mitch to drop everything. He looks at the driver and sees that it is a laughing Kent.

INT. ATHERTON'S CLASSROOM

Chris, Kent, Bodie and Carter are present as Atherton wraps up a day's class. People take serious notes. Chris reads a magazine. People file out and Mitch enters approaches Chris to get him to work on the laser. Chris shakes his head.

INT. ATHERTON'S LAB-LATE NIGHT

Mitch is working alone. He adjusts the laser and turns it on. It burns through a very thick block of wood, but Mitch is still not pleased.

INT. HALLWAY-NEXT MORNING

A very tired Mitch heads for the lecture hall. He comes to the door, opens it and enters to see a tape recorder lecturing to a roomful of tape recorders.

INT. CHRIS AND MITCH'S ROOM-ANOTHER NIGHT

In need of a break from studying, Mitch goes to the closet in hopes of figuring out how to open the wall.

He examines the walls and the floor and looks, for hidden switches or secret mechanisms, all to no avail. As he's about to give up, the closet door swings closed. When it closes, the wall opens to reveal a small elevator-like cage. Mitch steps in and the cage descends. It hits a lever and stops. But before Mitch steps in and the can get off, it begins to move sideways, triggering another pulley, and goes down again into the steam tunnels, then drags along the floor and stops. Mitch gets out. It's spooky. In the distance there is a glow of light.

Mitch goes forward until he can see the home of Hopsfield. It's a very utilitarian example of life on the edge, with all the comforts. At the console of an amazing, hand-built computer sits amazing Hopsfield. Mitch watches in awe from the darkness.

INT. ATHERTON'S LAB-DAY

There is an experiment in progress. A large laser is building up an energy load. Atherton, Kent, Bodie, Carter, and Mitch monitor various pieces of equipment. Things hum and click and there is a sense

that something big is going to happen. Atherton seems pleased, while Mitch seems troubled. Suddenly, a valve blows and a stream of liquid nitrogen hisses from a hose, spewing frost over everything. Everyone jumps for switches and they shut the experiment down.

CARTER

(checking the valve)

It's nothing. It's just mechanical.

ATHERTON

GOOD. Don't bother changing it. I want you and Bodie to rebuild the whole unit; same output in half the size. Should hold up, right Mitch?

MITCH

Sure, as long as we go with H.F.

ATHERTON

Well, gentlemen, now what? Things are going okay so far, aren't they?

KENT

They certainly are in my area, Jerry.

ATHERTON

(warning)

KENT

KENT

(unaware)

Yes?

MITCH

Boy, when I think of all the applications for this...!

ATHERTON

(covering)

We've got enough theory to deal with without talking applications. You just worry about giving me that power breakthrough. how close are you?

KENT

(gloating)

Not very, from what I hear.

ATHERTON

(to Mitch)

Aren't you and Chris  
working together?

MITCH

Yes...but...

ATHERTON

Where is Mr. Kinsley?

KENT

(anxious to get  
Chris in trouble)

He's outside.

Kent goes to the window and shouts down.

KENT (CONT'D)

(shouting)

Kinsley! Dr. Atherton  
wants you.

EXT. LAB BUILDING-MEDIUM CLOSE ON CHRIS-WAIST UP

He's sitting on a chaise lounge with a  
stack of encyclopedias, sipping a beer.

CHRIS

Coming.

PULL OUT TO REVEAL that the chaise lounge  
has balloons tied to each corner. Chris  
dumps a volume from his lap and the chaise  
rises straight up in the air.

ANGEL ON ATHERTON AND CHRIS-FRAMED BY THE  
WINDOW

Chris hovers in mid-air.

ATHERTON

What are you doing out  
there?

CHRIS

Floating, sir. And  
thinking.

ATHERTON

(fuming)

I want to see you at my  
house at six o'clock.  
Sharp.

CHRIS

Sounds fun. Should I  
bring anything?

ATHERTON

How about a proper  
attitude for a change?

CHRIS

I'll try and borrow one.  
Now, if you'll excuse me,  
there are millions of  
boys and girls everywhere

waiting for me to bring  
them presents. Ho ho ho.

He hands Atherton a volume and floats from  
view.

INT. LAB

Atherton, Mitch and Kent stand at the  
window, watching Chris ascend.

KENT

He's really pushing it,  
isn't he, Jerry?

ANGLE ON MITCH

He smiles as he watches his roommate and  
friend float off.

EXT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE-EARLY EVENING

The restoration work is reaching  
completion and the house is looking pretty  
beautiful.

A small crew of workmen paint and do other  
finishing work. Chris is sitting on the  
porch, watching. He is eating a very large  
puffs of popcorn from a bag. We SEE  
Atherton returning from his daily jog. He  
is decked out in an expensive designer  
jogging suit and has all the appropriate  
accessories. he also has all the silly  
habits of the trendy runner for cooling  
down and stretching.

CHRIS

You wanted to see me,  
your joggingness?

ATHERTON

Mr. Kinsley. Right on  
time. What a surprise. Do  
you run?

CHRIS

Only when chased.

ATHERTON

What are you eating?

CHRIS

It's one of mark's  
Ickagami's experiments.  
He's been irradiating  
corn with strontium. it's  
his hobby; big food.

ATHERTON

That's popcorn?

CHRIS

It's big popcorn.

ATHERTON

(over reacting)

Get it away from me. I  
can't stand it. I hate  
popcorn. Leave it there.  
Chris puts the bag down on the porch.

CHRIS

Okay. Have you ever  
considered switching to  
de-caffeinated coffee?  
Atherton leads Chris to the front door,  
where he removes his shoes and then stands  
and waits until Chris does the same. They  
proceed into the house.

INT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE- CONTINUOUS  
The interior is immaculate. A classic  
example of elegant good taste. Atherton is  
fastidiously protective of his things.

ATHERTON

I want to start seeing a  
lot more of you in the  
lab.

CHRIS

You want me to work nude?

ATHERTON

Very funny, you're a  
major disappointment to  
me, Chris.

CHRIS

And you to me, Jerry.

ATHERTON

(angry)

We had a deal!

CHRIS

And I advanced your  
project more than any  
three guys on campus.

ATHERTON

That was yesterday. What  
have you done for me  
today?

CHRIS

Hey, aren't you getting a  
little obsessive about  
this? I took in the new  
kid. He's working his  
guts out for you.

ATHERTON

Your arrogant,  
disrespectful behavior is  
distracting him. If you  
keep it up, you're going  
to pay for it.

CHRIS

Hey, I'm out of here.  
Delenda Est Cartheo.  
P.E.I. July one.

ATHERTON

You still have to pass,  
dear boy, and considering  
the fact that my class is  
a requisite, it would  
seem that I would have  
some control over your  
destiny. From now on, you  
and Mr. Simon are going  
to spend every waking  
moment working on my  
power problem and you  
will solve it by my  
deadline.

CHRIS

Okay, Jerry, but I really  
think you should see an  
analyst.

Chris exits. Atherton watches him go.

INT. ATHERTON'S LAB-NIGHT

Mitch is alone and trying to work on the  
new, smaller laser. He looks tired and  
upset. He tinkers around for a while, then  
goes back to his table and looks at his  
notes. Nothing seems to make sense  
anymore. Chris enters with a beaker in his  
hand.

CHRIS

Hi. Do me a favor, taste  
this.

Mitch is confused.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Come on, you won't hurt  
my feelings.

MITCH

I...

Chris rams the spoon in his mouth.

CHRIS

Well, too sweet?

Mitch makes a face.

MITCH

What is it?

CHRIS

Beats me. I just found it  
in one of the labs.

MITCH

Aggghh!!

CHRIS

Come on. I'm just pulling  
your leg. How are you  
doing?

MITCH

I'm stuck. Dr. Atherton  
says we've got to  
miniaturize the power  
supply and you're not  
helping.

CHRIS

Lighten up. It's only a  
laser.

Chris goes to the laser. Mitch is annoyed.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Instead of trying to take  
that roomful of  
capacitors over there and  
putting new perspective.  
Charge this baby up.  
Everything you've got.

MITCH

What for?

CHRIS

You'll see. Go

Mitch goes next door. Chris, meanwhile,  
measures a certain distant from the floor  
and mounts a mirror on the wall above his  
head. He then moves to the laser and  
repositions it to shoot at the mirror.  
Mitch returns and makes some adjustments  
to a control panel.

MITCH

All set, I think.

CHRIS

Do it.

Mitch throws a switch. Immediately, a loud  
electrical hum fills the air. Chris goes  
over and opens the door to the hall and  
glances left.

CHRIS'S POV

A roomful of capacitors loading.

EXT. THE CAMPUS-NIGHT

The lights twinkle from various buildings.

WE HEAR the hum

EXT. THE CAMPUS-NIGHT

The lights twinkle from various buildings.

We hear the hum growing.

MITCH (V.O.)

What are you doing now?

CHRIS (V.O.)

Making hamburgers.

Suddenly, there are several loud snaps and all the lights on campus go off at once as the power overload blows the sub station fuses.

MITCH (V.O.)

Oh, no!

INT. THE LAB IN DARKNESS

CHRIS

Relax, it's just the fuses at the sub station. They'll have it back on in a second. More importantly, did we get a charge?

Suddenly there is a loud "crack" and the laser sends out a beam across the room, bouncing off the mirror on the wall., out the door, where it hits another mirror and disappears from sight.

MITCH

Wow!

EXT. THE CAMPUS-CONTINUOUS

The beam has formed a web of light across the darkened campus. The effect is quite spectacular. People look in awe. Chris and Mitch exit the physics building.

CHRIS

Follow the yellow brick road.

MITCH

Have you ever considered the fact that you are completely wasting your life?

CHRIS

Constantly.

The lights on campus come back on as Chris and Mitch continue to follow the beam.

INT. WAVE TANK BUILDING

An open window above the door lets the beam of light enter. Chris and Mitch enter.

INT. HALLWAY-CONTINUOUS

Chris and Mitch walk down a stairway through an open door, following the beam.

INT. WAVE TANK ROOM-CONTINUOUS

The place has been turned into an indoor Waikiki. The beam has been directed into a hood-shaped device that has split it into enough rays to cook a bunch of hot dogs and hamburgers on an improvised barbeque,

managed by ICK, who is dressed for the beach and wearing a welding mask. Past him we can see that there about twenty girls and some guys present. Several of them are water-skiing on the mechanically produced waves inside the tank, towed by an elaborated pulleys system. Others are frolicking on the "beach" and cut out palms stand around, achieving the desired effect. Blankets have been laid out and girls sit on them eating hot dogs and talking. There are sun lamps set up in one area and some kids are smoothing sun tan oil and shagging a few rays. Rock music fills the room.

ICK

(lifts his mask)

Aloha.

ANGLE ON THE DOORWAY

A lot of the guys we've seen around the dorm have started to arrive. They enter hesitantly at Chris's urging.

CHRIS

Come on in, boys. Surf's up.

Awestruck, shy but excited, they approach.

CORNELL

(a nerdy student)

I have a geochemistry test tomorrow and I do not feel adequately prepared.

CHRIS

But the main thing is you look good.

CORNELL

Thanks.

MILTON

What if we end up having too much fun and end up failing?

CHRIS

And would that be the end of the world. Milton?

MILTON

Yes, it would.

CHRIS

Yeah, you're right. Maybe you should go back to the library.

MILTON

Well, maybe I could just  
look for a minute.

CORNELL

(noticing)

Are those girls?

CHRIS

I haven't had them all  
tested yet, Cornell, but  
so far so good.

MITCH

Who are they?

MILTON

They're not from here.  
I'd know.

CHRIS

No, no they're not,  
they're from a nearby  
college though.

MITCH

Which one?

CHRIS

The Wanda Trossler School  
of beauty.

MITCH

They're beauticians?

CHRIS

Not yet.

CORNELL

Gee, I don't know...

CHRIS

They'll teach you. Let's  
get serious here, lads.  
There are 670 guys at  
pacific tech and 136  
girls.

MILTON

A ratio of 4.93 to 1

CHRIS

Good, Milton. Of the 136  
girls, most of them can  
find guys a lot better  
than you.

CORNELL

Oh, easily.

CHRIS

These girls are not used  
to geniuses. You might  
impress them.

CORNELL

I don't see how.

CHRIS

Let me put this another way. Given the type of people you are and the environment you're in, you guys have to admit the strong probability that this may be the only chance you'll ever get in your entire lives to have sex.

There is a pause while everyone considers the hypothesis.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Think about it.

He turns and heads into the party. After a beat, everyone except Mitch follows Chris's lead.

ANGLES ON VARIOUS ACTIVITIES- A LITTLE LATER

Water-skiing, dancing, a volleyball game. Most of the guys are making an effort to socialize. Mitch watches quietly.

ANGLE ON MILTON TALKING TO A GIRL OVER BY THE SUN LAMPS.

VIVIAN

So, what do you guys do?  
Just be smart all the time?

MILTON

Well...

VIVIAN

What's your major?

MILTON

Astrophysics.

VIVIAN

Is that like sports medicine?

MILTON

Space.

VIVIAN

(impressed)

Oh! Let me ask you something about that. If I was on the moon, Could I like tease hair much higher?

MILTON

Theoretically.

VIVIAN

This is fascinating.

ANGLE ON another guy named Fenton and a girl. They're necking.

CONNIE

My friend Evelyn, tells  
me that brilliant men are  
the best lovers.

FENTON

I'd say that's true.

CONNIE

Up to now, what's been  
your ultimate sexual  
experience?

FENTON

I once fell off a ladder  
and landed on my sister,  
Bernice.

ANGLE ON CONNELL, and a girl in the tank.  
they both bob up out of the water. Cornell  
still has his glasses on. He takes them  
off and can't see.

LOUISA

Why do you wear those  
glasses?

CORNELL

So I can see.

LOUISA

But you look very sexy  
without them.

Reflexively he breaks his glasses in his  
hands.

ANGLE ON MILTON AND VIVIAN. He rubbing  
suntan oil on her back

MILTON

I really should be  
studying.

VIVIAN

Me too. I have a  
bleaching final tomorrow.

MILTON

(sneezing)

Achew.

VIVIAN

Bless you.

MILTON

I'm allergic to suntan  
oil.

VIVIAN

Maybe you should stop.

MILTON

(aroused)

I don't think I can

ANGLE ON CORNELL AND LOUISA. They are  
sitting on the "beach" toweling off.

LOUISA

(very sexy)  
You know, I read in the  
Enquirer that woman paid  
twenty thousand dollars  
for the sperm of a  
genius.

CORNELL

Really?

LOUISA

(putting her arms  
around him)

I've GOT TWENTY BUCKS?

CORNELL

Do you have a cup?

ANGLE ON MITCH

The party is in full swing and most of the  
guys have become very comfortable. Some  
are making out. Mitch now seems like the  
only one left out. he sees a pretty GIRL  
just coming out of the water. She adjusts  
her top. Mitch wanders over to her.

MITCH

(with great  
effort)

Hi.

TAMMY

Hi.

MITCH

I was watching  
you...swim.

TAMMY

Yes?

MITCH

I was thinking of maybe  
going for a swim myself.

TAMMY

Yeah? Is this the kiddy  
pool?

She exits, leaving Mitch devastated. He  
goes and sits in a corner. Meanwhile,  
Chris is looking around proudly. It's  
obvious he didn't see what just happen to  
Mitch. He smiles at the fun everyone is  
having. A girl passes him eating a  
hamburger.

CHRIS

Don't eat that!

KIMBERLY

Huh?

CHRIS

Don't you know eating  
that stuff can give you  
very large breasts?

(mock despair)

Oh. My god! I see I'm too  
late.

She laughs. He puts his arms around her  
and they walk off. As Chris and Kimberly  
EXIT, we catch a glimpse of a face in a  
window. We push in to see Kent, spying.  
INT. CLASSROOM-SAME TIME (BUT APPEARS TO BE DAY)  
OPEN TIGHT on Atherton's face. He looks  
odd, as there are Kleenex tissues sticking  
out from his shirt collar. A hand comes  
into frame, holding a pancake makeup puff,  
and starts applying it to his face.

ATHERTON

Christ, Don. I'm doing  
the best I can. You act  
like I don't want my own  
invention to work. There  
are only so many hours in  
a day.

CAMERA PULLS BACK

CARMICHAEL

I agree. And what's more  
important, massaging your  
ego on television  
explaining the digestive  
system of a rabbit to the  
great unwashed or  
"project crossbow"

MAKEUPMAN

Off-hand, I'd say  
television.

ATHERTON

(angrily to make  
up man)

Just get rid of the  
crows' feet!

(to Carmichael  
carefully)

There's nothing more  
important than "  
crossbow," but when went  
from blue sky to black  
you turned into Bigfoot.

The STAGE MANAGER approaches.

STAGE MANAGER

Ready to go, Dr.  
Atherton.

He exits.

ATHERTON

Pushing me doesn't help.  
You tell them that.

He walks away. There is definitely no love  
between them.

ATHERTON (CONT'D)

(under his  
breath)

Son of a bitch.

CARMICHAEL

(under his  
breath)

Asshole.

ANGLE ON ATHERTON as he walks over to the  
cue card man and checks through the cards.  
KENT enters in a rush.

KENT

I have something to...

ATHERTON

(cutting him off)

Did you pick up my dry  
cleaning?

KENT

Yes I did... there's  
something you should  
know.

ATHERTON

The gravy stain?

KENT

No, that came out.

(very pleased)

Chris and Mitch aren't  
working. They're at a  
party.

Atherton begins to seethe.

ATHERTON

I want to show me where,  
right after I'm finished  
here.

KENT

(all smiles)

My pleasure.

STAGE MANAGER

In five...four...

Kent forgets to move. Atherton shoves him  
off. We HEAR an off-stage CRASH.

STAGE MANAGER (CONT'D)

...three...two...and...

We PUSH in on nearby monitor. the show's  
logo comes on, along with its theme MUSIC.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

WELCOME TO "SCIENCE,"  
WITH YOUR HOST, Dr.  
JEROME ATHERTON. FUNDED  
BY...

A NEW CARD SHOWS ON THE MONITOR.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

... A grant from Pacific  
Electric Instruments.  
PEI. And now, Dr.  
Atherton.

Atherton appears on the monitor.

ANGLE ON ATHERTON IN THE STUDIO

He smiles broadly and reads from the cue  
cards.

ATHERTON

Good evening. Tonight  
we're going to look at  
something most of us take  
for granted... the colon.  
What's it look like?

KENT WANDERS BY IN THE BACKGROUND.

INT. WAVE TANK ROOM-LATER THAT NIGHT

THE PARTY IS STILL GOING STRONG.

ANGLE ON JORDAN

She tosses a volleyball up into the air in  
a one-woman game of catch. Mitch  
approaches forlornly.

JORDAN

Wanna play?

MITCH

I'm not very...

HE GETS SMACKED IN THE HEAD BY THE BALL.

MITCH (CONT'D)

Sure, all right.

Through the following, Mitch and Jordan  
volley the ball between them.

JORDAN

Some party, huh?

MITCH

I guess.

(hesitant)

How come you're not...

JORDAN

Necking?

MITCH

well...

JORDAN

I'm not gay.

MITCH

(embarrassed)

I didn't... I wouldn't  
even...

JORDAN

Look, I'm seventeen. I'm brilliant, and I'm hyperkinetic. Guy are a little afraid of me, you know. It'll pass...I hope.

ANGLE ON MITCH

MITCH

(softly)

I think you're very nice. Mitch gets smashed on the head with the ball, sending his glasses flying. Suddenly, Atherton burst into the room, followed closely by Kent.

ATHERTON

(seeing Mitch)

Simon!

He passes the tape deck and snaps it OFF. Everything comes to a stop as Atherton heads for Mitch, all eyes trained on the pending drama.

ATHERTON

You were supposed to be in the lab tonight.

KENT

(chiming in)

Weren't you!

MITCH

I was and...

ATHERTON

You are at Pacific Tech to work, not to behave like a philistine.

KENT

That's right!

MITCH

I was working, I...

ATHERTON

Where's Kinsley. I imagine this was his idea.

KENT

No doubt!

ATHERTON

(annoyed)

Kent!

KENT

(stiffening)

yes?

ATHERTON

(to Mitch, very angry)

I took a big chance  
recommending a fifteen-  
year-old. I guess I made  
a mistake. I hope you're  
proud of yourself.

Kent is in seventh heaven as Atherton  
turns and heads for the door. As they  
exiting, they pass Cornell and his date.

CORNELL

Dr. Atherton?

ATHERTON

What!

CORNELL

Are you wearing makeup?

Atherton can only stare in his rage.

LOUISA

Is it too try and hide  
those crows' feet?

He growls and exits.

ANGLE ON MITCH

He is truly at a loss in the face of this  
cruelty. Everyone is staring at him. He  
runs out the door.

ANGLE ON JORDAN

She watches Mitch go, feeling very badly  
for him

INT. ATHERTON'S LAB-THE NEXT NIGHT

Mitch, tired, looking like a kid who's  
been working for hours, is staring at a  
formula on the blackboard. Frustrated, he  
throws his screwdriver against it in anger  
and runs into the adjacent room and begins  
disconnecting the capacitor bank.

INT. LAB HALLWAY-EARLY MORNING

Kent, Bodie and Carter cross toward the  
lab. Just then, Mitch comes out. He looks  
exhausted and very upset. As he passes  
Kent, he turns away from his stare.

KENT

(mock concern)

Gee, he looks depressed.

The other guys yuk it up. They turn and  
watch Mitch go into Atherton's office down  
the hall. They follow in time to HEAR:

MITCH (O.S.)

I'd like to make a  
collect call to Mrs. Bill  
Simon.

Kent's eyes light up with an idea.

INT. ATHERTON'S OFFICE

Mitch is on the phone. He's very upset.

MITCH

I know, but I don't like  
it here anymore. I want  
to live at home with  
you...

(reluctant)

Yeah, and dad. I want to  
go back to high school.

I-dad did what?

Rented out my room? ...Well, why can't Mr.  
Echevarria and I share it?... Please, ma,  
I want to come home.

INT. KENT'S LAB-TIGHT ON A MINI TAPE RECORDER  
Its reels are spinning. It's being held up  
to a telephone receiver.

MITCH (V.O./FILTER)

(crying)

Please let me come home.  
I don't want to stay  
here.

WIDEN to reveal Kent holding the recorder  
as cater and Bodie watch. The workbench  
area in Kent's lab is covered with a drop  
cloth. Kent chuckles as MITCH pleads with  
his mother.

INT. DORM HALL-DINING ROOM-NEXT MORNING  
The dorm population is eating their  
breakfast. Kent and his unholy two are  
smugly downing their "shredded wheat"  
Mitch is alone off in the corner. It's  
obvious he hasn't slept.

Chris enters and crosses to Kent. A  
WAITRESS, middle-aged, is serving coffee.

CHRIS

Kent...let's never fight  
like that again.

KENT

What?

CHRIS

We've been lovers too  
long to have a silly  
argument come between us.

The waitress stares disgustedly at Kent.

KENT

Chris...

CHRIS

Please. Don't speak. You  
were right. Tonight I'll  
wear the cowboy suit.

CHRIS EXITS

KENT

(sputtering)

You...

WAITRESS

Do your parents know  
about this?

KENT

Of course not!

She nods and exits. Kent calls after her.

KENT (CONT'D)

Nobody knows. I mean,  
there's nothing to know.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Chris walks over to Mitch.

CHRIS

Where were you all last  
night?

MITCH

The lab. Where you were  
supposed to be.

CHRIS

Jordan told me about  
Atherton coming down on  
you...what exactly did...

Mitch abruptly turns his back to Chris and  
continues eating. Chris sees the  
conversation is over.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(referring to the  
sentence he never  
finished)

...Let me hold that  
thought and get back to  
ya.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Ken, Bodie and Carter. The gentle strains  
of classical music fill the room.

KENT

Something soothing to eat  
by.

The tape is abruptly interrupted by the  
RECORDING Kent made of Mitch on the phone  
to his mother.

ANGLE ON MITCH

He can't believe his ears. His expression  
runs from surprise to embarrassment.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Everyone stops eating and listens to Mitch  
begging his mother to come home. They  
share his embarrassment and lower their  
heads. Even Kent's friends are  
uncomfortable. Kent, on the other hand, is  
laughing it up, having a great time.

ANGLE ON MITCH

He's in a state of shock.

ANGLE ON KENT

KENT

(he can't wait )

Here comes the crying!

He loves it.

ANGLE ON MITCH

He runs out of the dinning room. Kent loves Mitch reaction. It makes him laugh harder.

ANGLE ON CHRIS

CHRIS

(to himself)

Too low.

INT. MITCH'S ROOM-A FEW MINUTES LATER

Mitch is trying to pack, but it's difficult because the place is in such disarray. Chris enters. He watches and tries to think of what to say.

CHRIS

Okay, if you want to leave, go ahead. But you'll miss the fun.

MITCH

(sour)

What fun?

CHRIS

Ick invented a new virus and we're gonna release it in Kent's room.

Mitch turns on Chris with surprising hostility.

MITCH

That's sick! That's a sick thing to do!

CHRIS

Hey, I was just kidding, I...

MITCH

You're always just kidding. There's something wrong with you.

CHRIS

Just a second...

MITCH

The other night I needed your help and all you wanted to do was party.

CHRIS

I tried to help you. I tried to help you relax.

MITCH

Being snubbed by  
beauticians isn't my idea  
of relaxing.

CHRIS

Student beauticians.

MITCH

(Blows up)

I thought this place was  
going to be different,  
but it's just the same.  
I'm either used or made  
fun of. In high school  
they pushed me in a  
mailbox, did I tell you  
that?

CHRIS

They called me Chris the  
whiss'...

MITCH

Really? What's a whiss?

CHRIS

I think they meant wuss,  
but it didn't  
rhyme...when I was three  
years old, I balanced my  
father's checkbook so  
they sent me to school  
and fired their  
accountant. My father was  
so intimidated, he  
stopped speaking to me.  
My teacher disliked me  
because I was smarter  
than they were, and my  
classmates hated me  
because I bell the bell  
curve. Sound familiar?  
And tell me why my...why  
did my mother dress me in  
white shirts, hush  
puppies and a briefcase,  
guaranteeing that a girl  
would never talk to me?

Mitch looks down at his own white shirt  
and hush puppies.

MITCH

YOU?

CHRIS

(Dramatic)

And then one night, in  
this room, I was sitting  
right where you are

sitting now. I had a  
vision. I saw him.

MITCH

god

CHRIS

Hopsfield.

MITCH

Hopsfield? Oh! The guy in  
the closet.

CHRIS

Yeah. Laslo Hopsfield. I  
followed him. Through the  
closet; down into the  
steam tunnels. And down  
there I saw the most  
disgusting thing I've  
ever seen.

MITCH

(Frighten)

What?

CHRIS

Hopsfield in his pajamas.

MITCH LAUGHS.

CHRIS

(Lighter, but  
sincere)

And I talk to the guy .  
Turned out that in the  
Seventies he was the  
number one stud around  
here. Smarter than you  
and me put together. So  
brilliant, so sharp, so  
advanced, so long.

MITCH

What do you mean?

CHRIS

He graduated. Went to  
work for some chemical  
company. One day someone  
told him he was making  
stuff that was killing  
people. I think it was  
his mother. He freaked.  
You see, he was totally  
unprepared for the real  
world. He had no  
philosophy. He thought  
science was the answer  
for everything.

MITCH

Am I gonna wind up in a  
steam tunnel?

CHRIS

Yes, you are,  
Metaphorically speaking.  
Unless you see that the  
same thing that has made  
your life miserable can  
make it great; your  
brain. When you're smart,  
people need you, and you  
can learn how to work  
that for fun and profit.

MITCH

You had a arrangement  
going with Atherton,  
don't you? That's why you  
don't have to study.

CHRIS

Hey, I don't carry a  
briefcase.

(pause)

You're a nice kid. If you  
leave I'll miss you.

MITCH

(thinking about  
it)

If I stay, what should I  
do, I mean...

CHRIS

Well, the first thing you  
have to do is get even  
with Kent. It's a moral  
imperative.

MITCH

(smiles)

Yeah.

EXT. CAMPUS-NIGHT

Kent's Citroen pulls up. Kent and Carter  
get out and walk by Jordan, who is sitting  
nearby.

KENT

And at Northern  
Electronics you get the  
stock options, but not  
the free housing, It's  
what makes PEI so sweet.  
You get everything.

CARTER

Yeah, and Kinsley's got  
that locked.

KENT

(knowingly)

Maybe he does, and maybe  
he doesn't.

They walk away.

After a beat, CHRIS, MITCH and ICK jump  
out from behind another car. Mitch carries  
a TOOL BOX.

JORDAN

Over here!

The others rush over to her. Chris trains  
a light on the license plate. It reads,  
"KENT."

CHRIS

He puts his name on his  
car. He does the same  
thing with his underwear.

Mitch flops down the tool box. 5R5DISSOLVE  
TO:

MONTAGE

Chris, Mitch, Jordan and Ick working on  
Kent's car. They are undoing bolts,  
talking out wires, removing fenders, etc.  
The last DISSOLVE and we see the car is  
gone. And no sign of our foursome.

EXT. DORM HALL-NIGHT

Chris quietly goes up the stairs inside  
the dorm carrying a steering wheel. Ick  
and Mitch have an engine on a flatbed  
cart. Jordan enters carrying heavy chains  
and a drill.

EXT. KENT'S ROOM-EARLY MORNING

Filthy with crankcase oil, Chris, Mitch,  
Ick and Jordan exit and scamper down the  
hall. All are very pleased with  
themselves.

EXT. KENT'S ROOM-LATER THAT MORNING

Kent is coming down the hall. he opens his  
door and walks inside.

INT. KENT'S ROOM

CLOSEUP ON KENT. His jaw drops open.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Chris and Mitch enter.

CHRIS

Hey, Kent. That's your  
car.

MITCH

You're not supposed to  
park on campus.

KENT

This isn't funny. You  
went too far this time,  
Kinsley.

CHRIS

I had help.

KENT

(surprised, to  
Mitch)

You?

(a beat)

I'm going to get you  
guys. Dr. Atherton's  
gonna hear about this.

He storms out of his room.

CHRIS

(calls to Kent)

Hey, Kent, you owe us ten  
dollars for the gas.

(to Mitch)

He'll never pay us.

EXT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE-DUSK

The restoration has been completed and the  
house looks beautiful. Chris comes up the  
walk, goes to the door and rings the bell.  
A very pretty girl named SUSAN answers the  
door.

INT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

Chris enters.

CHRIS

Wow! Hello.

SUSAN

Hi.

CHRIS

Jerry asked me to drop  
by. What did he ask you  
to do?

SUSAN

What?

CHRIS

Which word didn't you  
understand?

SUSAN

Are you here for the  
meeting?

CHRIS

What meeting?

SUSAN

I don't know.

CHRIS

Okay.

SUSAN

I'm just waiting.

CHRIS

Right.

The study doors open and Atherton, Carmichael and Decker step out.

DECKER

(finishing their conversation)

And finally, it comes down to, if you can't do it, we'll get somebody else. I have a timetable, doctor.

CARMICHAEL

We're very close, Dave, don't worry, everything's going to be fine.

DECKER

(cold as ice)

Don, try and remember you work for me.

(to Atherton)

I think I've made my point, haven't I?

ATHERTON

(equally as cold)

Crystal clear, Mr. Decker.

DECKER

Good.

CHRIS

Anything I should know about?

ATHERTON

Shut up Kinsley. I'll be with you in a moment.

DECKER

Goodbye, Jerry, and good luck. Susan?

They begin to exit. Chris takes Susan's hand.

CHRIS

I guess this is goodbye. I'm sorry I didn't get a chance to know you. At all.

(to the boys in admiration)

Have you ever seen breasts like theses before?

DECKER

She happens to be my daughter.

CHRIS

Oh, then I guess you  
have.

CARMICHAEL

(to Atherton)

I'll be reporting to him  
every day.

DECKER

Coming, Don?

CARMICHAEL

Yes, Sir.

They exit.

ATHERTON

What do you think you're  
doing?

CHRIS

You said come over.

ATHERTON

Take off those shoes.

Chris removes his shoes to reveal even  
dirtier socks.

ATHERTON (CONT'D)

Stay off the rugs.

INT. STUDY-CONTINUOUS

CHRIS

What's up, Doc.

ATHERTON

I'm withdrawing your  
recommendation to PEI.

CHRIS

What?

ATHERTON

I'm giving Kent the job.

CHRIS

Did you suddenly find  
humor?

ATHERTON

You haven't solved my  
power problem.

CHRIS

I'm trying.

ATHERTON

No, you're not. So, I'm  
going to fail you, so you  
won't graduate, so you  
can't take the job.  
Q.E.D.

CHRIS

I'll pass your exam.

Atherton just smiles a "so what" smile.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

We had a deal!

ATHERTON

Did we? That doesn't  
sound very ethical.

CHRIS

You can't do this. I'll  
go to Dr. Meredith.

ATHERTON

(enjoying this)

Go ahead. What are you  
going to tell him. Don't  
forget, like most  
scientists, he is an  
honorable, moral man who  
thinks everyone else is  
too. I'll just deny  
anything you say.

CHRIS

You dick!

ATHERTON

Count on it.

EXT. DORM ROOF-NIGHT

Chris sits, lost in thought, outside the  
window of his room, Mitch appears at the  
window, sees Chris and climbs out to join  
him.

MITCH

What are you doing?

CHRIS

Self-realization. I was  
thinking of jumping, but  
it's only twelve feet.

MITCH

Something wrong?

CHRIS

No. Atherton is going to  
flunk me out of school.

MITCH

But you had a deal.

CHRIS

Yeah, and he says I  
didn't deliver. You sleep  
with pits, you wake up  
smelly. I think Aristotle  
said that. It was him or  
Eva Gabor. At least  
Hopsfield still has his  
integrity.

MITCH

Excuse me?

CHRIS

I thought I was so smart.  
I didn't want to be like  
the other dumb geniuses

like Hopsfield. I though  
I could use Them.,  
instead of Them using me.  
But, Guess what?

MITCH

I have to agree. It does  
appear that you've been  
the victim of your own  
erroneous logic.

CHRIS

Thank you.

MITCH

However, this doesn't  
mean that you can't get  
yourself out.

CHRIS

How?

MITCH

Hard work?

CHRIS

But that's the old way.

GRINDING MONTAGE

A series of shots showing Chris hard at  
work, underscored by an original song.

INT. LASER LAB

Mitch and Chris dismantle part of the  
laser.

INT. DINING HALL

Mitch, Jordan and Ick are listening as  
Chris shows them diagrams and formulas for  
a laser supercharger while they try to  
eat.

INT. BIOCHEMISTRY LAB

Chris and Ick search for a new gas  
combination for the laser supercharger.

INT. ATHERTON'S LAB

Mitch and Chris work hard on a second  
laser. Kent is both upset and suspicious  
of Chris' new interest in work.

INT. ATHERTON'S CLASSROOM

Chris enters carrying books and a note  
pad. Kent sees this and is shocked.  
Atherton gives Chris a "you haven't got a  
chance" grin.

INT. CHRIS AND MITCH'S ROOM-NIGHT

They both study for exams; on the wall is  
a chart of exam week showing Mitch's exam  
schedule, a big red square around Chris'  
exam with Atherton and, in every free hour  
is written " Laser".

INT. DORM LIBRARY

Many students, including our gang, study for exams. Suddenly, Milton can't take the pressure any longer and momentarily goes out of his mind and runs from the room.

INT. ATHERTON'S LAB

A tired looking Chris and Mitch attach a second laser to the original but nothing improves. They check their notes and diagrams. Kent, Bodie and carter chuckle in the corner.

INT. AN EXAM ROOM

Mitch is taking an exam with a bunch of people he doesn't recognize from the Professor who everyone tape recorded. One of the students appears to be near panic as he deals with a pile of mangled tape.

INT. JORDAN'S ROOM-VERY LATE NIGHT

Chris and Jordan use a blackboard diagram to discuss the engineering difficulties of Chris' laser supercharger assembly.

INT. DORM HALL

Chris runs down the hall and enters his room. Mitch is sprawled out asleep under a math text. Chris feels bad about it but wakes him up.

INT. ATHERTON'S LAB

A wasted Chris and Mitch build the new assembly that will allow a second laser to shoot at the gas jets of the principal laser.

INT. DORM LIBRARY-NIGHT

Chris is studying hard. Mitch is asleep, his head on the table.

MITCH

(in his sleep)

Please, Vito, not in the mailbox again.

CHRIS

Mitch!

Mitch wakes up.

MITCH

Oh... I was just reliving some high school highlights.

CHRIS

Look, you don't have to stay up with me. It's not like we're driving. Get some sleep. You're a growing boy. I hope.

Hopsfield enters carrying two large boxes of what appear to be file cards. Mitch is stunned. They all stare for a beat.

CHRIS

Hi, Laslo.

HOPSFIELD

I thought you might want some help so I dug into the computer and got every question Artherton's ever asked on every final he ever given.

CHRIS

Gee, I didn't get you anything. Is that them?

HOPSFIELD

No, these are entries for McDonald's Sweepstakes. No purchase necessary. Enter as often as you want. So, I am.

CHRIS

Really?

HOPSFIELD

This box makes it one million, six hundred thousand. I should win thirty two point six percent of the prizes, including the car.

CHRIS

Kind of takes the fun out of it, doesn't it?

HOPSFIELD

I suppose so. But they set up the rules, and lately, I have come to realize that I have certain materialistic needs.

CHRIS

So where are the questions?

HOPSFIELD

(insulted)

I memorized them.

Chris and Mitch look at each other, impressed and a little frightened.

MITCH

I have to go to sleep now.

HOPSFIELD

Want my pajamas?

MITCH

Uhhh...thanks, no.

HOPSFIELD

Smart kid. He's going to  
grow five inches in the  
next year.

CHRIS

How do you...never mind.

INT. MITCH'S ROOM

He opens the door and enters. It's dark.

FEMALE VOICE

Mitch?

MITCH

(surprised)

Jordan?

He turns on the light. Much to his  
surprise and ours, seated on his bed is  
Sherry Nugil, the girl Chris met at PEI -  
the genius groupie. She's dressed for the  
occasion.

SHERRY

Mitch Simon?

MITCH

Who?

SHERRY

I'm Sherry Nugil. And  
I've been waiting three  
years for this.

MITCH

For what?

SHERRY

For you to be old enough.

MITCH

For what?

SHERRY

For this.

She kisses him.

SHERRY (CONT'D)

Are you ready?

MITCH

For what?

SHERRY

Why do you keep saying,  
'For what?'

MITCH

'Cause so far it's  
working great.

INT. JORDAN ROOM-NIGHT

Jordan is using a big machine to sand her  
floors. There's a knock on the door.

JORDAN

(shouts)

Come in.

Mitch enters, He appears dazed and disheveled.

JORDAN

Oh, hi, Mitch. I'm just sanding the floor.

MITCH

Could you turn that off a second?

She does. She starts moving the furniture back.

JORDAN

What's wrong? Why are you sweating?

MITCH

I...I just...I came back from helping Chris and there was this woman in my room.

Jordan stops, It's the first time we've seen her doing nothing.

JORDAN

A woman?

MITCH

(with emphasis)

A woman. I mean she was...blessed

JORDAN

Oh?

MITCH

And she wanted to...How can I say this so as not to offend you?

JORDAN

Jump you?

MITCH

Yeah. I hope you're not offended.

JORDAN

So what happened?

MITCH

(excited)

She kissed me. Then she took off her clothes. Then I took off my clothes-she had to help me. I kept blacking out - then... it was unbelievable.

JORDAN

You made it with her?

MITCH

No. That's what was unbelievable.

JORDAN

Sure.

MITCH

It's true. I stopped her and told her I didn't want to.

JORDAN

Afraid?

MITCH

No...I mean I really did want to ... but not with her.

He looks at her hopefully. She smiles.

INT. ATHERTON'S LAB-DAY

Chris puts the finishing touches on the second laser assembly. He seems pretty pleased with himself. Kent, Bodie and Carter watch conspiratorially. Carter looks at his watch and starts for the door.

CARTER

Let's go girls

BODIE

What's that supposed to mean?

CARTER

It's just a f..f..figure of speech, Bodie. You guys coming to the exam or not?

CHRIS

(finishing his work)

I guess we should, seeing as he's gone to all the bother of having one and everything.

They all begin to exit, but then Kent holds up.

KENT

You guys go ahead. I have to go to the bathroom.

CHRIS

(exiting)

Okay, Kent, but I don't think that's going to help your confidence, do you?

The others exit as Kent goes back to Chris' laser, opens it up and starts to fiddle with the works.

KENT

(to himself)

So, Mr. Funny Man, let's see how funny you think this is.

INT. ATHERTON'S CLASSROOM-DAY

Students wait to begin taking their final exams. Chris, Bodie and Carter enter and take their seats. Atherton is passing out the booklets.

ATHERTON

You will have exactly three hours. And remember, we believe in the honor system here, people.

ANGLE ON KENT

He enters and heads for his seat beside Chris.

KENT

Good luck, buddy boy.

CHRIS

Is it okay if I name my first child after you? Dipshit Kinsley has a nice ring to it.

5R5DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ATHERTON'S CLASSROOM-LATER

The students are busy taking the test.

ANGLE ON CHRIS

He seems to be breezing through it.

ANGLE ON KENT

He's taking the test. He looks up and is distressed at Chris apparent lack of trouble. Chris looks over and throws Kent a big kiss. Kent turns away immediately.

INT. ATHERTON'S OFFICE

Atherton is going over some plans.

Carmichael ENTERS. Atherton rises.

ATHERTON

(reprimanding)

This is my class hour!

CARMICHAEL

(loud whisper)

We're past the deadline. Don't you understand, Decker's dangerous. We need those plans.

ATHERTON

(snaps back)  
It's not ready yet. But  
it will be. I've got  
Kinsley cooking now.  
He'll do it. Believe me,  
I know how to push that  
kid's buttons.

(rolling up the  
plans)  
Here are my drawings for  
the optics in the  
sighting system.

CARMICHAEL  
(cutting him off)  
Decker wants the laser by  
the end of the week.

ATHERTON  
(close to losing  
it)  
I'm doing all I can,  
damnit!

Atherton storms out.

INT. CLASSROOM

Atherton enters like a dark cloud. He sits  
at his desk.

ANGLE ON CHRIS

He finishes his last question. He gets out  
of his seat.

ANGLE ON ATHERTON

Sitting at his desk. Chris places his test  
on the desk. Atherton looks up.

ANGLE ON CHRIS AND ATHERTON

Chris has a big grin on his face. He takes  
a piece of paper and writes on it and then  
slides it in front of Atherton.

INSERT

The piece of paper. It says, "I aced  
this."

ANGLE ON ATHERTON

He writes a message and slides it to  
Chris.

INSERT

A piece of paper which reads, "Ace the  
laser."

ANGLE ON CHRIS

Chris places an apple on Atherton's desk.  
He exits. Atherton tosses the apple in the  
wastebasket. The APPLE EXPLODES.

EXT. CAMPUS-DAY

Chris is heading for the lab. The place  
has that look of exam period desertion.

CHRIS

(muttering to  
himself)

Okie-dokie, doc, a house  
doesn't have to fall on  
ole Chris Kinsley.

INT. ANTHERTON'S LAB-DAY

Chris enters and prepares to test the new equipment. He aligns the secondary laser and let it charge up. He makes some final checks and then throws a switch. The laser fires for an instant but then seems to go crazy. The new laser overheats and the main chamber sparks and smokes. Chris tries to shut it down but to now avail. he tears the cover off in hopes of pulling the wiring, but he's too late. We see everything melting away as the machine eats itself. We also see a message left for Chris just before it too melts. It reads: "1 laser=1car." Chris is on the verge of a complete mental collapse as he watches his work go up in smoke.

CHRIS

(in anguish)

No!!!!

There is nothing but the echo of his voice in response. The main laser stands like a huge, frozen bird in the empty room. In anger and frustration he swears at the machine.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

You bastard. This is your  
fault.

He kicks the wastepaper basket in hopes of getting rid of some of this anger; but, instead, all he gets is the basket bouncing back and hitting him in the shin.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Shit! I deserve that. It  
all comes back on you in  
the end.

He suddenly stands up straight as though he were having a stroke.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Holy shit!

Inspiration takes hold and Chris begins running around like a madman, gathering up parts to the laser.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(almost singing,  
he's so happy)

Of course, it's so  
simple. Echoes, bouncing  
back at me and you.

EXT. DORM-A LITTLE LATER

Chris runs up the stairs three at a time.

INT. CHRIS AND MITCH'S ROOM

He bursts in.

CHRIS

Mitch?!

The room is empty.

The closet door opens and Hopsfield steps  
out, carrying another box of cards.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Laslo! Buddy! Have you  
seen Mitch?

HOPSFIELD

No. How did you do?

CHRIS

(elated)

I failed!

HOPSFIELD

You shouldn't have.

CHRIS

That's true. But never  
mind that now. It came to  
me. The power problem. I  
solved it. Echoes! It's  
so simple, four little  
mirrors. It bounces back  
and supercharges the gas  
itself. I've got to find  
Mitch to help me build it  
but it should increase  
the power ten-fold at  
least. If you see him,  
tell him to meet me at  
the lab. Bye.

Chris exits, leaving Hopsfield lost in  
thought.

EXT. STUDENT UNION-MOMENTS LATER

A hand-painted sign hangs over the door  
that says: "Exam Week Decompression Here."

Chris runs in the door.

INT. DECOMPRESSION ROOM-CONTINUOUS

The room is full of students who are  
blowing off steam from studying for and  
taking exams. They are engaged in all  
sorts of silly, mindless activities,  
ranging from tiddly-winks and video games  
to watching cartoons. There are supplies  
of "brain food" and health drinks around.

Mitch, Ick and Jordan are in the corner.  
Chris runs up to them.

JORDAN

Oh, Chris. How did it go?

CHRIS

Great. It was a snap. But  
Atherton said he's  
failing me anyway.

JORDAN

That's terrible. You must  
be feeling awful. Are you  
all right?

CHRIS

Thank you, Jordan. I do  
feel terrible but I can't  
talk about it right now.  
I need Mitch. Gotta go.  
Eye.

He grabs Mitch and pulls him out.

ICK

He seems to be handling  
it all right. 5R5FADE OUT

EXT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE-LATER THAT NIGHT  
Chris knocks on the front door. Atherton  
answers the door. He is less than thrilled  
to see Chris.

INT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE

CHRIS

(forcing his way  
in)

Hiya, Jerry, how's it  
going?

ATHERTON

What do you want Kinsley?

CHRIS

World peace, but I don't  
think this is the time to  
discuss it.

ATHERTON

What are you doing here?  
I've already told you  
you've burned out and  
you've failed me and  
yourself miserably.

CHRIS

Yes, I know that. But I  
thought you might be  
interested.

ATHERTON

I'm not interested in  
anything you have to say.

Just then a pretty COED starts to come down the stairs. She is dressed only in one of Atherton's shirts.

COED

Jerry?

CHRIS

I solved the power problem, Jerry.

Atherton pauses. He looks at Chris, then the girl.

ATHERTON

Debbie, go home.

INT. ATHERTON'S LAB-LATER THAT NIGHT

Atherton, Kent, Bodie and Carter stand by the laser as Chris explains what he's done with formulas on the blackboard.

CHRIS

As you know, I was working on supercharging the DF by means of a fusion technique using a secondary laser. Well, when I tried it, I discovered Kent had sabotaged it so it collapsed on itself.

Everyone looks at Kent in disgust.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

And I want to thank him for the thought.

KENT

What????

CHRIS

The Deuterium and Fluorine take up enough space by themselves, right? Well, the mistake we've been making up to now is in trying to kick up the power by means of yet another outside source. Big and bulky, right? Well, the elegance of this is that by reflecting part of the lasing light back in the gas jets we supercharge the whole deal, increasing the power tenfold with no increase in size.

KENT

This is a complete waste  
of time.

Mitch has been preparing the laser for  
demonstration. He is struggling to lift  
several thick metal plates.

CHRIS

Kent, make yourself  
useful for once and help  
put those plates against  
the wall.

Kent does and everyone stands back.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Okay, Mitch do it. This  
should work.

Mitch switches on the main laser. It comes  
to life. Gases flow and a beam appears,  
hitting the plate without effect.

MITCH

Now we open the vacuum  
chamber.

He turns a valve and the beam begins to  
heat up the plate.

CHRIS

So far so good. And now,  
cross your fingers.

He throws a switch. There's a beat. And  
then, suddenly, the beam glows intensely  
brighter, cuts through the plate, the  
cabinets behind it and through the wall  
out into the night. Chris and Mitch jump  
shut the whole thing off.

CHRIS

Sorry about the wall,  
sir.

KENT

(looking through  
the hole)

And the tree across the  
quad.

ATHERTON

(in awe)

Screw the wall, you did  
it! You really did it.

KENT

(petulant)

I've done my part, too.

ATHERTON

(ignoring Kent)

Okay, Kinsley. You did  
it. You pass.

CHRIS

Thank you, sir.

ATHERTON

And I think we can get  
that job back for you at  
PEI.

KENT

(apoplectic)

What! You can't. That's  
my job. I've done  
everything you've ever  
asked. I get your  
laundry, and I finished  
the mirror. Look.

Kent runs out of the room as Mitch and  
Chris exchange a look and Atherton shakes  
his head. Kent returns, rolling a circular  
precision mirror one meter in diameter.

KENT

See! Do you have any idea  
how hard it is to make a  
film virtually 100 per  
cent reflective, one  
micron thick and apply it  
to a mirror this shape?

ATHERTON

Good, Kent.

(to Chris, in a  
hurry)

I have to go. I have a  
pressing...

He exits.

MITCH

(very happy for  
Chris)

Let's celebrate.

CHRIS

Absolutely. Kent, you  
with us?

KENT

(totally  
frustrated)

Oh...eat me.

EXT. CAMPUS-NIGHT

Chris, Mitch, Ick and Jordan are looking  
at the laser hole in the tree.

EXT. LIBRARY-NIGHT

They look at where the beam has cut a hole  
through the head of the statue of Dr.  
Bradford.

EXT. STREET-NIGHT

They look high up at a hole where the beam  
went through a telephone pole and then  
across the street, even higher, where it

burned through a billboard on top of  
tavern. They cheer.

INT. BAR-LATER

Our group is celebrating. The jukebox  
blares. Chris and Ick are drinking beers;  
Mitch and Jordan are holding hands,  
sharing a milkshake and feeding each other  
French fries.

MITCH

I don't think I'm ready  
for that yet. Maybe we  
should wait a year; at  
least until I get my  
license.

JORDAN

I understand. There are a  
lot of things to be  
considered here. For  
example, I could drive.

Hopsfield enters and sits down at the  
table. Everyone stares for a beat.

HOPSFIELD

(to Chris)

I've been thinking about  
your laser solution.

(a beat)

I figure you've increased  
the output to six  
megawatts.

CHRIS

Yeah.

HOPSFIELD

What would you use that  
for?

MITCH

The applications are  
unlimited. Industrial for  
one.

HOPSFIELD

With the gas tanks you've  
designed the beam would  
only last for forty  
seconds. What good is  
that?

CHRIS

I don't care, Laslo. I  
graduated.

MITCH

Let the engineers figure  
out a use for it. That's  
not our concern.

HOPSFIELD

Maybe somebody already  
has a use for it, one for  
which it's perfectly  
designed.

JORDAN

You mean Atherton had  
something in mind all  
along?

HOPSFIELD

Looks at the facts: very  
high power, portable,  
limited firing time,  
unlimited range. All  
you'd need is a big  
spinning mirror and you  
could vaporize a human  
target from space.

Hopsfield gets up and walks outside.  
Silence for a beat.

CHRIS

This is not good.

ICK

You want another beer?

MITCH

How big a mirror?

INT. HALLWAY-EARLY MORNING

Chris, Mitch, Ick, Jordan and Hopsfield  
run down the hall and enter the lab.

ANGLE- THE LAB

The laser is gone.

INT. HALLWAY

Chris runs next door and forces Kent's lab  
door open, looks in.

INT. KENT'S LAB

They all enter.

CHRIS

The mirror is gone, too.  
Atherton, you worm! You  
pig! You fuck! Kent, you  
too!

Chris is venting his rage on every  
inanimate object in the room, kicking and  
punching.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I should have seen it!  
How could I have not seen  
it!

MITCH

He lied to us.

CHRIS

It's easy to lie to you.  
You trust people! I'm

cynic! What an asshole I  
am!

HOPSFIELD

I understand how you  
feel, Chris, and you're  
right. But what we should  
be doing now is trying to  
find out what he's doing.

INT. CHRIS AND MITCH'S ROOM-NIGHT  
Chris and Mitch sit waiting. Chris is very  
despondent. Very. Jordan enters.

MITCH

Did you do it?

JORDAN

I put a receiver in it  
too.

(referring to  
Chris)

Is he okay?

MITCH

I don't know he stopped  
talking about an hour  
ago. May I see it?

She holds out her hand and we see an  
almost microscopic electronic device. Ick  
enters carrying several gas masks, a gas  
bottle, some tubing and an atomizer.

ICK

Ready?

INT. DORM HALLWAY -MOMENTS LATER  
Mitch, Jordan and Ick are gathered around  
the closed door to Kent's room wearing the  
gas masks. Ick feeds the end of the tube  
under the door and opens the valve on the  
bottle.

ICK

We'll have two minutes.

A STUDENT walks by, not batting an eye.

STUDENT

Hi, guys.

INT. KENT'S ROOM

The gas has knocked Kent out. He sleeps  
peacefully in a chair. The door opens and  
our gang enters.

JORDAN

(to Mitch)

Open his mouth.

He does and she pulls out some dental  
tools and goes to work, placing the  
receiver in Kent's mouth.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

It was his braces that  
gave me the idea. They're  
a perfect antenna. His  
whole..

ICK

It's about time someone  
put it to good use.

INT. CHRIS AND MITCH'S ROOM-MOMENTS LATER  
They all huddle around a homemade radio  
transceiver.

MITCH

(disguising his  
voice, into a  
microphone)

Kent. Kent. Wake up,  
Kent.

INT. KENT'S ROOM-SAME TIME  
Kent begins to stir. We can HEAR Mitch's  
voice coming from Kent's head. At first he  
thinks he's dreaming.

MITCH (V.O.)

I'm talking to you, Kent.

KENT

What?

MITCH (V.O.)

I said I'm talking to  
you.

KENT

(shaking his  
head, violently)

No!

MITCH (V.O.)

Yes.

KENT

(slapping  
himself)

I'm not asleep. I must be  
overworked.

MITCH (V.O.)

You're not overworked,  
Kent.

KENT

Well, I'm not insane!

Silence.

KENT (CONT'D)

Am I?

INT. CHRIS AND MITCH'S ROOM

MITCH

That remains to be seen,  
Kent. But we are having a  
conversation.

INT. KENT'S ROOM

KENT

I have to metabolize  
this. Um... who is this?

MITCH (V.O.)

This is Jesus, Kent, and  
you've been a very  
naughty boy.

KENT

(cracking up,  
laughing)

All right! Who is this?!  
Bodie? Carter?

MITCH (V.O.)

I am known by many names.  
I am the One. Turn to me  
and be saved.

KENT

Oh, Sure.

MITCH (V.O.)

Cut the crap, Kent,  
you've built a weapon.

KENT

How did you know that?

MITCH (V.O.)

I know everything.

KENT

Oh. God.

INT. CHRIS AND MITCH'S ROOM

MITCH

That's right, Kent. Where  
is the laser now?

INT. KENT'S ROOM

KENT

I can't tell you.

MITCH (V.O.)

How would you like to  
burn for the rest of  
time?

KENT

(panicking)

No, they're testing it on  
the twenty-seventh but I  
don't know where. It's  
classified.

MITCH (V.O.)

Oh.

KENT

What?

MITCH (V.O.)

Nothing. I want you to  
think about what you've  
done and repent, and from

now on, stop playing with  
yourself.

KENT

I don't...okay

INT. CHRIS AND MITCH'S ROOM

MITCH

Now what?

The closets door opens and Hopsfield  
appears.

HOPSFIELD

Phase two.

INT. STEAM TUNNELS

They are near Hopsfield's lair. Hopsfield  
has removed the cover from an enormous  
terminal. Chris seems remote and  
depressed.

HOPSFIELD

This is the phone  
terminal for the entire  
school.

MITCH

Okay, we tap Atherton's  
office phone. What about  
his home?

ICK

All the faculty's home  
phone are part of the  
University system.

JORDAN

(enthusiastically  
, looking at the  
maze of wiring)

Great, all we have to do  
is find it!

HOPSFIELD

We'll find it.

Jordan and Hopsfield set to work searching  
for Atherton's lines. Ick is concerned  
about Chris.

ICK

I'm depressed. Why did I  
listen to my parents? I  
should have become a  
ping-pong pro.

HOPSFIELD

It's not too late.

MITCH

You shouldn't be  
depressed. It's us he  
used.

JORDAN

Downtown Schmidlap.

MITCH

Excuse me?

JORDAN

(Still working)

Ernie "Downtown"

Schmidlap. From my high school. He was captain of everything. One day he told me he wanted to "date me up." so for a month he'd come over and I'd do his homework for him. He was going to take me to the prom. But once he passed his courses, he took Roberta Preen. I stayed home and re-wired our housekeeper's TV.

ICK

That's awful!

MITCH

You think that hurts? You should've met my Uncle Stan. He was a Weasel.

ICK

That bad, huh?

MITCH

No, that was his lodge. The Royal order of Friendly Weasels. Every Wednesday when I was eight, he'd take me down to his lodge meeting and he'd challenge people to call out two five-digit numbers. I had to multiply them in my head faster than a guy could do it on a calculator. They'd bet on me. Of course, after the meeting, he'd take me for ice cream.

ICK

That's nice.

MITCH

Well...he'd take me to the supermarket and I had to dip my hand in.

HOPSFIELD

I've got his office.

JORDAN

I've got his home.  
INT. STEAM TUNNEL- SOMETIME LATER  
They've all made themselves comfortable as they sit and wait for the phone tap to produce results. Hopsfield has wired a speaker so that they can hear,

CHRIS

Why doesn't your phone ring, you jogging, syphilitic microbe?

ICK

(sotto, to Mitch)

I think he's coming around.

Suddenly, from the speaker, we HEAR the sound of Atherton's phone being picked up.

ATHERTON (V.O./FILTER)

Hello

VOICE (V.O.)

Is this Jerome Atherton?

ATHERTON (V.O.)

Yes, it is.

VOICE (V.O.)

This is Bill Carlisle. I saw your television show the other night about the reproductive system.

ATHERTON (V.O.)

Thank you, I hope you enjoyed it.

VOICE (V.O.)

I love it. Everything you said was copied word for word from my book and I expect a lot of money for it.

ATHERTON (V.O.)

Need I remind you, it's public television, an attempt to teach people something. And all you can think of is personal greed. It's people like you that make me feel bad about being American.

VOICE (V.O.)

I'm Canadian

ATHERTON (V.O.)

I'm not surprised. Good day.

They hang up.

ICK

God, he's good at that.  
He almost gets away with  
it. That's the most  
manipulative guy I've  
ever seen... I mean  
heard.

CHRIS

He does get away with it.

MITCH

Not anymore.

INT. STEAM TUNNEL-LATER STILL

Everyone lies asleep in various places and  
positions, Mitch awakens. He is amazed to  
find Jordan asleep on his shoulder, so  
amazed he has to wake her.

MITCH

Jordan?

JORDAN

Hmmmmmmmm.

MITCH

You were sleeping.

JORDAN

I was? Gee

(snuggling)

I guess you relax me.

MITCH

(proudly)

Wow!

CHRIS

(awakening)

What's going on?

MITCH

I put Jordan to sleep.

CHRIS

And you're proud of that?

MITCH

Yeah.

The speaker comes to life with the sound  
of the receiver being groped for and then  
Atherton's groggy voice.

ATHERTON (V.O.)

(mumbling)

Yes...hello

DECKER (V.O.)

Jer? Dave Decker How are  
you?

ATHERTON (V.O.)

Christ, Dave what time is  
it?

DECKER (V.O.)

Nine thirty here in  
Washington. I thought you

Californians all get up  
early and exercise. Ha,  
ha

CHRIS

This is it. That's the  
guy I saw at his house  
with the daughter.

ATHERTON (V.O.)

Very funny, Dave. What do  
you want? I'm busy.

DECKER (V.O.)

It sounds like it.  
Listen, I'll be out there  
tomorrow for the test but  
I want you to go to the  
Marsh this afternoon and  
check optics systems one  
more time.

ATHERTON (V.O.)

Why?

DECKER (V.O.)

Because I'm in charge,  
Doctor. Goodbye. He hangs  
up. All look to Chris.

ICK

Well?

CHRIS

(comes to life)

It's happening.

MITCH

It's only weapon if it  
works, right?

CHRIS

(determined)

You're absolutely right!  
The time has come,  
people. No more being  
used. No more Downtown  
Schmidlaps or Uncle Stans  
or Jerry Athertons. We're  
going to take  
responsibility for our  
own brains. Remember,  
without ethics there can  
be no morality. Without  
morality there is no  
society and without  
society there can be no  
fast food restaurants. So  
the whole country, nay,  
in the world, is counting

on us to get even in a  
big way. Thank you.

ICK

Nice logic.

CHRIS

Thanks. Synchronize  
watches.

MITCH

Why?

CHRIS

It's just something you  
say at a time like this.

HOPSFIELD

I don't need a watch.

CHRIS

Okay, forget it. Let's  
go.

EXT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE-DAY

Atherton comes out and heads for his car  
carrying an over-night bag. As he drives  
away we SEE that Ick has been spying on  
him.

EXT. A FILED-DAY

Ick is hiding behind some bushes on a  
knoll. he is looking through binoculars.

ICK POV

Atherton's car is passing through a high  
security gate into Marsh field.

EXT. SHIPPING DOCK-DAY

Chris, Mitch and Hopsfield are loading the  
last of several large boxes into a beat-up  
van.

EXT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE-EVENING

The van pulls up in front. Painted on the  
side is a plumber's logo. Mitch, Jordan  
and Ick start unloading boxes. Chris goes  
to the front door.

ANGLE ON THE DOOR.

Chris picks the lock.

INT. HOPSFIELD'S LAIR-LATER THAT NIGHT

Chris and Mitch enter to see Hopsfield as  
he works at the computer, attempting to  
interface with another computer. Each time  
he hits the keys the READOUT replies  
"Negative."

HOPSFIELD

Boy, these secret fields  
are so untrusting.

CHRIS

So we can't get on-base  
clearance.

HOPSFIELD

I guess not.

CHRIS

Forget it. We'll balls  
it.

Jordan enters carrying two I. D. cards.

JORDAN

How do these look?

INSERT

Two fake I. D.'s with Mitch's and Chris's  
picture on them.

Perfect. I hope.

ANGLE BACK ON THE ROOM

MITCH

What if they don't fool  
anybody?

CHRIS

They shoot us.

EXT. MARSH AIR FORCE BASE- MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Technicians check monitors and prepare for  
the coming test. Nearby stands a firing  
command module very reminiscent of the  
pilot's compartment in the opening  
sequence. Atherton goes over last minute  
details with various people. He seems  
distracted as an engineer discusses a  
problem with him.

ENGINEER

Are you all right?

ATHERTON

What? Oh, yes, fine. Have  
you ever had a feeling  
that there's something  
terribly wrong?

ENGINEER

No.

EXT. MAIN GATE OF THE BASE-NIGHT

There are two Air force Police GUARDS in  
the shack. Chris and Mitch pulls up in  
Kent's Citroen, behind a government sedan  
awaiting clearance at the gate. They are  
dressed as technicians and Mitch sports a  
moustache.

INT. THE CITROEN

Mitch is a wreck and Chris doesn't help.  
He begins humming the theme from "Mission  
Impossible."

GUARD (V.O.)

All clear, Mr. Decker.  
Just follow the yellow  
line.

Chris accidentally hits the horn. Through the windshield we SEE Decker and the guard look back. Chris recognizes Decker.

CHRIS

(covering)

How long does it take?  
Mitch whimpers. Decker's car pulls away. The guard uses one finger to motion Chris forward. Chris pulls the car up. The guard leans in the window.

GUARD

I.D.

Mitch, obviously shaking, hands his to Chris who hands them to both guard.

CHRIS

Snap it up, will ya? We just flew in. We're tired. We're hungry. We have this stupid car.  
The guard turns away and walks into the shack.

MITCH

Are you out of your mind?

CHRIS

You have to intimidate these guys.  
The guard returns.

GUARD

You're not on the list.

CHRIS

Of course not. We're classified.  
We HEAR the phone RING. The second guard answers it.

INT. COMMAND CENTER

An Air Force Officer is on the phone. An impatient Atherton stands beside him.

ATHERTON

I don't know what he should look for, just tell him if he sees anything out of the...let me tell him.

He grabs the phone.

INT. THE CITROEN

GUARD

Aren't you guys a little young to be technicians?

CHRIS

Lasers are a young science. There, fine, now

you've made me say it.  
Now we're all in trouble.  
Mitch looks like he's going to die.

GUARD

Look, I'll call the duty  
officer.

He starts towards the phone shack. The  
other guard is still on the phone.

CHRIS

(his demeanor  
changing)

Excuse me.

The guard turns back.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Look, pal, don't call  
anybody. We're four hours  
late. It's our jobs. Give  
us a break, will ya?  
Someday you might be in  
the private sector,  
right?

A beat. Mitch dies. Chris gives the guard  
a goofy grin.

EXT. THE GATE

The guard waves them through. The car  
pulls away. The guard returns to the  
booth.

SECOND GUARD

We're supposed to look  
for anything out of the  
ordinary.

FIRST GUARD

Okay.

EXT. THE RAMP - NIGHT

A B-1 Bomber, painted black, sits in the  
glow of the work lights. Technicians, who  
are wearing jumpsuits similar to the ones  
Mitch and Chris have on, are busy working  
around the plane.

Chris and Mitch ENTER FRAME and walk up to  
the plane. A couple of the technicians  
watch them curiously as they go up the  
stairs into the bomb bay.

INT. BOMB BAY

Chris and Mitch enter. Three technicians  
are inside the plane running last minute  
checks on the laser, which sits in the  
middle of the cabin. Chris crosses to the  
technician who is in the middle of the  
cabin. He watches him making mental notes  
as he checks the program. The technician  
turns, sensing his presence.

CHRIS

Nice work. Keep it up.  
Mitch, meanwhile, checks out the laser optics. After a beat, one of the technicians signals for the others to complete their jobs and exit. They start to file out. One of them turns and looks at Chris, who is just standing there.

CHRIS

What?!

The technician shakes his head uncertainly and exits with the others. Finally, Mitch and Chris are alone. Chris opens the BRIEFCASE. It contains a cellular phone, a modem and an EEPROM Processor.

INT. HOPSFIELD'S LAIR - SAME TIME

The computer receives a signal. Hopsfield turns to Jordan and Ick.

HOPSFIELD

We've got a connection.  
They're in.

INT. BOMB BAY

CHRIS

Get the EEPROMs.

Mitch opens up the computer and clips a couple of power lines and pulls out four computer chips and hands them to Chris, who plugs them into the processor. Chris picks up the phone.

CHRIS

(into phone)  
Abbott to Costello.

INT. HOPSFIELD'S LAIR

Jordan picks up the phone.

JORDAN

(into phone)  
This is Costello. Go ahead, Abbott.

INT. BOMB BAY

CHRIS

(into phone)  
Costello, who's on first?  
Mitch hits him impatiently.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

We've got the goodies.

JORDAN (V.O.)

We have the target coordinates computed for trajectory adjustment.

CHRIS

Great. Shoot.

INT. HOPSFIELD'S LAIR

Hopsfield's computer screen fills with machine code of ones and zeros. He begins searching through many screens of code.

HOPSFIELD

Oh, oh.

ICK

What?

HOPSFIELD

Oh, nothing.

INT. BOMB BAY

Chris and Mitch freeze as a mechanic walks by the open bomb bay door.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - EARLY MORNING

Technicians are checking monitors and a radar scope at a control panel. Atherton is in the rear of the room briefing a group of civilians and military brass. Amongst them is Decker. Atherton points to a drawing on a large chart.

ATHERTON

The plane will reach an altitude of sixty-five thousand feet. When it is over, the target will fire the laser from here

....

(points to the firing module)

... for five point two seconds.

Carmichael enters.

CARMICHAEL

They're all set for the final onboard check.

ATHERTON

Fine. Right this way, gentlemen.

They all follow Atherton and Decker to the exit at the rear of the room.

INT. BOMB BAY

Chris and Mitch sweat it out.

INT. HOPSFIELD'S LAIR

Hopsfield is scanning the screens.

HOPSFIELD

I think I've found it.

May I have the coordinates, please.

ICK

(reading from paper)

Thirty-four degrees, ten minutes, fifteen seconds

North; one hundred  
eighteen degrees, nine  
minutes, three seconds  
West.

Hopsfield enters the data into his  
computer.

JORDAN

(into phone)

We're sending.

INT. BOMB BAY

CHRIS

(into phone)

We're taking.

Mitch suddenly panics as he looks out.

MITCH'S POV

Atherton and his group come around the  
corner of a building and head for the  
plane.

ANGLE ON MITCH AND CHRIS

MITCH

They're coming this way.

CHRIS

(into phone,  
overly calm)

You may be interested in  
knowing that Mitch  
reports that Herr  
Professor is approaching  
and I'm not even  
sweating. Isn't that  
remarkable?

INT. HOPSFIELD'S LAIR

JORDAN

Please hurry. Atherton's  
coming.

HOPSFIELD

(typing  
furiously)

Please, I don't work well  
under pressure.

He finishes.

HOPSFIELD (CONT'D)

There. I hope that does  
it.

JORDAN

(into phone)

Okay, Chris ... I mean  
Abbott. Hello ... hello  
... hello ...

EXT. BOMBER

Atherton and his group approach and enter  
the bomb bay.

INT. BOMB BAY

As they enter, there is no sign of Chris and Mitch. Atherton checks out the laser and the computer. The others examine various gauges and switches and the flight deck.

CARMICHAEL

Everything all right?

ATHERTON

Of course.

EXT. BOMBER

As the group exits the plane, Chris and Mitch drop out of the forward landing gear well in the background.

ATHERTON

(turning back)

Oh, I forgot ...

ATHERTON'S POV

A glimpse of Chris and Mitch as they disappear around the corner of the building.

CLOSE ON ATHERTON

Uncertain of what he has just seen.

CARMICHAEL (O.S.)

What is it?

ATHERTON

Nothing.

INT. DORM LIBRARY - PRE-DAWN

Kent looks the worse for wear as he sits surrounded by psychology books dealing with schizophrenia.

MITCH (V.O.)

Hi, Kent.

KENT

(surprised)

Oh, I thought you were gone.

MITCH (V.O.)

Not yet. Have you been touching yourself?

KENT

Yes. I mean, no.

INT. CHRIS AND MITCH'S ROOM - SAME TIME

MITCH

(into mike)

Good, Kent. Dad, my father, you know, God, wants to show you something.

KENT (V.O./FILTER)

Why? I mean, what?

MITCH

I've learned not to ask.  
INT. DORM LIBRARY

MITCH (V.O.)

He wants you to wait on  
the sidewalk at six  
thirty nine Ivy Crest  
Drive at precisely six-  
oh-eight this morning.

KENT

Ivy Crest?

MITCH (V.O.)

Just wait there and you  
shall receive a sign. Do  
not despair and do not go  
inside.

KENT

Why not? Hello? Hello,  
Jesus?

A student walks in and looks at him  
strangely.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - DAWN

Atherton and company watch the bank of  
monitors as the flight controller clears  
the bomber for take off.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAWN

Chris and Mitch jump into the van and  
drive off.

INT. COMMAND CENTER

Some monitors show the bomber climbing  
while others show the desert target area.  
It is a mock up of a Presidential  
motorcade. The open cars are filled with  
test dummies, and are linked together and  
are being towed slowly across the desert  
by a tractor.

CONTROLLER

(into mike)

Crossbow One, radar  
contact. Climb and  
maintain flight level six  
five oh.

EXT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE

The van pulls up and parks across the  
street. Chris and Mitch get out. Just  
then, a Volvo pulls up and Jordan, Ick and  
Dr. Meredith get out. Dr. Meredith is  
wearing a bathrobe, pajamas and slippers.

MEREDITH

Ah, Mr. Kinsley. Why am I  
not surprised to see you  
here? Perhaps you have  
the explanation for this

so-called event I'm  
suppose to witness.

CHRIS

Yes, sir, I do, but first  
may I take this  
opportunity to compliment  
you on your fashion  
sense.

INT. CONTROL CENTER

CONTROLLER

(into mike)

Crossbow One, turn left  
to two eight zero.

PILOT (V.O./FILTER)

Two eight zero, roger.

A technician hits a switch and a monitor  
pops on. Crosshairs dominate the center of  
the screen. The desert floor rushes by.  
Atherton turns to a specialist standing  
by.

ATHERTON

Norman, if you'd be so  
kind. This cockpit mock-  
up duplicates the shuttle  
flight deck and we've  
placed it here to  
demonstrate the firing  
technique.

The specialist takes his place inside the  
command module.

PILOT (V.O./FILTER)

We are thirty one DME  
from the target.

CONTROLLER

(mike)

Roger, Crossbow. Open the  
doors.

INT. BOMB BAY

The doors open to reveal clouds rushing  
past and the ground far below.

EXT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE

MEREDITH

These are rather strong  
accusations, Chris.

CHRIS

Yes, sir, I know.

MEREDITH

If they're true, I'm  
going to need some proof.

CHRIS

I think we're going to be  
able to accommodate you  
in just a minute, sir.

Looking past Meredith, Chris sees Kent  
approaching.

ANGLE ON KENT as he arrives at the house  
and stars up at it. He glances at his  
watch and waits impatiently.

INT. COMMAND CENTER

Inside the firing module, the specialist  
pulls down the target sighting device and  
puts his hands on the joysticks.

SPECIALIST

Power on.

CONTROLLER

T minus fifty and  
counting.

INT. BOMB BAY

The large mirror lowers into its firing  
position and the laser powers up.

EXT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE - MORNING

The group watch Kent, who is nervously  
pacing back and forth, talking to himself.

CHRIS

(to Mitch)

Boy, if this works, he's  
going to start a new  
religion.

MITCH

If it doesn't work ...?

Chris shoots him a censoring look.

INT. COMMAND CENTER

This countdown continues. Monitors display  
the target sight, the pilot's sighting  
screen of the ground and a camera's view  
of the bomber.

TECHNICIAN

Trajectory command relay,  
locked.

ATHERTON

Now, Norm here has firing  
control.

ANGLE ON TARGETING MONITOR

The target motorcade is sighted.

INT. BOMB BAY

The laser mirror and sighting lens move in  
unison as they line up on target.

INT. COMMAND CENTER

The crosshairs line up on the sighting  
monitor.

EXT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE

JORDAN

What's he doing?  
THEIR POV  
Kent has now started toward the front door.

MITCH  
I told him not to go in!  
CLOSER ANGLE ON KENT

KENT  
(muttering to  
Jesus)  
Look, this is Jerry's house, we're very close, so if you're not going to answer me, then I'm going in ...  
He reaches for the front door.

KENT (CONT'D)  
... here I come.  
ANGLE ON CHRIS AND MITCH

CHRIS  
(shouting)  
Kent! Stop!

ANGLE ON KENT  
who turns and sees them.  
INT. COMMAND CENTER  
Everyone is riveted to the sighting monitor.

SPECIALIST  
Target locked. In ten,  
nine, eight ...  
As the countdown continues.

INT. BOMB BAY  
The computer comes to life and electronically unlocks the laser optics from the sighting camera. The mirror turns to the left.

INT. COMMAND CENTER  
The aerial view of the motorcade remains centered on the sighting monitor.

INT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE  
Kent opens the front door and enters.

KENT  
(to himself)  
That looked like Dr. Meredith in a bathrobe. First I'm hearing things, now I'm seeing things.  
He closes the door.

KENT (CONT'D)  
Okay, God. Let me have it.

The room is dark, lit only by morning light coming through a large stained glass window at the top of the stairs. In the middle of the room is what looks like a large above-ground swimming pool, covered in aluminum foil. Kent is amazed.

INT. COMMAND CENTER

SPECIALIST

... three, two, one,  
bingo.

He hits the trigger.

INT. BOMB BAY

The laser fires.

EXT. SKY

The laser beam traces through the atmosphere.

INT. COMMAND CENTER

The group waits expectantly. Nothing happens to the target.

EXT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE

Chris and Mitch, who are running toward the house, are stopped in their tracks by the incredible sight of the red laser beam shooting down out of the heavens, striking the grass, tracking across the lawn then up the wall of Atherton's house.

INT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE

The beam strikes the window and for one tiny moment causes the most incredible light show anyone has ever seen.

KENT

(in awe)

Oh!

The window is obliterated by the laser light, which crashes down directly onto the aluminum foil-covered pool.

KENT (CONT'D)

Oh, my!

The foil is heated instantly in the laser light and there is the SOUND of tiny explosions, building to a roar. In a second, the foil rises violently and tears open. Kent picks up a piece of debris and examines it.

KENT

Popcorn?

In the next instant, he is engulfed in popcorn.

EXT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE

The beam disappears as suddenly as it came. Everyone stands in awe. A few

kernels fly out of the broken window, then a storm.

INT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE

Kent and furniture are being forced up the stairs by a rising tide of popping popcorn. He struggles against it, loses, and sinks into the mound like a dinosaur in quicksand.

EXT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE

The windows are filling up with popcorn. Finally, they crack and break as popcorn forces its way out of the house wherever it can.

MITCH

Kent!

Chris and Mitch head for the front door. Suddenly, it bursts open and Kent is carried out by a moving wall of popcorn.

INT. COMMAND CENTER

People furiously check systems.

CARMICHAEL

I don't understand. Did it fire?

TECHNICIAN

Yes, we indicate a shot. We've got another problem, though. It's not shutting down.

INT. BOMB BAY

The computer is still working. The laser optics and equipment begin to melt. It's been wired to self-destruct.

INT. COMMAND CENTER

The devastated group watches the laser self destruct on the monitor.

DECKER

Nice going, Jer.

ATHERTON

Something's wrong here. Unlock the bird's eye.

He takes over the command module sighting system

ATHERTON

I'm tracing where the shot went.

We watch as the monitor's view swings away and across a residential neighborhood, coming to rest on a bird's eye view of his own house.

ATHERTON (CONT'D)

Oh, no.

The monitor view moves in to reveal what looks like a growing mushroom.

DECKER

What have you done?

ATHERTON

Retired.

EXT. ATHERTON'S HOUSE

The group looks on as the mountain of popcorn continues to engulf the house.

Meredith goes to see if Kent is all right.

CHRIS

(to Mitch)

Do you think we used too much?

MITCH

Maybe a little.

CHRIS

Well, I guess we all learned something here today.

JORDAN

What?

CHRIS

I don't know, but it seemed like the right thing to say, didn't it?

ICK

It did to me.

As they continue to watch the destruction of the house, and various neighbors come out to see what's what, a Winnebago pulls up and stops. Hopsfield gets out.

HOPSFIELD

I think you used too much.

CHRIS

Really? I'm sorry you missed it.

HOPSFIELD

Yeah, well, I had to pack.

CHRIS

Why?

HOPSFIELD

I'm getting married.

CHRIS

What? To whom?

MITCH

(looking at the U-Haul)

What is all this?

HOPSFIELD

Oh, I won. Only thirty-one point eight percent though. I have to figure that out. But not this summer.

Mitch suddenly sees Sherry standing at the Winnebago door.

MITCH

Sherry?

SHERRY

(kissing  
Hopsfield)

Hi. Isn't it wonderful. I finally found him. Number One. I've been looking for him for ten years.

HOPSFIELD

What can I do? She loves me.

CHRIS

Right. Congratulations.

HOPSFIELD

Thanks. Anyway, we probably won't ever get to see you again, so, bye.

CHRIS

What do you mean? Where are you going?

SHERRY

I've got a little survival place in Wyoming. We're going to live there.

HOPSFIELD

Yeah, it's getting too weird around here. See ya.

They climb into the Winnebago and it pulls away. The others watch it go.

ICK

You think it's getting too weird around here.

CHRIS

Absolutely.

JORDAN

I didn't notice.

MITCH

I like it.

In the background, the popcorn has split the walls of the house and finally lifts the roof off like the top of a pot. The

whole house tilts to its side and the  
popping stops.

As we PULL BACK, Atherton's car pulls up  
and he gets out, dumbstruck. Dr. Meredith  
walks over to him and confronts him. Kent  
joins Chris and the others who watch.

THE END.