

WORLD WAR X

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Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future.
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.

T.S. Eliot

FADE IN:

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - SUNSET

A WHITE STAR STEAM SHIP breaches a rough patch of ocean.

We RISE ABOVE THE BOW to reveal a hundred EUROPEAN IMMIGRANTS crowded against the port side railing, their hopeful faces auburn from setting sun.

North Atlantic Ocean - 1915

These immigrants are all men, broad-shouldered and imposing with square jaws and sharp GREEN EYES. They could be brothers.

A distant, lilting WOMAN'S VOICE sings an Irish lullaby...

YOUNG MOTHER (VO)
(singing)
*'TIS THE LAST ROSE OF SUMMER,
LEFT BLOOMING ALONE...*

ON THE MAIN DECK

YOUNG BOYS play marbles on a floor that won't stay level.

YOUNG MOTHER (VO) (cont'd)
*...ALL HER LOVELY COMPANIONS,
ARE FADED AND GONE...*

IN THE SHIP'S HULL

Long rows of blankets mark territory for each family. The WOMEN are pale and sick, not made for this kind of voyage.

YOUNG MOTHER (OS)
*...WHEN TRUE HEARTS LIE WITHERED,
AND FOND ONES ARE FLOWN...*

A BABY BOY cries as his blue-eyed YOUNG MOTHER rocks him against the harsh movement of the ocean, singing softly...

YOUNG MOTHER (cont'd)
*...OH WHO WOULD INHABIT THIS
BLEAK WORLD ALONE.*

CRACK! Mother and child react to a LOUD NOISE ABOVE.

ON THE MAIN DECK

A glimmering FIREWORK sparkles above the ship. TWO BROTHERS near the bow watch the raining shards of light on the water.

BROTHER #1
You see, brother? It is a great country.

They scan the horizon for the gilded torch of Lady Liberty... but instead they see a SMALL BOAT WITHOUT SAILS.

The MASKED RAIDERS aboard this boat are dressed in black. Each holds a silver REVOLVER and a razor sharp PENDULUM BLADE.

BROTHER #2

Take the children below deck...

CLANK! A GRAPPLING HOOK finds its grip on the port railing.

CLANK! CLANK! Two more grappling hooks starboard. They are completely surrounded.

The immigrant men SNAP INTO ACTION, ordering their sons below deck. They draw pistols from beneath their coats and OPEN FIRE on the Masked Raiders as they BOARD THE SHIP.

The Raiders shoot the men point blank before brutally SEVERING THEIR SPINES with steel blades. Bodies hit the deck with faces frozen in surprise, glowing firework embers falling around them like burning snow.

In the time it takes to boil water, fifteen are dead.

ON THE MASKED LEADER

Taller than the others, a warrior's build like we haven't seen since the fall of Rome. He signals his men toward the cabin door.

IN THE HULL

The cabin door CREAKS OPEN and a pair of HEAVY BOOTS descend the steps. Mothers scatter into dark corners, covering their children's mouths to silence them. Our YOUNG MOTHER wraps her baby in a blanket to muffle his cries.

The Masked Leader CRACKS A FLARE, revealing a thick crowd of women and children cowering in fear.

He walks slowly toward the muted cries of the infant boy and wraps his enormous gloved hands around the baby. The Young Mother HOLDS TIGHT, choking on tears.

YOUNG MOTHER

No...please...

MASKED LEADER

Let him go.

His voice is warm and reassuring, yet resolute. The Young Mother runs a finger along her baby's cheek for the last time as the man TAKES IT FROM HER.

He hands the child to a lithe, muscular FEMALE RAIDER. She freezes, staring at the young mother crumpled on the floor.

MASKED LEADER (cont'd)

Go, now!

The Female Raider wraps the baby in a blanket and climbs the stairs. The Masked Leader takes one last look at the dirty, tearful faces...then STOMPS out the flare.

YOUNG MOTHER

No...NO!!

The Young Mother BREAKS FREE of others trying to restrain her. We FOLLOW HER up the stairs to the locked cabin door.

She BASHES HER SHOULDER up against it, throwing all her weight, a weapon of fury now, screaming and spitting with every heave until it BREAKS OPEN to

THE MAIN DECK

where she's faced with the LIFELESS BODIES OF EVERYONE SHE KNOWS, collapsed and still.

She stumbles over them to the port railing as the last of the boats disappear into the fog, her infant's cry growing distant fast.

A moment of breathless horror, blood washing over her bare feet as it sloshes from bow to stern...

...and the ENTIRE SHIP EXPLODES IN A BILLOWING CONCUSSION BLAST OF FLASH-MOLTED STEEL AND FIRE.

EXT. NEW JERSEY SHORE - DAY

A misty grey morning. A YOUNG GIRL, 6, pig-tailed and muddy, builds a sea turtle out of sand.

A ROCKING HORSE washes ashore. She runs to it, only to notice more debris along the beach...doll's heads, burnt wood and scattered clothes...and a WOODEN TRUNK.

The girl approaches it and cautiously LIFTS THE LID. The hinges SNAP. She JUMPS BACK as it falls to the sand.

INSIDE THE STEAM TRUNK

An INFANT BOY on a stack of wool blankets, clothes ripped and torn, sharp green eyes wet with tears.

ON THE YOUNG GIRL

Stunned and breathless. She kicks off her sandals and runs up the beach toward a beautiful Victorian home.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH SCHOOLYARD - DAY

A tiny fist makes BRUTAL CONTACT with a bully's jaw.

St. Christopher's School For Boys - 1926

Cheering CATHOLIC SCHOOLBOYS surround THOMAS WADE, 10, a green eyed scrapper with blood on his knuckles. The BULLY he's fighting is thicker and taller, nearly 17.

SCHOOLBOYS

Club him, Tom! Kill the bastard!

The Bully SWINGS WILDLY but can't touch Thomas, ducking and weaving like a middleweight. He SWEEPS THE BULLY'S KNEES and the Goliath FALLS. Thomas follows him down and PINS the kid's gravel-scraped cheek to the pavement.

THOMAS

Say uncle...

BULLY

I shagged yer mother, orphan.

Tom lifts him by the hair and CRACKS his face on the cement. The bully's nose EXPLODES BLOOD.

BULLY (cont'd)

Uncle!...uncle!!...

Thomas props the Bully's head up at a group of THIRD GRADERS standing around a SMALLER BOY with a bloody lip.

TOM

Leave my friends alone, or I'll break something you really need.

Thomas DECKS HIM one last time and the bully SPITS TEETH.

INT. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

FATHER WILSON, a bleary-eyed Catholic Priest, sits across from ARNOLD AND MARGARET WADE, Thomas' adopted parents.

FATHER WILSON

Righteous or not, Ma'am, we can't have violence at St. Christopher's.

ARNOLD

Then punish him. Cane him if you have to. There's no need for expulsion, he's just a boy.

FATHER WILSON

They're all boys, Mr. Wade. Yours nearly paralyzed one twice his size.

Margaret can no longer hold back her tears.

ARNOLD

He has a temper. But he's been to so many schools now...surely the Lord can help.

FATHER WILSON

Perhaps. But there are clergy trained to rid a soul of the devil.

Arnold's eyes become steel.

ARNOLD

My son is not possessed.

Father Wilson glares ominously back at him.

FATHER WILSON

Oh, there is something wicked in him, Mr. Wade. Of that you can be certain.

EXT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - SAME

Arnold and Margaret exit Father Wilson's office to find Thomas waiting in the hall, face scratched with dried blood. Arnold puts an exhausted hand on the boy's head.

ARNOLD

Hey, who needs these guys, huh? Bunch of old gasbags.

Thomas cracks a smile. He loves this guy. Margaret shoots her husband a look. He knows what must be done.

ARNOLD (cont'd)

Thomas...what if your Mother and I taught you your subjects at home? Would you like that?

Thomas is confused. Margaret kneels beside her son and peers into his green eyes.

MARGARET

I know they're wrong about you. You're not a bad boy, you're good, through and through. You hear me?
(convincing herself)
You're good.

Margaret wipes away her tears with a gloved hand, takes the boy's hand and the family exits into the harsh midday sun.

The light BLEEDS until it fills the frame...

WORLD WAR X

EXT. MANHATTAN - 30 YEARS LATER - MORNING

The grand silver skyline as your grandfather remembers it.

New York City - October, 1945

CENTRAL PARK

A low fog blankets the Great Lawn. European Nannies push the first batch of Baby Boomers along wooded footpaths.

FIFTH AVENUE

An endless canyon of glass and steel. Morning sun refracts in the Yellow Cabs clogging the arteries of this living metropolis.

FINANCIAL DISTRICT

Dense crowds of GI's home from a freshly won war walk to new jobs in grey flannel suits. NEWSBOYS hawk the day's Times:
NAVY SHIPS WELCOME PRESIDENT TRUMAN FOR VICTORY CELEBRATION.

This 1945 is desaturated and cold, overexposed in places, an aesthetic we commonly associate with a dystopian future. It's a bold and arresting take on a time we thought we knew.

INT. DINER - W. 86TH AND BROADWAY - DAY

MEN IN TRENCHCOATS sit shoulder to shoulder at the counter while lipsticked WAITRESSES pour coffee like they give a damn.

We TRACK along the counter to TOM WADE, now 31, square jaw made more striking by his sharp green eyes. There's a decency behind these eyes, but also something that makes you wonder if pushing this guy too far is really a good idea.

Tom sips coffee with one hand while circling news stories in pencil with the other. The WAITRESS sets down a plate of greasy eggs-in-toast.

WAITRESS

Don't you have to read the paper you work for, Tom?

TOM

Have to get my news somewhere, Marlene.

WAITRESS

What's your beef with the Mirror, anyway? That rag is first rate.

She opens the NY DAILY MIRROR resting on the counter:
ALLIGATOR FOUND IN QUEENS BASEMENT.

WAITRESS (cont'd)

See? *That* happened. What else you gotta know?

DING. A new customer ducks in from the cold. Tom spots the man's reflection in the chrome countertop--NYPD uniform. He moves the newspaper off the empty plate beside him.

OFFICER MCGRADY, mid-50's, thick and Irish, fills the seat.

TOM
You're late, McGrady.

MCGRADY
Had a jumper on the bridge. Poor sap hit the water like a poached egg on concrete.

TOM
Got any pictures?

MCGRADY
Hungry little bugger, aren't you...

TOM
Maybe I'm looking to move up in the world.

MCGRADY
Maybe you are. But it ain't news if it happens every day.

TOM
Gimme a lead, I'll have a byline this time tomorrow.

MCGRADY
Leads don't come cheap.

Tom slides an envelope across the counter. McGrady checks the contents. Cash. His leathery mouth curls into a smile.

MCGRADY (cont'd)
Robbery down at the Navy Yard.
Somebody blew a hole in the USS Yosemite the size of a Chevrolet.

Tom scribbles notes on a handheld pad.

TOM
Why would anyone steal from the Navy?

MCGRADY
Maybe they pulled it off before.
Maybe they got casaba-size globes.

WAITRESS (OS)
And...the usual.

The Waitress sets down a plate of cream cheese and bacon.

MCGRADY

Thanks, doll.
 (mouth full)
 Took a peek at your file...you and
 the law been friends for awhile.

Tom's coolness cracks a bit.

TOM

I had some trouble when I was a kid.

MCGRADY

Musta been some kinda trouble. Army
 wouldn't take you in wartime...

TOM

Not because of that.
 (taps his chest)
 Bad ticker. They call it a murmur.

MCGRADY

You'd better eat some of this then.
 (slides over the bacon)
 Tightens the heart muscles. Read it
 in a magazine.

TOM

No thanks.
 (checks his watch)
 Got an angle on this crime scene?

MCGRADY

OSS has the lid down tight, G-Men up
 the tuckus. But that pier's got some
 soft spots if you know where to look.

Tom chugs the last of his coffee and puts on his fedora.

TOM

You're a king among men, McGrady.
 (to the Waitress)
 Put him on my tab, huh?

MCGRADY

Class act, Rockefeller.

As Tom rises from the counter, he notices a BEAUTIFUL YOUNG
 WOMAN watching him from a booth...

She casually averts her eyes like she wasn't looking.

Tom smiles to himself. He's seeing things again.

EXT. BROOKLYN NAVY YARD - DAY

COPS and DETECTIVES swarm beneath the USS YOSEMITE, a massive
 Navy cargo ship with a GAPING HOLE on the port side hull.

EXT. PORT 57 - GUARD BOOTH - SAME

Tom approaches a pair of SHORE PATROL GUARDS at the gate and confidently holds up a dubious ID card.

They wave him through.

ON THE PIER

Cops hover over two destroyed NAVY JEEPS, flipped and blackened, crisped to the core. FORENSIC DETECTIVES examine the smoking wreckage, stumped.

Tom gets close enough to eavesdrop.

DETECTIVE

...they took out two Willys, no shell casings, no prints. You boys get robbed by a pack of ghosts?

COMMAND INVESTIGATOR

What do ghosts want with uranium? No, these guys knew what they were after.

Tom scribbles the details on his notepad...*uranium*...

He notices the Shore Patrolmen walking quickly toward him, followed by their SUPERIOR OFFICER, clearly furious.

SHORE PATROLMAN #2

Alright, wise guy, let's see your badge.

Tom holds up his ID, keeping it at a distance.

SHORE PATROLMAN #1

That ain't no press badge.

TOM

Suppose there's not much harm I can do then. Say you let me have a look around?

SHORE PATROLMAN #2

Say I give your nose a break.

The MP PUSHES TOM, who unexpectedly ABSORBS THE FORCE without stumbling. A startling ANGER blazes in his eyes...then subsides as he realizes the odds are stacked deep.

COMMAND INVESTIGATOR

Any trouble here?

TOM

Just doing the people's work, gentlemen. No trouble at all.

Tom pockets his notepad and cautiously exits the crime scene.

EXT. UNDER THE PIER - MOMENTS LATER

Tom climbs down a rusted ladder to a small dock below the pier. The charred black cavity in the SHIP'S HULL is visible from here, still smoking.

He takes out his Leica and snaps away.

POV - CAMERA VIEWFINDER

A few quick STILLS of the blasted steel...broken shipping crates floating among the burnt projectiles...

...and a LEATHER BOUND BOOK.

Tom shoulders his camera and LIFTS HIMSELF UP onto the support rafters beneath the pier. He hangs down by his knees, stretches his arm to the water...and GRABS THE BOOK.

EXT. NAVY YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Tom climbs up the ladder and walks briskly away, lifting his eyes from the pavement just long enough to notice a pair of BLACK OLDSMOBILE COUPES parked at the guard booth.

Four OSS AGENTS in black suits emerge from the cars. They FLASH CREDENTIALS and enter the crime scene without slowing.

One of them makes quick EYE CONTACT with Tom. He quickly looks away and continues toward the subway.

INT. NY DAILY MIRROR NEWSROOM - DAY

Tom enters a vast room of clicking TYPISTS and PROOFREADERS. He shuffles to a small desk and sits. Nobody looks up.

Tom removes the leather book from his pocket and runs a finger over the raised symbol on the cover: a bolt of lightning crossed with a sword over an oil lamp.

MR. SELIG (OS)

You hear they found that missing girl
in Greenpoint, Wade?

MR. SELIG, Tom's short, rotund SUPERVISOR, is over his shoulder.

MR. SELIG (cont'd)

Some Polack had her in his basement.
Normally we'd run with juice like
that, but today we got scooped by the
Daily Mail. Why? Because the story
was sitting here...

(on Tom's desk)

...waiting to be proofed.

TOM

I was following a lead, sir.

MR. SELIG

A lead? I'm sorry, are you a reporter for this paper?

TOM

Times change.

MR. SELIG

Oh, you got moxy, huh? Well how's this for news: I got a call this morning said you were down at the Navy Yard flashing a press badge.

TOM

I had the beat on a story.

MR. SELIG

You had the beat on an accidental detonation of fireworks. I got a wire from the *US government* saying so.

TOM

And you believed them?

MR. SELIG

Wade, you came to me with no formal education and a brief but colorful history of violence. All I wanna know is: *can you do the easiest job at this paper?*

GLORIA (OS)

It was my fault, sir.

Selig spins around to face GLORIA, mid 20's, a mousy typist in a floral print dress.

GLORIA (cont'd)

I misspelled Pierogi. He just got the copy five minutes ago.

Selig glares at her with unmasked contempt.

MR. SELIG

I take it back, Wade. You have the second easiest job at this paper.

Gloria absorbs the dig, boldly indifferent. Selig exhales and disappears into the newsroom bustle.

GLORIA

Maybe his wife doesn't speak English. Feels like the only way it could work.
(over Tom's shoulder)
So...how about that lead?

TOM
 (without looking up)
 It's nothing. Never mind.

GLORIA
 Hey come on, don't let a jerk like
 that get you down...

TOM
 No...I'd just rather keep this lead a
 secret, Gloria. I wasn't going to
 tell him anyway.

Tom rolls paper into his Underwood and starts typing. Gloria
 backs off, a bit disappointed.

When she returns to her desk, Tom sneaks the leather book out
 from under his jacket and stuffs it in his bag.

INT. EXAM ROOM - DAY

A BALDING DOCTOR takes a drag on his cigarette and listens to
 Tom's heart with a stethoscope.

DOCTOR
 Yep, still there. Like a broken
 record. You been eating well? Meat,
 starches, dairy?

TOM
 Every day. You ever think maybe
 there's nothing wrong with me?

DOCTOR
 I wouldn't get your hopes up. The
 heart's a stubborn sumabitch.
 (takes another drag)
 Got a girl?

Tom shakes his head no.

DOCTOR (cont'd)
 Get a girl. Hell, your heart's broken
 already, what's the worst that could
 happen?

EXT. E. 87TH ST. MARKET - NIGHT

Tom hoists his bag of groceries and flips a dime to GINO, 27,
 the young Italian grocery clerk.

GINO
 (thick accent)
 You smile, Tom, no? War is over.

Tom smiles just enough to be polite and moves on.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Tom enters his lobby, brushing past CLEVON, mid-30's, black, the building's lone handyman.

CLEVON
Evening, Mister Wade.

TOM
How's that girl of yours, Clevon?

CLEVON
Mighty fine, sir.

Clevon continues polishing, watching Tom until he disappears around the corner.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tom enters and drops his keys. This cluttered room has been lived in for many years with no sign of a woman's touch.

We PAN AROUND to reveal walls pocked with DENTS AND HOLES in the plaster, the kind you make with a fist.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Tom opens the oven and removes a baking sheet with two steaming potatoes and the LEATHER BOUND BOOK, pages now dry.

WALTER WINCHELL (VO)
(ON RADIO)
The same thing happened today that happened yesterday, only to different people...

Tom dumps the potatoes on a plate, CRUSHES OPEN each one with a tenderizing mallet and douses them with ketchup.

He sets his food on a card table and opens the book to the first page with his butter knife.

INSERT - LEATHER BOOK

Two hundred pages of a COMPLEX FOREIGN LANGUAGE. The symbols are jagged and intricate, no alphabet of ours.

ON TOM

Flipping through the pages with a fascination he's granted little else in 30 years. Deep inside he finds a small entry in handwritten ink, vertical along the seam: 423-LISPEN/6

Tom reaches into a nearby drawer and takes out a map of Manhattan. He follows Sixth Avenue south to a familiar cross street and scribbles down an address...423 *Lispenard at 6th*.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - BROADWAY - DAY

The frame EXPLODES with a shimmering blizzard of tickertape descending on 50,000 NEW YORKERS.

It is OCTOBER 27, 1945 - NAVY DAY IN MANHATTAN.

This grand parade is in honor of PRESIDENT TRUMAN, visiting today for the week of fleet celebrations.

ON TOM

Moving through the dense crowd of civilians in long coats and hats, almost identical at first glance.

The crowd dissipates as he turns the corner and walks west on Lispenard, a comparatively empty street of warehouses.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Tom finds the address on his notepad and ducks into an alley across the street. He waits in the shadows, watching the door while the roaring crowd echoes from up Broadway.

Suddenly it opens and a TALL MAN in a black trenchcoat walks down the front steps.

He's a few years older than Tom, broad-shouldered and imposing, even at a distance. His trenchcoat billows as he walks determinedly toward the parade.

Tom waits for him to get a few lengths away, then follows.

EXT. CANAL ST. - DAY

The Tall Man moves at a clip through the crowd. Tom follows as fast as he thinks he can, periodically checking his pulse. *Don't overdo it.*

The Tall Man STOPS at an intersection, turns back and looks right at us. His face is ABSTRACTLY FAMILIAR. Square jaw, sharp green eyes...not unlike Tom.

When the traffic cop signals walk, he turns and walks briskly into the crowd.

TOM

Hey! Stop...

But the Tall Man doesn't stop. And though he isn't quite sure why, Tom has no choice but to follow.

EXT. BROADWAY - DAY

The parade is in FULL SWING as the Tall Man rounds the corner and WEAVES through the raucous scores of civilians. He is alarmingly quick and agile.

Tom does the same with far less grace, still managing to stay within ten yards of his mark...then the Tall Man hurdles the barricade and RUNS INTO THE PARADE.

Tom PURSUES HIM into the chaotic blizzard of ticker tape. The Tall Man cuts through a MARCHING BAND, ducking in and out of rows, barely missing the sliding trombones, paper falling so thick he can't make out more than ten yards ahead.

Tom pushes through the band, not so lucky, colliding with bass drums and knocking trumpets sideways.

He emerges in time to see the Tall Man TAKE OFF RUNNING at a speed that isn't quite human.

Something inside Tom SHIFTS INTO GEAR. A deep, all-consuming need to know that LIGHTS HIM UP. His trenchcoat billows and he RUNS FLAT OUT in pursuit.

The Tall Man LEAPS onto moving cars, jumping from one to another without fear. Tom forces his way through a dense group of NURSES, struggling to keep an eye on his target, expecting his heart to fail him at any moment.

He's losing him...Tom has to do better.

He breaks free of the crowd and JUMPS UP onto a moving car. The Tall Man is three cars away now, barely visible through the ticker tape.

Tom LONG JUMPS from one Cadillac to the next, gaining...but not for long. Up ahead, the Tall Man RUNS UP THE SIDE OF A MOVING FLOAT. He speeds across the platform and HURDLES to the next one.

Tom leaps off the last Cadillac and tries to SCALE THE FLOAT after him, but he can't match this guy. He falls to the asphalt, vision obscured by the dense confetti.

The Tall Man stands high atop the float as it passes a lamp post, jumps out to it, SWINGS once around to build momentum and VAULTS OVER THE CROWD...

...landing with a THUD on the cement beyond the layer of civilians lining Broadway.

ON TOM

Stunned by what he just saw.

POLICEMAN (OS)
You! Stop right there!

A collection of NYPD closing in. He can't lose this guy now.

He DIVES into the dense crowd, PUSHING HIS WAY to the other side. He breaks through, spots the Tall Man turning a corner and CONTINUES AFTER HIM.

We MOVE WITH TOM as he runs faster than he ever thought he could. The Tall Man checks over his shoulder as Tom closes on him...then turns the corner onto the pedestrian walkway of the BROOKLYN BRIDGE.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

We FLY OVER THE ACTION as Tom chases the Tall Man over the wood-planked walkway.

When he reaches the first tower, the Tall Man hops the steel girders and swings out on a suspension cable, his body hanging above the choppy water.

Tom slows, gasping for air. The Tall Man yells to him over the sound of speeding cars below.

TALL MAN

You're fast.

TOM

(breathless)

Who are you...why did you run...

TALL MAN

I had to see for myself.

TOM

See what?

The Tall Man turns his back on Tom.

TOM (cont'd)

No...WAIT!

He JUMPS. We follow his GRACEFUL PLUNGE from the bridge...

...SMACK onto the deck of a PASSENGER FERRY passing beneath it. He sticks the landing with both feet and doesn't stumble.

The Tall Man looks up at Tom and SMILES...then he hops down to the passenger deck and blends in with the crowd.

Tom feels his heart beating like a machine gun. He should be dead right now.

But he's never felt more alive.

INT. DINER - 86TH AND BROADWAY - MORNING

Tom sits in the same spot at the counter, this time with the leather book he discovered at the Navy Yard. On the front page of the Times: NAVY DAY FIREWORKS DAMAGE SHIP.

He impatiently checks his watch as the waitress refills his coffee cup.

TOM
McGrady come in this morning?

WAITRESS
Not on my shift.

Tom looks around the diner, finger tapping impatiently on the counter, not sure whether or not to wait.

EVELYN (OS)
Excuse me, is this seat taken?

Tom turns to find himself facing the beautiful woman he caught watching him from the corner booth the other morning.

EVELYN PRICE is not yet 28. Her eyes are smoky, her voice a soft velvet with a palpable confidence beneath it, the way your grandmother sounded when she was hot.

EVELYN (cont'd)
Sorry to be rude, but if I don't make the 8:30 train my boss will have another secretary before lunch.

Tom moves the newspaper covering Officer McGrady's plate.

EVELYN (cont'd)
It's awful swell of you Mr...

TOM
Wade. Tom Wade.

EVELYN
Evelyn Price.

Evelyn takes off her coat and scarf to reveal a simple grey skirt and blouse that she somehow manages to make sexy.

EVELYN (cont'd)
Can you believe it's thirty degrees out? That's the freezing point of water. And we're mostly water. Vulnerable little creatures, really.

WAITRESS (OS)
What'll you have, hon?

EVELYN
Eggs in toast, please.

TOM
You always order eggs in toast?

EVELYN

Only way to eat eggs or toast and that's a fact. I've seen you sitting here before, haven't I?

TOM

I come around sometimes.

EVELYN

Ah, I see. Can't get too close. You some kind of G-man?

TOM

No ma'am. Just a reporter.

EVELYN

I knew you were up to something dangerous, I've seen you with your policeman friend.

She notices the leather book on the counter.

EVELYN (cont'd)

Say, what do you have there?

TOM

Nothing. Something I found.

EVELYN

Any good?

TOM

Don't know yet.

Evelyn eyes the book, almost like she wants to reach out and grab it. Tom puts it back in his coat.

EVELYN

You have green eyes. It's rare, you know. Lucky.

For a moment the room feels quiet...then their connection is broken by the DING of the front bell.

Tom stands.

TOM

I should go.

EVELYN

Maybe I'll see you here again?

TOM

Don't know. I might be too dangerous for this place.

EVELYN

You don't seem so bad to me.

Tom puts on his fedora and gets out while he's still good.

INT. MURRAY HILL PRECINCT - 35TH ST. - DAY

NEW YORK POLICEMEN in long blue peacoats fill this smoky cavern of US-built stone infrastructure.

Tom sits across a desk from LIEUTENANT ORTON, mid-fifties.

LT. ORTON

No match on the badge number. You sure he was one of ours?

TOM

Yes, McGrady with a G. He was assigned to this precinct four months ago.

LT. ORTON

Son, I've been here fifteen years, I never met a McGrady.

TOM

So you're saying I'm crazy?

LT. ORTON

No, I'm saying whoever you been getting your tips from? Ain't a cop.

EXT. ITALIAN GROCERY - NIGHT

Tom takes his bag of groceries from Gino without looking up, preoccupied by the day's events.

TOM

Thanks, Gino.

GINO

Mio piacere, Tommasino.

Gino watches him until he turns the corner into the dark.

EXT. E. 87TH ST. - CONTINUOUS

As Tom approaches his apartment, he spots two SHADOWY FIGURES in the doorway. The OSS AGENTS from the Navy Yard.

OSS AGENT #1

You Thomas Wade?

TOM

Who are you, friend?

OSS AGENT #1

We got a tip you swiped evidence from our crime scene. You take something?

TOM

Just pictures.

OSS AGENT #2

That makes a guy like me wonder why you were so interested.

TOM

Maybe I'm a fella who likes to ask questions.

OSS AGENT #2

Maybe I am too. What say you come along with us?

TOM

On what charge?

The OSS Agent PULLS A GUN from a holster.

OSS AGENT #1

Sticking your nose where it don't belong.

TTZZZCCHHTT!

The OSS Agent COLLAPSES to the concrete. The second agent reaches for his weapon but quickly TENSES UP and joins his colleague on the ground.

Standing behind them is a MAN IN SHADOW. Long black trenchcoat. Matching fedora. He steps into the light...

...it's MCGRADY, holding a dark ELECTRIC BATON unlike anything Tom has seen before.

MCGRADY

Come on. We don't have much time.

TOM

But you're a cop...they're government men...

MCGRADY

These men are not from the government. They were going to kill you.

TOM

Me, what for?

MCGRADY

They know you're one of us.

This stops Tom cold. He's been waiting to hear somebody say that all his life.

MCGRADY (cont'd)
Stay close. Don't look back.

McGrady leads Tom across the street into the dark, leaving the two OSS Agents motionless on the sidewalk.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

McGrady gets into a SHINY BLACK OLDSMOBILE. The passenger side door UNLOCKS automatically.

IN THE CAR

Black leather interior. Chrome dials. McGrady starts the engine and points to a BURLAP SACK on the dash.

MCGRADY
Put it on.

Tom hesitates.

MCGRADY (cont'd)
I said you have to trust me.

Tom hoods himself and the car KICKS INTO GEAR.

EXT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS - NIGHT

The Oldsmobile pulls up to a 19th Century brownstone, warm light emanating from inside.

McGrady leads Tom up the stairs and raps an elaborate SECRET KNOCK on the door.

INT. BROWNSTONE PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

Dark red drapes frame oak walls hung with portraits of DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMEN in tweed suits and bowties. Leather club chairs flanked by stand-alone ashtrays soak up the amber glow of a wood fire.

McGrady enters with Tom and removes his hood.

There are FOUR MEN in this parlor, each in a burgundy smoking jacket with a pipe or a glass of scotch. They vary in age, but their faces look subtly similar, like they share a parent.

Tom recognizes one of them as the Tall Man he chased through the parade. His name is NESMITH.

NESMITH
I think our friend needs a drink.

The other two raise their pipes: ANTHONY, 23, smaller than his peers, and MARSHALL, 34, thick-necked and thinly mustached.

McGrady holds out a pack of Lucky Strikes.

MCGRADY

Cigarette?

TOM

I can't smoke.

MCGRADY

Right. Bad heart. And yet you chased a man sixteen blocks in thirty degree cold...

TOM

(eyeing Nesmith)

He didn't have to run.

NESMITH

We had to be sure.

Tom looks around at the polished mahogany shelves dense with awards and service medals.

TOM

What is this, some kind of policemen's union?

MCGRADY

I'm not a cop, Tom.

(lights a cigarette)

What do you remember about your parents?

TOM

They died when I was young.

MCGRADY

Do you think you'd recognize your father if you saw him today?

McGrady motions to a framed group of portraits on the wall, laid out like a family tree. Tom moves to examine them.

INSERT - FRAMED PHOTOGRAPHS

Dozens of YOUNG MEN who look a lot like Tom, paired with YOUNG WOMEN who don't.

MCGRADY (OS) (cont'd)

Thirty years ago, a passenger ship was attacked in the Atlantic Ocean. Until now, we believed there were no survivors...

ON TOM

looking around at the eerily familiar faces on the wall.

TOM

Who are you?

MCGRADY

We're a bloodline of chosen men, Tom.
A Brotherhood, here to save the world
from a gathering evil...

Tom GRABS A FIRE STOKER, sharp end touching McGrady's throat.

NESMITH

Told you he was fast.

TOM

You're no brotherhood, you're
thieves. You stole uranium.

MCGRADY

Obscurum stole that uranium. We tried
to stop them and failed.

TOM

Obscurum?...

NESMITH

The Shadow Axis. The connective
tissue that binds our enemies
together.

MCGRADY

The Nazis. The Japs. Mussolini. What
do they have in common? Obscurum
orchestrated this war. And if they
aren't defeated, America will lose
everything she fought so hard to win.

TOM

Hitler wouldn't take orders from
anyone.

MCGRADY

Obscurum's power runs deep, beyond
anything the Fuhrer understands.
That's why we need you. With our
Brothers united, we can defeat them.

TOM

I don't believe it.

MCGRADY

If proof is what you need...

McGrady nods to Marshall. He puts a hand on Anthony's shirt collar and pulls it down to reveal a RED RORSCHACH-LIKE BIRTHMARK on the back of his neck. It spreads out as it disappears into the hairline.

MCGRADY (cont'd)
We are all marked with the sign.

The expression on Tom's face CHANGES. He has seen this mark before. His whole life.

NESMITH
Tom...that emptiness you've felt your
entire life...it's a part of you
that's unfulfilled...a truth...

Tom instinctively puts a hand on the back of his neck, pulling his collar down enough for us to see a slight variation of the SAME MARK.

MCGRADY
We lost you once before. Never again.

Tom lowers the fire stoker, worn down. His existential nightmare is all over his face.

MCGRADY (cont'd)
When you're ready to know who you
really are, we'll be waiting.

Marshall passes something in front of Tom's eyes that FLASHES and he BLACKS OUT.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - GREAT LAWN - DAY

Tom wakes up in his clothes.

He is alone in the center of this open field, blades of grass silver with November frost.

Tom sits up, head aching. He spots a NANNY with a baby carriage watching him from a nearby footpath...

...then the previous night's events come RUSHING BACK.

Tom stands and walks quickly out of the park.

INT. APARTMENT LOBBY - MORNING

Tom enters, passing Clevon fixing a floor tile.

CLEVON
You expecting company, Mr. Wade?

Tom freezes.

TOM

What makes you say that?

CLEVON

There's two men waiting outside your door. They friends of yours?

On his guard, Tom steps into the stairwell and looks up to the third floor.

The two OSS AGENTS are waiting outside his door.

He backs slowly away...

TOM

You know what...I forgot something...

Tom exits quickly without looking up. Clevon's expression doesn't change. It's almost like he's not surprised.

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

Tom moves through a rolling sea of fedoras, wanted by the law and effectively homeless.

He shuffles across a busy street to find himself facing

ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL

A truly majestic structure, unchanged over centuries. He walks up the front steps and enters.

INT. CATHEDRAL - CONTINUOUS

The ethereal beauty of this space creates an instant calm. A rehearsing CHILDREN'S CHOIR echoes from the dias.

Tom walks down the center aisle, crosses himself and looks up at the intricate stained glass window. Sunlight pours through...but its beauty offers no answers.

Then he spots a familiar face among the faithful: EVELYN, seated alone a few rows down.

EXT. CATHEDRAL STEPS - DAY

Evelyn walks briskly toward the sidewalk. Tom exits running.

TOM

Evelyn!

She turns, surprised to see him.

EVELYN

Tom! Well I'll be.

TOM

I didn't want to bother you in there but...I thought if you weren't busy, I could buy you a cup of coffee.

EVELYN

That's awful nice of you. Thing is I'm late for work...

TOM

A walk then. Wherever you're going. See I don't know too many people, so when I've got a problem, I talk to strangers. Do you mind?

Evelyn smiles a little. She doesn't mind at all.

EXT. PARK AVENUE - DAY

Tom and Evelyn walk together. It's a frigid day and their breath puffs steam.

EVELYN

Another war? You'd have to be suicidal to fight our boys right now.

TOM

They say it's a shadow element. Organized the Axis powers in secret.

EVELYN

That's quite a feat. And what does this "Obscurum" want now?

TOM

Revenge. They're in America, planning some kind of invasion.

EVELYN

So any Tom, Dick or Harry could be...

Evelyn looks cautiously around at the passing civilians.

TOM

One of them.

EVELYN

And you're ready to join these vigilantes, fight an enemy no one's ever heard of, no questions asked?

TOM

My whole life I felt different...like I was lost in the dark...

EVELYN

We all feel that way sometimes.

TOM
No, this is different. I know it's
crazy, but...I believe it. Every word.

EVELYN
Then nothing I can say will change
your mind.

EXT. CHRYSLER BUILDING - DAY

Evelyn and Tom stand outside the chrome-plated entrance. He
stares up at the towering edifice.

TOM
You work here?

EVELYN
Yep. They talk, I type, the world turns.

TOM
Nowhere to go but up.

She smiles at him, charmed, then KISSES his cheek.

TOM (cont'd)
What was that for?

EVELYN
Luck.

CRASH! A garbage can falls over in the alley nearby. A MAN IN
A BROWN SUIT can be seen walking away from the overturned
can. Evelyn glances toward the commotion, visibly unsettled.

EVELYN (cont'd)
Goodbye Tom.

She holds her hand up in farewell, then blends in with the
crowd moving like a bloodstream through the revolving doors.

INT. DINER - DAY

Tom sits in his regular spot at the counter, unable to touch
his eggs-in-toast.

WAITRESS
You okay, kid? Food's getting cold.

TOM
Sorry...I guess I'm not hungry.

WAITRESS
Yeah? Now that's news.

She sets a bill down. Tom reaches into his coat pocket for
loose change...

...and discovers a SMALL ENVELOPE. He opens it to find a single card with an address.

804 W 145th ST.

Tom looks over his shoulder. Nobody around.

Now he's more sure than ever. *It's time to learn the truth.*

EXT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Tom holds his fist up to knock...but the door UNLOCKS. As it creaks open, we can see into the parlor where Tom's FOUR BROTHERS stand waiting for their newest member to arrive.

Tom steps in and the door closes behind him.

INT. INITIATION ROOM - NIGHT

Dark and candlelit, walls lined with ancient tomes.

The Brothers stand around Tom with smoking jackets over their three-piece suits. Tom's coat is gone, his shirtsleeves rolled up to the elbow.

Anthony opens a safe, removes a wooden box engraved with same symbol as the book--lightning, sword and lamp.

Inside there are TWO BLACK OPAL SPHERES.

ANTHONY

Hold out your left palm.

Tom obeys. Nesmith takes the spheres from the box and places them in Tom's open hand.

NESMITH

Tom, your brain is full of things we call *prohibitors*. Anxieties, dysfunctions, those fits of rage you're prone to. Most importantly, fear. This will get rid of all that.

Tom instinctively ROTATES THE SPHERES in his hand like revolving planets. They HUM as they circle each other.

NESMITH (cont'd)

There are also some parts of you that have been sleeping, ever since you were born. This will wake those parts of you up.

The spheres are moving faster now. Tom CLOSES HIS EYES...

...and sees MOMENTS FROM HIS PAST.

1923 - TOM AS A BOY

A brutal PLAYGROUND BEATING at yet another school. Same fight, different battered bully.

1927 - TOM AT TWELVE

Yelling at his adopted parents. He LASHES OUT angrily, smashing a vase and knocking over lamps.

1932 - TOM AT SEVENTEEN

BLAM! A deer collapses with one clean HEADSHOT. Tom stands in the wintry backyard of his childhood home, smoking REVOLVER in hand. He stares at the blood pooling in snow, mesmerized.

1944 - TOM AS AN ADULT

In his apartment, lost in an uncontrollable RAGE. He FLIPS over a table, BREAKS a mirror, SMASHES a radio and puts a powerful FIST THROUGH THE WALL.

BACK TO THE INITIATION ROOM

as an ENERGY PULSE courses through Tom's body and he FALLS.

The black spheres roll to the feet of Brother Anthony. He scoops them up and places them carefully back in the box.

Tom opens his eyes and RISES. His posture is more confident. He even appears more muscular.

MCGRADY

Congratulations, Brother. At last...

(hands on his shoulders)

You are complete.

EXT. EMPTY FIELD - WESTCHESTER - DAY

Tom and his new Brothers stand in an open field near the tollbooth where Sonny Corleone will get shot in five years.

NESMITH

Your body is more powerful than your brain thinks it is. Agility, strength, endurance, everything that makes a man hard to kill. Now run.

TOM

What?

NESMITH

Run.

Marshall whips out a starting pistol and FIRES in the air.

Tom takes off running...VERY FAST. We move with him as he adjusts to his new speed and within seconds he's burning it up like Rickey stealing third.

A few hundred feet away, Tom digs his heels into the dirt and STOPS ON A DIME. He looks back at his Brothers and allows himself a smile. This feels INCREDIBLE.

EXT. AUTOMOBILE JUNKYARD - STATEN ISLAND - DAY

Tom RUNS UP A MOUNTAIN OF JUNKED AUTOMOBILES. He sticks each surface like a Parkour master.

NESMITH (VO)

You must stay in prime physical condition. Your gifts may surprise you at times--it's crucial your body can keep up.

EXT. BROWNSTONE BASEMENT - DAY

Tom and Marshall FISTFIGHT. Both of them are FAST and DEADLY.

NESMITH (VO)

Obscurum are trained in combat from a young age. They do not fall easily.

Tom PINS MARSHALL and the others cheer. He RAISES HIS FIST, nose bloody, taking in the fraternal support.

EXT. MAPLE FOREST - DAY

Tom uses an M1-GARAND RIFLE to shoot the FALLING LEAVES of a Maple Tree as they drift to the ground. *FTHT. FTHT.*

NESMITH (VO)

Your abilities give you an advantage, but you must master them with presence of mind.

FTHT. One every second and he doesn't miss.

EXT. BROWNSTONE ROOFTOP - DAY

Tom and Anthony FENCE on the rooftop. Tom is swift and agile, parrying and lunging with graceful authority.

NESMITH (VO)

You are part of something bigger than yourself now. A brotherhood of man.

Tom backs Anthony to the roof ledge and CONNECTS. Anthony stumbles back, about to fall, but Tom's hand SHOTS OUT and grabs his arm.

NESMITH (VO) (cont'd)

Without them, you are nothing.

INT. COMMUNICATION ROOM - NIGHT

A light clicks on to reveal a dank underground cellar dense with radio communication equipment.

Nesmith guides Tom to a table covered with topographic maps. Anthony tunes the hulking SHORT WAVE RADIO to a frequency playing a light CHOPIN CONCERTO.

Marshall sits at a teletype, preparing to take dictation. McGrady checks his pocket watch.

The Chopin broadcast JANGLES and goes quiet. A MALE VOICE emanates from the speakers. It is garbled and muddy--radio of this time made most men sound alike.

MAN ON RADIO (VO)

Today is the seventeenth of November, 1945. These are your orders and they are active now.

Marshall types furiously. The teletype CLICKS AWAY, spitting tape.

MAN ON RADIO (VO) (cont'd)

Three days from now, Obscurum will heist 2 million in cash from The Bank of Norway. Details will be telegraphed.

The MORSE CODE TICKER goes off.

MAN ON RADIO (VO) (cont'd)

Your mission is to intercept the enemy on their escape and transfer the cash to a remote location, where it will be returned to authorities. Your efforts will not go unnoticed.

The frequency SCRAMBLES and the Chopin resumes.

MCGRADY

Gentlemen, we're in business.

INT. COMMUNICATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A STREET MAP OF MANHATTAN unfolds onto the table. Marshall reads from a strip of morse code.

MARSHALL

Between 8:20 and 8:32 AM on the morning of November 20th, a stolen bank transport will pass through the intersection at 14th and 2nd Avenue en route to the midtown tunnel.

McGrady puts an ink-stained finger on the map.

MCGRADY
We'll have to ram it.

MARSHALL
I can get a milk truck.

MCGRADY
Good enough. Firepower?

ANTHONY
M1 75 millimeter Howitzer in the car,
composition C-4 for the armored
van...Thompsons if it gets personal.

MCGRADY
Tom, I want you on lookout. There's a
phone booth on the northwest corner.

TOM
I don't understand. How did that man
know when Obscurum would strike?

The Brothers shoot each other knowing looks.

MCGRADY
Be patient. Soon everything will
become clear.

INT. ARMORY - NIGHT

A secret bookcase opens to reveal a WALK-IN ARSENAL full of
submachine guns, sniper rifles, grenades, shotguns--all
scratched up as if used regularly for years. The Brothers
LOCK AND LOAD. Nesmith hands Tom a Browning 9MM.

NESMITH
There you go. Lightweight, low
recoil. A baby could do it.

TOM
I can handle my own.

ANTHONY
Says you. Obscurum don't go easy on
greenhorns.

MARSHALL
What's the fatality rule?

MCGRADY
These men have killed brothers. Show
no mercy.

Tom checks the magazine of his pistol, unsure exactly what
they're about to do and, more importantly, why.

EXT. FINANCIAL DISTRICT - BANK OF NORWAY - DAY

A BANK GUARD locks the back of an ARMORED VAN.

As he walks around to the driver's side, a MASKED MAN KNOCKS HIM OUT COLD, takes the keys and gets behind the wheel.

As another BANK GUARD exits the building, a SECOND MASKED MAN materializes from a nearby alley.

BLAM! His SHOTGUN tears up the Bank Guard's abdomen. Civilians scatter as the vehicle SCREECHES AWAY.

INT. ARMORED VAN - SAME

The Masked Men speed up Second Avenue. The driver pulls down the HANDKERCHIEF covering his mouth.

MASKED MAN #1
Is it all there?

His partner turns back, SLIDES the metal door open and checks their haul: multiple shelves of HEAVY BURLAP BAGS.

MASKED MAN #2
Hoo! Looks like goddamn Fort Kno--

CRASH!!!!!!

They are BLINDSIDED BY A MILK TRUCK and the armored van FLIPS OVER A FIRE HYDRANT into a DEPARTMENT STORE.

Water SPRAYS INTO THE SKY as civilians SCREAM AND RUN. Traffic in this intersection comes to a standstill.

Marshall jumps out of the milk truck wearing leather driving gloves. Anthony appears from the subway and applies a sticky PLASTIC EXPLOSIVE to the back door of the armored van.

Nesmith exits a department store and DETONATES THE EXPLOSIVE by remote. The van door BLASTS OFF and SHATTERS the windshield of a Yellow Cab.

A BLACK HEARSE screeches around the corner and SKIDS OUT so its rear bumper faces the armored van. McGrady exits the Hearse and signals to the others.

The four men line up and TRANSFER THE BAGS OF CASH from the crashed bank van to the Hearse.

ON TOM

In position on the northwest corner, using binoculars to scan the long corridors of buildings for police lights.

He spots a pair of BLACK AND WHITES 8 blocks out and gives a sharp two-finger WHISTLE.

ON THE HEARSE

McGrady spots the red lights weaving through stopped traffic.

MCGRADY
Leave the rest.

MARSHALL
That's a hundred grand!

McGrady GRIPS MARSHALL BY THE COLLAR, suddenly livid.

MCGRADY
You want to die today, Brother?

Marshall quickly grabs as many bags as he can and tosses them into the back. One of them RIPS OPEN and a stream of loose bills WHIPS UP IN THE WIND.

Anthony crawls beneath the van, STICKS AN EXPLOSIVE under the back tire, then rolls under the milk truck and plants another.

McGrady WHISTLES to Tom.

Tom slides over the hood of a crashed Buick and runs through the intersection toward the Hearse.

His eyes SHIFT toward a figure crawling from the crashed van...one of the MASKED MEN, face bloodied...

He's got a SHOTGUN trained on McGrady.

Time SLOWS...McGrady registers the threat, too late...this guy has him cold...Tom has a split second to act...

On pure instinct, Tom pulls his Browning pistol and FIRES TWICE, hitting the Masked Man in both shoulders.

The man FALLS TO HIS KNEES, the life draining from his body amidst a flurry of falling cash. Tom locks eyes with his cold, dead pupils as he falls forward...

BLAM! Tom looks up to see McGrady with his gun pointed skyward, gazing down at him with a newfound respect.

MCGRADY (cont'd)
Time to go, Brother.

Tom makes a running dive into the open door of the Hearse as it PEELS OUT away from the scene.

INT. HEARSE - SAME

Marshall behind the wheel. Nesmith removes a remote detonating device from his pocket.

MCGRADY

Wait. Not yet...

McGrady checks the rearview. The COP CARS breach the intersection without slowing, still in pursuit.

MCGRADY (cont'd)

Now.

CLICK.

The armored van and milk truck EXPLODE in a fireball that FLIPS BOTH VEHICLES in the air. They CRASH DOWN ONTO THE PURSUING POLICE CARS as they roar through the intersection, creating an impassable barricade.

The Brothers yell and pump their fists as they speed away from the crime scene.

Tom cannot share their joy. He's DEEPLY DISTURBED by what just happened and it shows.

EXT. BRONX SHIPYARD - DAY

The Hearse slows as it approaches several FORD COUPES waiting alone on a broad expanse of concrete.

The men waiting here look like Brotherhood on steroids, even larger and stronger than the ones we know.

The back door of the Hearse opens and they go to work transferring the bags of cash into the waiting Coupes.

McGrady approaches the BRUTISH LEADER and gives him a handshake all their own.

BRUTE BROTHER

You've done a great service, McGrady.
He will be pleased.

MCGRADY

That is all we desire.

The Brute Brother spots Tom apart from the others, looking out at the river canals.

BRUTE BROTHER

That him?

MCGRADY

That's him.

BRUTE BROTHER

You report it to Central?

MCGRADY

They brought him to us. We're just following orders.

BRUTE BROTHER

Think you can trust him?

Tom VOMITS into the river, wiping away sweat with his tie. McGrady watches him thoughtfully.

MCGRADY

I certainly hope so.

The trunk of the last Coupe SLAMS. The transfer is complete.

MARSHALL

Done.

POLICE SIRENS in the distance.

MCGRADY

Let's move out.

INT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS BROWNSTONE - PARLOR - NIGHT

Scotch is poured. Cigars are lit. Tom sits among his Brothers, now wearing his own burgundy smoking jacket.

ANTHONY

(mid-laugh)

...then I look over and this poor sap's losing his lunch *and* his dinner...

The men CRACK UP and backslap Tom, who laughs the same way we all do when it's actually not that funny.

MARSHALL

How do you feel, now that you've drawn blood for our cause?

TOM

How should I feel? I shot a guy.

MARSHALL

He was Obscurum. His death brings us one step closer to victory.

We can tell Tom doesn't completely buy this reasoning.

NESMITH

Tom, you've been holding that glass for an hour. Drink up.

There is a hint of suspicion in Nesmith's voice. Tom DRINKS. McGrady takes the floor.

MCGRADY

Today we did a great thing. Not just
for our Brotherhood. But for humanity.

BROTHERS

Here! Here!

MCGRADY

And...we did it with one more.

(all eyes on Tom)

Brother Tom. The Father praises you.

BROTHERS

Praise to Father Zael!

Tom REACTS when he hears that name for the first time. *What the hell are these guys talking about?*

MCGRADY

Now I ask you all, is this new
Brother ready to hear The Word?

Marshall raises a hand.

MARSHALL

I believe he is.

MCGRADY

Brother Anthony?

Anthony doesn't hesitate.

ANTHONY

He is.

MCGRADY

Nesmith?

Nesmith isn't so sure, but he's outvoted and he knows it.

NESMITH

I abstain.

MCGRADY

Nesmith abstains. I say yes. And so
it is decided. *The Father is truth!*

ALL

Betimes he rises!

We CLOSE IN ON TOM. Gone is the enthusiastic new member of an elite club. He sees red flags everywhere now...but he's in too deep to show it.

EXT. LISPENARD ST. - DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Tom and his Brothers walk down this familiar street, shiny from recent rain. They stop at the warehouse Tom staked out during the ticker tape parade.

McGrady knocks a complex pattern on the steel door. It OPENS.

INT. EMPTY WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A broad expanse of dusty floor, empty and barren. They cross the room to a nondescript door that could be a broom closet.

These are STAIRS beyond it and a light below. We FOLLOW THEM DOWN to an underground hallway that opens into

THE GRAND LODGE

A cavernous temple in dark wood. Benches make a half circle before a DIAS featuring a hand-carved BROTHERHOOD SYMBOL above the proscenium.

The hall is packed with more than TWO HUNDRED MEN, each disturbingly similar in matching burgundy smoking jackets. They stare curiously at Tom as he's led down the carpet toward the proscenium.

They're welcomed with open arms by the LODGE GRAND MASTER, 73 but still hard as shit, the way Burt Lancaster was at his age. He wears a long, elaborate dark blue robe.

GRAND MASTER

Welcome, Tom.

The Grand Master steps up to the podium and we CRANE OVER HIM to reveal the 200 BROTHERS now standing at attention.

GRAND MASTER (cont'd)

The time has come for this Brother to know the Truth. Any in this hall with reason to deny him the Father's Word, speak now or forever be silent.

ON NESMITH

Fighting an instinct deep within. But he keeps quiet.

GRAND MASTER

So be it.

A TALL, SLENDER BROTHER brings out a small black box on a silver tray. The Grand Master ceremoniously opens the box and removes a GLASS PRISM.

He hands it to Tom and motions toward an enormous FIRST EDITION of their book, open to a page with only four lines of text.

Tom places the prism over the bizarre text. Amazingly, it is TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH THROUGH THE GLASS.

Tom looks back at McGrady, who nods encouragingly.

TOM

(reading)

Praise be to Zael, Seer of the Day of Judgment. All those who guard against evil, the path to glory is before us. The Father is Truth.

BROTHERHOOD

Betimes he rises!

INT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Tom sits on the bed in his small room, lamp covered with a cloth to dim the light. He's reading his personal copy of the book with the prism decoder.

We see FLASHES OF TEXT as he reads...

TOM (VO)

...the Blacksmith was a humble servant, dutiful and proud...and so the High Emperor called upon him to build a force of righteousness...

Rudimentary drawings of SPACECRAFT...A tall ALIEN BEING suspending a MAN in midair with four-fingered hands...

TOM (VO) (cont'd)

The Blacksmith bestowed his gift upon generations...an army of warriors in His name...to ready for the Change of Times.

Tom hears footsteps outside his door. Then a light KNOCK. It's Anthony, holding a candle.

ANTHONY

I saw your light on.

Anthony enters and sits, inviting himself in.

ANTHONY (cont'd)

I remember when I first learned the Truth. I envy you, Brother.

TOM

You read this book as a child?

ANTHONY

I did. And it changed my heart.

Anthony senses Tom's unease.

ANTHONY (cont'd)
I know this must be difficult for
you, Tom. But doubt is the enemy.

TOM
A few weeks ago I didn't know this
book existed. Now I'm supposed to
believe every word?

ANTHONY
(earnest)
Well...yes.

TOM
It says here that an alien race came
to the prophet Zael a thousand years
ago...where have they been since?

ANTHONY
Waiting, of course.

TOM
Waiting for what?

ANTHONY
A great day is coming. Soon the
Father will return, and we will march
to glorious victory in his name.

There's an almost robotic monotone to Anthony's witness, as
if these words have been repeated so often, saying them is
easier than breathing.

TOM
That's the truth, is it?

ANTHONY
The Truth is in His word. Know the
Father, and you will know yourself.

Tom nods like he understands, but he doesn't at all.

EXT. CHRYSLER BUILDING - DAY

Tom stands amongst the moving crowd, scanning the faces for
Evelyn's blue eyes. He SPOTS HER exiting the revolving doors.

TOM
Evelyn!

EXT. STATEN ISLAND FERRY - DAY

Tom and Evelyn look out at the skyline as Hudson Bay churns
in their wake.

EVELYN

Let me get this straight...a thousand years ago, an alien told a blacksmith that someday an evil organization would enslave the earth...

TOM

Obscurum, that's right.

EVELYN

And this blacksmith, *Zael*? He was altered by these aliens...so his offspring would grow into a powerful army to fight this war?

TOM

That's what they believe. But I looked everywhere, there's no proof this *Zael* even existed.

EVELYN

You don't have to convince me it sounds cracked. Where do they get their orders from?

TOM

The radio. They say it's a broadcast from Central Command.

EVELYN

Well, maybe you can trace the signal.
(off his confused look)
I mean if you find the frequency, we can figure out where it's coming from.

TOM

You know how to do that?

EVELYN

I know someone who does.

TOM

They won't like me snooping around.

EVELYN

Then don't get caught. Here.
(writes a number down)
If you're ever in trouble, call this number and I'll send help.

Tom takes the piece of paper, suspicious now...

TOM

Who are you, Evelyn?

Evelyn looks out at the Manhattan skyline. Tom takes the opportunity to gaze at her perfect skin. Beautiful.

EVELYN

A friend.
(her voice softens)
You watch yourself, okay?

Tom nods, comforted by her.

EXT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

A light snow falls past the darkened windows.

INT. TOM'S ROOM - NIGHT

Tom lies awake, eyes on the ceiling. He looks over at the clock on the side table. 3:47 AM.

He throws off the covers to reveal he's fully dressed.

INT. COMMUNICATION ROOM - NIGHT

The deadbolt CLICKS and the door swings slowly open. Tom pulls TWO HAIRPINS out of the lock and closes the door behind him.

He flicks a lighter, illuminating the dark.

There is a notepad near the short wave radio with a handwritten DAILY LOG of communications and frequencies, constantly changing. He copies down the last five.

ON THE MAP TABLE

Tom opens several of the TOPO MAPS, broken down into regions throughout the country, two or three states apiece. There are BROTHERHOOD CELLS circled and labeled with ID NUMBERS.

One map of the midwest grabs his attention. There are multiple ID Numbers clustered around one location in southern Ohio. Whatever this is, there are more Brothers here than anywhere else.

Tom determines the coordinates, writes them down and puts the paper safely in a shirt pocket.

Suddenly the radio CRACKLES TO LIFE.

VOICE (VO)
Manhattan 8585, this is Central, do
you copy?

Tom follows his instinct: get the story. He adjusts the bandwidth tuner and picks up the microphone.

TOM
Hello? Who is this?

A long beat on the other line.

VOICE (VO)

Who is *this*?

An uncomfortable beat of silence. Then the line GOES DEAD.

Tom hears a phone RING upstairs. *Oh shit*.

He scrambles to put everything back where he found it. FOOTSTEPS on the next level up. No place to hide. He shuts off his lighter and the room GOES DARK.

The door opens to reveal McGrady standing in silhouette, holding a SHOTGUN.

Tom stays flat against the wall, trying not to breathe.

MCGRADY

You really shouldn't be in here, Tom.
But you know that, don't you?

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

CRACK! Marshall decks Tom with a fist wrapped in cloth.

Tom is tied to a chair in the center of an otherwise empty room. A lightbulb swings above. His face is bloody.

MCGRADY

Who is your contact?

TOM

Please...I don't know what you're
talking about--

THWACK! Nesmith gives Tom a ROUNDHOUSE KICK IN THE MOUTH.

MCGRADY

Don't lie to us again. Now who is
your contact?

TOM

This is crazy...you and I, we're
brothers...

MCGRADY

You're a mole, Tom. An inside man.

TOM

No...I wanted to know where the
broadcasts are from--

MCGRADY

You think this is because you got
curious? We expect a Brother to ask
questions.

Anthony steps forward, cracking his knuckles...

NESMITH

It's the beacon in your leg.

TOM

The wha--

CRACK! Right in the ear. Anthony grabs his fist in pain--that one hurt to give.

NESMITH

The tracking beacon. Command picked up a signal on Obscurum frequency. You're spiked.

TOM

No...there's nothing...you can't prove that...

MCGRADY

Oh, we can. All you have to do is hold very still.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Tom is SLAMMED DOWN on the wood butcher's block. A BANDANA covers his mouth. Marshall uses SCISSORS cut down his pantleg from hip to knee.

Nesmith puts a REVOLVER TO HIS HEAD.

NESMITH

Shhhhh...just relax...

MCGRADY

We're going to cut you now, Tom. You can make it difficult or...

(puts a wood spoon in Tom's covered mouth)

...you can let things take their course.

Anthony pops the cap off a bottle of whiskey, takes a gulp and then SPRAYS IT ON TOM'S LEG.

Marshall opens a pocket knife and CUTS IN. Tom's eyes go WIDE.

Nesmith reaches into the wound with tweezers and removes something square and silver, about the size of a dime.

NESMITH

Well I'll be...

MCGRADY

Looks like somebody's been keeping track of you. Now why would that be?

Tom lets the wooden spoon fall from his mouth, wheezing. McGrady SIGHS, disappointed.

MCGRADY (cont'd)

Take him upstairs.

EXT. BROWNSTONE ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The Manhattan skyline stretches south, the clustered lights of midtown visible through falling snow.

The door KICKS OPEN and Tom is marched outside.

The Brothers release him, hands tied. All four of them draw silenced semi-automatic pistols.

MCGRADY

I'm going to ask you one more time.
And please respect me enough to tell
the truth. *Who is your contact?*

Tom backs up to the EDGE OF THE BUILDING, a good 250 feet to the cement. His eyes dart about for an opportunity.

TOM

Go to hell.

McGrady raises his pocket copy of Zael's Word above his head.

MCGRADY

*Book Four, Twelfth Passage. Any
Brother who betrays his own shall be
made to eat fire, and so his corrupt
soul shall be taken from this earth.*

The Brothers cock their guns. Tom backs closer to the ledge as they move forward...then he STEPS OFF THE BUILDING...

...we fall with him as he PLUNGES FOUR STORIES...

...and LANDS ON HIS FEET, giving at the knees to absorb the shock. He rises, undamaged by a drop that would kill most people, and looks up as a bullet WHIZZES by his head and SHATTERS a car windshield.

The Brothers are FIRING DOWN AT HIM from the roof.

Tom RUNS. Bullets spray the parked cars behind him, filling each with enough ordnance to spark the gas tank and EXPLODE.

Tom leaves a chain of destruction in his wake as he rounds a corner and disappears into the night.

ON THE ROOF

McGrady tosses his gun aside, livid.

MCGRADY

Call the Lodge. We need a wrecking crew.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Tom runs flat out down Amsterdam Avenue, open wound bleeding through his chinos. The physical pain is matched only by the psychological anguish that tears at his insides.

Heart and mind racing, he ducks into a dark alley to catch his breath...spots a phone booth across the street...

INT. EVELYN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A phone RINGS beside a queen-size bed in a Lower East Side studio. Evelyn sits up, hair in curlers.

EVELYN
(into phone)
Hello...

TOM (VO)
Evelyn?

A handsome, muscular man in a white T-shirt sits up beside Evelyn and rubs his eyes. His name is CRANE.

CRANE
That him?

Evelyn puts a hand up to silence him.

EVELYN
Tom, where are you?

INTERCUT WITH TOM IN PHONE BOOTH

TOM
Uptown...145th Street...they were going to kill me...

EVELYN
Are you okay?

TOM
No. There was something in my leg...

EVELYN
Meet me in the alley on the East side of the Chrysler Building.

TOM
Are you sure, I don't--

EVELYN
(firm)
Tom, just do it. Now.

She hangs up. Crane stretches, revealing several tatoos.

CRANE

You sure this shit's for real? Maybe he just wants to tap that ass.

EVELYN

Fuck off, Crane.

EXT. CHRYSLER BUILDING - NIGHT

Tom waits until the lone Yellow Cab on 42nd Street disappears around a corner, then enters the dark alley.

EVELYN (OS)

Did anyone follow you?

Tom SPINS toward the voice. Evelyn stands in shadow.

TOM

No. What are we doing here?

She steps into the light. The curlers are out, she's beautiful again.

EVELYN

Tom, I know what they found in your leg. I'm sorry that happened.

TOM

It was you...

EVELYN

We only did it for your protection.

TOM

From what?

EVELYN

I can answer that question...but you'll have to trust me.

TOM

I'm not sure I can trust anyone right now, Evelyn. Don't take it personal.

EVELYN

I don't. Come with me.

Evelyn crosses the alley to an unmarked door, removes a small black disc from her pocket and waves it past the doorknob. The lock CLICKS.

INT. CHRYSLER BUILDING LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Evelyn's heels click across the marble floor as they approach the bank of elevators. She swipes the disc again and the doors open.

IN THE ELEVATOR

Evelyn closes the iron gate--she's strong--pulls the lever and the elevator MOVES UP. They stand side-by-side in silence as the floors tick past.

TOM
You changed your hair. It's nice.

EVELYN
(genuinely flattered)
Thanks.

INT. 64TH FLOOR - NIGHT

The elevator opens into an empty insurance office. Rows of desks with typewriters. Evelyn leads Tom to the back of the room, where there is a doorframe without a door.

EVELYN
Tom, I want you to know that you're safe here. No one will hurt you.

He gives her a curious look. She swipes her disc and this framed wall SLIDES OPEN.

INT. METRONOME FIELD OFFICE - NY DIVISION - CONTINUOUS

Tom enters a room of a DIFFERENT TIME.

There are RAZOR THIN LAPTOP COMPUTERS, wall-size INTERACTIVE ARIAL MAPS, 3D HOLOMONITORS running multi-dimensional screensavers of the solar system.

He stumbles a bit. Evelyn puts a supportive hand on his arm.

The METRONOME AGENTS in here have jagged, short hair and dark clothes. Tom recognizes each of them from his daily life.

EVELYN
We've been watching you for awhile.

Tom spots Gino the grocer, known here as DANTE, now with a tight buzz cut and a tatoo on his collarbone...

DANTE
(without Italian accent)
Hey man, Dante. I know my cover was shit, I got Gino off a pizza box.

...then Clevon the apartment handyman, aka HELIX, a face he knows but a demeanor that couldn't be more different...

HELIX
(mocking himself)
Yessir, Missa Wade...
(laughs)
(MORE)

HELIX (cont'd)
 I'm just fucking with you, man.
 Helix. Sorry about that Clevon bullshit.

...and Gloria, the mousy typist from the newsroom, in a revealing tank top and tight cargo pants. Her name is REESE.

REESE
 Reese. These assholes give you any
 shit, you come to me.

Tom is as startled by the profanity as he is the constellations floating in midair around him.

Evelyn removes her trenchcoat to reveal a perfectly toned body defined in tight black. Tom takes a step back, shocked.

EVELYN
 My name is Maya. We're here to
 protect you.

TOM
 What are you...Obscurum?

MAYA
 Obscurum doesn't exist. It was
 fabricated to consolidate belief.

TOM
 Belief in what?

DANTE
 The big lie, broheim.

MAYA
 We work for a government agency.
 We've been embedded in 1945 to track
 and prevent cross-temporal terror.

TOM
 What?

CRANE (OS)
 Time terrorism.

Crane steps out of the shadows, a hulking alpha male.

CRANE (cont'd)
 Everything they told you was
 bullshit, kid.

MAYA
 Dammit, Crane, I said go easy.

CRANE
 He's fine. Rip the fucking band-aid off.
 (to Tom)

(MORE)

CRANE (cont'd)

Zael's not a prophet. He's a terrorist
from the future.

Tom keeps backing away until he hits the wall.

CRANE (cont'd)

That book you found? He wrote it
himself. He's just a man. A very
sick, dangerous man. Topped the ISA's
Most Wanted six years in a row.

Tom squints his eyes. That's a new acronym.

HELIX

International Security Agency.
Metronome is a black division--
nobody knows we exist, not even in
our time--but we protect them anyway.

Tom looks around at these bizarre new versions of people he
thought he knew.

TOM

I...I can't believe this.

DANTE

Ah, see that's the upside of having
reality in your corner.

(holds up a clear disc)

You don't have to *believe* shit.

INT. METRONOME FIELD OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Tom's face glows blue from a 3D HOLOGRAM projected from a
handheld device on the desk.

ON THE HOLOMONITOR

The PLANET EARTH rotates on its axis.

DANTE

Okay...history lesson.

Dante interacts directly with the image, using his fingertips
to ZOOM IN to the East Coast of America, all the way down to
the skyline of a FUTURISTIC CITY, intensely vertical.

DANTE (cont'd)

New York in 187 years, a decade after
World War Six.

NEWS FOOTAGE: The streets of Manhattan rocked with HUGE
EXPLOSIONS caught by telescope cameras. There are HOVER
ATTACK VEHICLES advanced far beyond our own.

DANTE (cont'd)

From the ashes we get our first
global government, the World Union.

A cavernous hall where NATIONAL LEADERS debate via HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS of themselves, beamed in from around the globe.

DANTE (cont'd)

Its first act as a governing body is
to regulate cross-temporal travel,
restricting it only to underpaid
agents like myself. Our job is to
stop crazy fucks like this guy...

Pixelated WEB VIDEO of a BEARDED LUNATIC with a futuristic assault rifle reciting a manifesto to the camera...

DANTE (cont'd)

...from using time travel to hit us
in the past. But in 2132, a rogue
physicist named Zael Marat replicates
the technology and uses it to do some
really dark shit...

Dante pulls up FAMILY PORTRAITS from Europe...sepia-toned photographs of IMMIGRANTS arriving in the US...

DANTE (cont'd)

Using a team of operatives, he plants
genetically-modified embryos in
abducted surrogates a thousand years
in the past...

A FAMILY TREE EXPANDS, each man woman and child depicted with an archived photo or sketched likeness.

DANTE (cont'd)

...literally seeds history with his own
descendants. The genes are dominant,
every child is a boy.

THE BOOK OF ZAEL, the undecipherable text moving in space.

DANTE (cont'd)

The psycho gives his followers a
book, loads it full of predictions...
a millennium later he's got an army.

A swirling WEB OF STILL PHOTOS depicting BROTHERHOOD members throughout time...POLITICIANS...NAVY COMMANDERS... DOCTORS...PROFESSORS...OIL TYCOONS...LAND BARONS...

DANTE (cont'd)

A million strong, waiting for their
prophet to return and lead the battle
for humanity.

(MORE)

DANTE (cont'd)
(turns to Tom)
And you, my friend, are one of them.

All eyes shift to Tom, not sure exactly how he will take this.

TOM
So all of this...the book, the
prophecy...he just made it up?

MAYA
If enough people believe in
something, it becomes real.

TOM
And the Brotherhood. McGrady.
Nesmith...

MAYA
The Sons of Zael have been told since
birth they have one purpose on this
earth. It's all they know.

TOM
But if you knew this...why would you
let me go in there alone?

CRANE
It was a necessary risk. We needed
the intel.

MAYA
Crane! Goddammit!

TOM
You used me to get intelligence?

MAYA
No, we would never let them hurt you.

TOM
You sent me to die...

CRANE
(annoyed)
We protected you for thirty years.
The "heart murmur" that kept you out
of the war? Helix injected a
nanopacer when you were four. Saved
your life.

Tom steps away from the group, not trusting anyone now.

TOM
You killed my parents.

Maya averts her eyes. Helix steps in.

CRANE

No, man. It was a hit. Terrorists
fight each other sometimes, people
get hurt. You survived.

EXT. CHRYSLER BUILDING DECK - NIGHT

Tom forces open the door and exits onto the deck, Manhattan
sprawling out in all directions below him.

A familiar rage builds within him like a volcano. His fury
explodes and he THROWS HIS FIST THROUGH A WINDOW.

Shattered glass falls as his hand SPURTS BLOOD.

TOM

(swearing for the first time)

FUCK!

Maya rushes outside like a concerned mother.

TOM (cont'd)

Get away!

MAYA

No, you're bleeding!

TOM

Let me bleed!

MAYA

I can't.

She really means that. Tom reluctantly lets her examine the wound.

MAYA (cont'd)

It's not deep. Here...

She pulls a silver handheld device from her pocket and holds
it over the cut. A light scans it. Tom pulls his hand away.

MAYA (cont'd)

Do you want me to help or not?

He does. The light miraculously HEALS HIS WOUND, leaving only
a clean pink scar. Tom leans against the building, exhausted
and overwhelmed.

They sit in silence together for a beat.

MAYA (cont'd)

When you were five, you burned your
foot on the heating grate in your
father's office. Remember?

Tom nods.

MAYA (cont'd)

I actually cried. Any time something happened to you, I'd wonder if it was our fault.

TOM

I didn't ask for your protection.

MAYA

I didn't ask to protect you. We're all just following orders.

Tom looks out at the city, lost...

...then he takes the COORDINATES out of his shirt pocket and hands them over.

TOM

I can't change who I am.

MAYA

I know.

She puts a tentative hand on his arm...then pulls a Baretta from her waist, checks the clip and hands it to him.

MAYA (cont'd)

But I trust you anyway.

Tom hesitates, then takes the gun.

INT. METRONOME FIELD OFFICE - NIGHT

The other Agents stop and stare when Maya enters.

REESE

Is he like totally freaking out?

MAYA

Just give him time.

DANTE

You didn't happen to get those coordinates...

She holds up the folded paper. Dante grabs it, rolls his chair to the computer and enters the numbers into a program.

Within seconds, he's got a SATELLITE IMAGE of a huge fortress structure in the snow.

DANTE (cont'd)

Ho-ly shit. Told you...

HELIX

Ohio. So fucking obvious, man.

DANTE
Fortified structure, complete
isolation. I wonder how long they've
been here...

REESE
You think there's a portal inside?

CRANE
Has to be, he needs an exit. Encrypt
and send to Command.

Crane notices Maya alone at the window. He goes to her, puts
his hands on her shoulders and massages tenderly.

CRANE (cont'd)
Sorry, babe. I miss you.

MAYA
He doesn't deserve this.

CRANE
Shit, none of us do.

MAYA
You think he'll be okay?

Crane stops massaging, agitated by how much she cares.

CRANE
He'll be fine.

AT THE COMPUTER

Dante, Helix and Reese examine the interactive map floating
in front of them.

DANTE
Dude's been upstairs for awhile.
Think he might jump?

REESE
Shit, I would. Some stranger tells me
my whole life is a lie? Twice in one
week? Royal mind fuck.

HELIX
(laughs)
Man, that boy looked like he was
about to lose his damn mind. Just
start capping motherfuckers.

REESE
I don't know. You see the way he
looked at Maya? He's not like them.

Dante looks over his shoulder at Reese.

DANTE
You wanna bet your life on that?

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK - NIGHT

Tom looks out over the sparkling city. A PENTHOUSE APARTMENT lights up on a rooftop below.

A MUSTACHED MAN walks onto the deck in a shirt and suspenders, smoking a cigarette. The drapes billow and a WOMAN appears in a long silk robe.

She puts her arms around him. He doesn't look at her. Instead he stares out at the city, smoking his cigarette.

Tom gazes down at this lush life, wondering if it could have been his. The man LOOKS UP and makes eye contact.

They regard each other curiously for a moment...then the man's expression CHANGES. His eyes are focused on something ABOVE TOM'S HEAD.

Tom looks up and sees EIGHT MEN RAPPELLING DOWN THE SIDE OF THE CHRYSLER BUILDING.

INT. METRONOME FIELD OFFICE - SAME

A SQUEAK on the window.

Crane's eyes DART across the room in time to catch a PAIR OF BOOTS pushing off the glass into darkness...

CRANE
Oh shit.

EXT. CHRYSLER BUILDING - WIDE - NIGHT

The Brothers SWING OUT like maypole ribbons as we TRACK AROUND THE BUILDING lit by the full moon...

...then they FIRE MACHINE GUNS INTO THE 87th FLOOR.

INT. METRONOME FIELD OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Glass SHATTERS as the entire floor is attacked from all sides by Brotherhood armed to the teeth.

They SMASH through the cracked windows and fan out through the dark space, SPRAYING THE ROOM WITH BULLETS.

Desks FLIP and CRACK IN HALF around Dante as he draws a pair of FULLY AUTOMATIC HANDGUNS from inside his black jacket.

Helix opens a HIDDEN COMPARTMENT in the bookshelf and takes out a FUTURISTIC ASSAULT RIFLE.

Reese grabs a PUMP ACTION SHOTGUN and unloads it around a corner, burning GIANT SMOULDERING HOLES in whatever she hits.

IN THE TRACKING ROOM

Crane TACKLES Maya as gunfire shatters the liquid crystal screens around them in a hail of sparks.

CRANE
Dammit, stay here!

MAYA
I have to protect him!

Maya dives into the long hallway. Bullets zip past as she runs toward the observation deck stairwell...

ANTHONY appears, blocking her way with a TOMMY GUN. She drops and SLIDES INTO HIS KNEES, breaking one, standing as he falls and catching the tommy gun in midair.

She spins it around and puts a BURST OF SLUGS in his chest before he hits the floor. Anthony dies mid-blink.

Maya steps over the body and continues on without looking down.

IN THE DECOY OFFICE

Dante rolls from desk to pillar as TWO BROTHERS fire at him from behind an overturned file cabinet.

Dante throws a paperweight into a picture frame, breaking the glass and distracting the Brothers for a split second--all he needs. He RISES FAST and smokes them both with a pair of clean shots to the skull.

IN THE BATHROOM

The MIRROR SHATTERS above Helix and Reese as they reload.

HELIX
Son of a bitch led them right to us!

REESE
Good. I've been wanting to kill some of these pricks for awhile.

Helix rushes into the next room, assault rifle spitting fire. He TAKES A BULLET in the flak jacket, knocking him back.

MARSHALL appears from the dark and stands over Helix, rifle against his temple, execution-style...

...then a SHOTGUN BLAST takes a bite out of Marshall's UPPER RIGHT TORSO, leaving a half-moon sized smoking emptiness where his arm used to be.

Reese steps through the open doorway and cocks the gun again.

Marshall looks at his sautered wound, bewildered, then collapses to the floor.

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK - SAME

Tom hears the gunfire and moves toward the stairs, but a MAN IN A BLACK TRENCHCOAT is in the doorway.

He takes off his mask. It's MCGRADY.

MCGRADY
I liked you, Tom.

McGrady cocks a Colt Python and levels it at Tom's forehead.

TOM
You shouldn't have come here.

MCGRADY
I'd say the same for you.

TOM
You don't know what you're fighting for. It's all a lie.

MCGRADY
Is that what they told you?

Suddenly Maya BUSTS DOWN THE DOOR and levels her machine gun at McGrady. He spins on her as Tom draws his Baretta and these three are locked in a standoff.

MAYA
Kill him, Tom. Break his neck.

MCGRADY
You heard her, Tom. Kill me.

Tom's finger twitches on the trigger, unable to squeeze it.

MAYA
Tom, shoot this asshole NOW!

MCGRADY
(eyes fixed on Tom)
Look into your heart, Brother. You know who you are.

MAYA
Goddammit!

Maya DROPS TO THE GROUND and FIRES UPWARD, killing McGrady. He drops the Colt and falls, eyes wide open, stunned.

INT. CORNER OFFICE - DAY

Crane enters to find the wall BLOWN OUT, opening a twisted hole to the thin air above 42nd Street.

The door closes slowly behind him and we see NESMITH there waiting. He sneaks up behind Crane and MELEES him with the butt of his rifle.

Crane recovers, spins on Nesmith and ATTACKS. These two guys are STRONG. They SMASH each other into walls, making huge dents in the plaster--genetically superior man vs. naturally superior man.

Nesmith dodges a right hook, grabs a pair of brass bookends off the shelf, SMASHES Crane's head between them like cymbals.

Crane reels, blood in his eyes. Nesmith lunges for the kill but Crane FLIPS HIM over his shoulder...suddenly the Tall Man is HANGING OFF THE CRUMBLING LEDGE.

Crane picks up a folding chair and SWINGS IT INTO NESMITH'S FACE like a golf club, SWATting HIM OFF THE BUILDING.

As Nesmith falls he pulls a cord in his vest and a PARACHUTE ENVELOPS THE AIR above him. He directs it RIGHT ON 42nd STREET and away to safety.

Crane watches him disappear through the blasted hole in the wall, his wrath boiling...

EXT. OBSERVATION DECK - SAME

Tom breathes in silence over the smoking body at his feet. Maya reaches a hand out to comfort him...but the door SWINGS OPEN and Crane appears. Maya quickly pulls her hand away.

Crane looks down at McGrady's buckshot-riddled corpse.

CRANE

Nice work.

MAYA

How many were there?

CRANE

Eight counting him. The tall one took a dive.

TOM

How did they find me?

CRANE

Give me your right arm.

Tom follows the order. Crane runs a finger over his forearm and finds a RAISED SQUARE BUMP underneath.

CRANE (cont'd)
Dammit. Hold still.

TOM
What?

Crane flicks open a switchblade and makes a shallow cut into Tom's forearm.

TOM (cont'd)
AGGH! That smarts!

Crane pulls a SMALL METAL TAG out of Tom's arm and tosses it over the side of the Chrysler Building.

CRANE
Smarts? Fucking Christ...

TOM
(cradling his bloody arm)
You wanna watch your language, pal?
There's a lady present.

CRANE
Back off, Wade. I just lost valuable
real estate thanks to you.

Crane and Tom LOCK EYES. Maya steps between them.

MAYA
Hey! Stop.

Crane backs off, more than ready to add another body to the Brotherhood death toll.

CRANE
Evac in seven minutes.

INT. METRONOME FIELD OFFICE - NIGHT

Helix, Reese and Dante sweep through the rooms, stuffing undamaged data storage devices into hard backpacks.

Tom stands at the blasted hole in the wall, wind sucking through the breach. He spots a trio of NYPD BLACK AND WHITES approaching, sirens on.

TOM
There a back door to this place?

DANTE
Sort of.

Reese opens a locked steel case to reveal a neat row of silver ION THRUSTER JETPACKS. They strap them on and POWER UP.

Dante shoves a pack into Tom's arms.

DANTE (cont'd)
 Make sure it's tight. I don't think
 you guys can fly.

Tom STRAPS ON THE JETPACK and fastens the steel buckles.

Crane sets a small blinking EXPLOSIVE DEVICE on the floor and
 arms it with a fingerprint scan.

CRANE
 Move!

Dante powers up Tom's jetpack. He feels the hum of the ION
 ACCELERATOR down his spine.

DANTE
 Look at me...
 (demonstrating)
 This is your accelerator, this is the
 brake. You change direction with your
 body, got it?

Tom nods, horrified. We FOLLOW THE GROUP through the dark
 hallways and up the stairs onto

THE OBSERVATION DECK

where they keep running and ROCKET INTO THE AIR. Tom squeezes
 the grip and his ION ACCELERATOR BLASTS BLUE FIRE.

EXT. CHRYSLER BUILDING - WIDE - NIGHT

The six of them ROCKET AWAY as the 64th Floor windows BLOW
 OUT in a huge pulse of WHITE LIGHT.

INT. 64TH FLOOR - SIMULTANEOUS

The blast INCINERATES everything but the walls.

Books, desks, computers and bodies are REDUCED TO DUST in an
 instant, leaving a room burned so hot, all matter is now
 white powder floating to the ground.

EXT. ABOVE BROOKLYN - SIMULTANEOUS

Tom and the Metronome Agents soar away from the city,
 reducing the once gargantuan skyscrapers to a distant ribbon
 of lights.

INT. 64TH FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The elevator doors open and a half dozen NY COPS spill out
 into the room. The entire space is empty, save a layer of
 bone dry WHITE ASH that covers every surface.

COP
 That's a first.

EXT. EMPTY BEACH - LONG ISLAND - NIGHT

Tom and the Metronome Agents skim the water and touch down on the sand. Tom STUMBLES A BIT before he sticks the landing.

Helix approaches a WOODEN SHACK and swipes his key. The door slides open to reveal a

HIDDEN SAFEHOUSE

with a fortified steel interior. They hang up the jetpacks and change into 1945 CIVILIAN CLOTHES, back into character.

TOM

Sorry about your hideout.

HELIX

Naw, it's cool. I was getting sick of that joint anyway.

TOM

Where do you go from here?

CRANE

Northeast Command. It's a few hours by bus, we'll have to mix in with civs.

DANTE

You'll fit right in.

TOM

I shouldn't stay. I'm putting you in danger.

REESE

Man, we *live* in danger.

MAYA

Come with us. We're going someplace safe. I promise.

Maya lets her hair down over the shoulders of a simple blue dress with white lace around the collar. Evelyn again.

Crane CATCHES TOM STARING. Tom sees the threatening glare in his peripheral and quickly looks away.

EXT. NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA - DAY

A GREYHOUND BUS chugs up a snow-covered incline through the Pocono Mountains.

INT. GREYHOUND BUS - DAY

Tom and the Metronome Agents are spread out amongst civilians, integrated seamlessly into the populace.

ON DANTE

playing a borrowed acoustic guitar. Two PRETTY GIRLS listen over his shoulder.

DANTE
 (singing)
*MORE THAN WO-ORDS...IS ALL YOU HAVE
 TO DO TO MAKE IT REAL...*

GIRL
 Did you write this?

DANTE
 (sincere)
 Yes I did.

He continues the song as we track past him to HELIX AND REESE, playing cards...

HELIX
 You really want to know?

REESE
 Yeah, like the worst ever.

HELIX
 Okay. I was working Temporal Crimes in Chicago, rookie year. We collared a guy who tried to go back in time and bang his wife when she was seventeen.

REESE
 Aww. That's sweet.

We continue on to CRANE AND MAYA.

Crane is reading the Daily Mirror--the front page leads with a story about a fire on the 64th floor of the Chrysler Building.

Maya is watching Tom a few seats back, gazing out the window, trying to cope with the unthinkable.

ON TOM

as Maya sneaks into the empty seat beside him.

MAYA
 I grow up around here someday.

TOM
 In the forest?

MAYA

No, this is Sherman's Wake, it's like a huge outlet mall. There's a multiplex where that barn is.

TOM

You have a flying car?

MAYA

That never really happens. People are crazy enough behind the wheel as it is.

TOM

So what happens next?

MAYA

It gets worse before it gets better. You don't know how good you have it.

Maya relaxes into her seat, comfortable around him.

TOM

Do you ever miss your family?

MAYA

Don't have any. None of us do. You go where the job sends you...but you can't go home again. House rules.

TOM

That must be difficult.

MAYA

Sometimes it is. But I have Crane.

Tom shifts in his seat.

TOM

Are you married?

MAYA

People don't really get married anymore. But if there were such a thing...we'd be it.

Crane SWATS A FLY against the window with his paper. He examines the bloody carcass and smiles.

MAYA (cont'd)

Can I ask you something?

(Tom nods)

McGrady could have killed me--

TOM

I couldn't do it.

MAYA
You didn't want to?

TOM
I wanted to. But I couldn't. He's...

MAYA
Your brother.

Tom looks back out the window, the short break from his identity crisis now over.

EXT. GREYHOUND BUS STATION - SCRANTON - DAY

Weekend travelers in long coats and wool scarves greet each other with warm embraces. Tom and the undercover Metronome Agents separate from the crowd and walk around back.

BEHIND THE BUS STATION

They are greeted by BENNIE, 45, a greying black man dressed like a milk farmer.

BENNIE
Crane. My motherfucker...

Bennie gives Crane a handshake that reveals he's never milked a cow in his life.

CRANE
Jesus, Bennie. You been working out?

BENNIE
Kick your punk ass.

Bennie spots Tom over Crane's shoulder.

BENNIE (cont'd)
That him?

TOM
I'm him.

BENNIE
Don't mean to be rude. I just never seen one in person.

Helix runs his finger along a shiny 1943 FORD TRUCK with a modified fiberglass CAMPER TOP.

HELIX
This your new ride?

BENNIE
That's my baby. Fuel cell engine, power shocks. Offroads like a dream.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The Ford truck winds its way through a white birch forest. They TURN OFF on a hidden dirt road into an

ABANDONED STRIP MINE

Gutted deep with only one small entrance dug into a sheer wall of NICKEL ORE.

Bennie clicks on his high beams and drives directly into the OPEN MINE SHAFT without slowing.

Tiny work lights ZIP PAST, slowing as the truck comes to a stop. CLANK. The space ILLUMINATES and we're in an

UNDERGROUND GARAGE

with several other vintage vehicles parked side by side. They each have that chunky, modified look of the Ford Truck.

Tom and the Metronome Agents hop out, approaching a glass booth with two UNION SECURITY PERSONNEL in identical dark blue uniforms manning a FULL BODY SCANNER.

The agents each walk through, allowing their entire selves to SCAN into the computer. Tom hesitates.

DANTE

Don't worry, they can't see your package.

Tom walks through and we feel it as his BODY IS SCANNED.

SECURITY GUARD

That your tourist?

CRANE

Affirmative.

The steel elevator door opens and they all ENTER.

INT. ELEVATOR - SAME

The metal box descends DEEP INTO THE EARTH. Tom looks at Maya, uneasy. She comforts him with her eyes.

The door opens and we TRACK WITH THEM into

ISA CENTRAL COMMAND 1945

Huge stalagmites rise toward an OPEN HOLE in the ceiling that allows a BEAM OF DAYLIGHT into a vast waystation alive with WONDERS OF DIFFERENT TIME.

1945 US ARMY JEEPS have been converted with electro-hover technology into hybrid flying weaponized attack vehicles.

UNION MARINES sit around cleaning huge guns--the hardware of the future is thick, precise and damaging. These are warriors of an enhanced regimen, towering and dense, the way American GI's looked to French girls.

We follow Tom past ISA TECHS playing games on their PSP9's... SHARPSHOOTERS blasting targets at a Light Fire Range...

They all stop what they are doing to look at him.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - CONTINUOUS

An enormous command center carved into rock. Dozens of ISA SATCOM TECHS track FIELD AGENTS all over a 3D MAP OF THE USA...hundreds of moving LIVE IMAGES, clustered in cities...

GENERAL ANDAX, 64, leathery and battleworn, walks up the shallow stairs and greets Crane first.

GENERAL ANDAX
Crane. Good to see you alive.

CRANE
Good to be here, sir.

GENERAL ANDAX
I've heard this whole team is being considered for a commendation.

DANTE
Well, *yeah*.

The General sees Tom among them, looking up at the giant overhead 3D HOLOMONITOR in awe.

GENERAL ANDAX
Tom Wade. Our lost boy.

TOM
What is this place?

GENERAL ANDAX
Curiosity. The sign of a true leader. Come with me, I'll show you.

He leads Tom down the steps, into the bustle of this fully operational command center.

GENERAL ANDAX (cont'd)
This room allows us to communicate with our field agents over multiple planes of time.

TOM
There's more than one?

GENERAL ANDAX

There is now. That's why we're in
this war.

General Andax uses his small remote wand to navigate through
the 3D interface above them.

ON THE OVERHEAD HOLOMONITOR

A single vertical TIMELINE OF WORLD HISTORY moves north/south
through the ages.

GENERAL ANDAX

Every time a terrorist alters the
past, it creates a tangent...

At a midpoint the timeline BRANCHES OFF while the original
line continues.

GENERAL ANDAX (cont'd)

...a new plane of time they can use
to build a world in their own image.

Andax zeroes in on the TANGENT. This intuitive interface has
a series of easily accessible HD VIDEO CLIPS attached. He
PULLS ONE UP for viewing...

GRAINY HANDHELD CAMCORDER FOOTAGE

of a bloody US CIVIL WAR BATTLE shot by Metronome Agents.

GENERAL ANDAX (cont'd)

This attack in 1863 was designed to
tip the Civil War to the Confederacy.

A barricade is BREACHED by a pair of modern ABRAMS TANKS,
shelling hundreds of stunned UNION ARMY SOLDIERS without
mercy. It's a massacre.

GENERAL ANDAX (cont'd)

A century earlier, another attack,
this time on the very inception of
our republic...

He ZOOMS OUT to the Original Line, then ZOOMS IN on another
tangent begun in 1776.

HANDHELD VIDEO FOOTAGE

shot through trees a hundred yards away. Ski-masked TIME
TERRORISTS march disoriented FOUNDING FATHERS onto the steps
of Independence Hall in Philadelphia and shoot them point
blank with AK-47's. Civilians SCREAM as the men fall.

GENERAL ANDAX

In the decade since the technology
was first cloned, we've been hit
fourteen times...

He CYCLES THROUGH VIDEO of terror events throughout time. They
come at us fast, intense and horrific...

BERLIN OLYMPIC GAMES - 1936

A sweaty, amped ADOLF HITLER speaks to tens of thousands when
an unexpected headshot SHATTERS HIS SKULL.

WEST INDIES - 1492

The Nina, Pinta and the Santa Maria approach the New World.
In a coordinated attack, all three ships EXPLODE IN
SPLINTERING HELLFIRE.

UNITED AIRLINES 175 - 9/11/01

Three SAUDI ARABIANS stand up with BOXCUTTERS for all to see.
TWO CIVILIANS a few rows back stand up and FIRE LASER WEAPONS.
The terrorists INCINERATE.

DALLAS, TEXAS - 11/22/63

Grainy ZAPRUDER FOOTAGE of the presidential motorcade. JFK is
startled by a loud noise behind him and we quickly PAN LEFT to
an EXPLOSION on the 6th floor of the Texas Book Depository.

GENERAL ANDAX (VO)

The men behind these acts feel
they're righting the wrongs of
history, and in some cases they are.
But that doesn't make it right.

ON TOM

The horrific images flickering in his eyes...

TOM

But if this can happen, time is--

GENERAL ANDAX

Unredeemable? Not entirely. We can't
erase a tangent once it's created,
but we can repair the damage.

The General waves his remote and some of the tangents CHANGE
DIRECTION, now travelling parallel to the Original Line.

GENERAL ANDAX (cont'd)

Often we succeed. Sometimes we don't.

TOM
So *this* is a tangent.

They all grow solemn.

GENERAL ANDAX
Yes.

TOM
But if it's not your future...why do you care?

GENERAL ANDAX
Some of us don't.

They all look at Helix.

HELIX
What? It ain't our problem.

GENERAL ANDAX
What Helix fails to recognize is that these tangents contain living beings. Billions of people like you. Since this conflict began, policy has been driven by a moral obligation to prevent the sabotage of our shared destiny, for better or worse...

Helix scoffs. Reese punches his arm.

GENERAL ANDAX (cont'd)
...but this has created a new danger. Due to these new tangents, the continuum has reached critical mass. If Zael succeeds, the causality of this one act could tear the very fabric of spacetime, bringing an end to the universe as we know it.

Andax REVERTS BACK to the Original Line, time tangents sprouting from it like branches on a family tree.

GENERAL ANDAX (cont'd)
The ISA has plugged the holes. All we need is Zael. We can foil terror plots the world over but until we stop the man, he'll keep trying...no matter how many worlds he corrupts.

Tom looks through the observation glass at the UNION MARINES at the Light Gun range, laughing and insulting each other.

TOM
What can I do?

General Andax puts a firm hand on Tom's shoulder.

GENERAL ANDAX

You can help us catch us him, Tom.

Tom weighs all this...then gives a confident nod. He gets it. General Andax smiles.

GENERAL ANDAX (cont'd)

Good man.

(to all)

Get some shuteye. Briefing at 0800.

The group scatters, back in their element. Crane puts a hand on Maya's lower back. Tom spots it.

MAYA

(to Tom)

We'll talk in the morning, okay?

Dante will take you to your room.

Crane nearly DRAGS her out but her eyes are still on Tom. She doesn't want to leave him alone and it shows.

INT. RESIDENT WING - NIGHT

Dante walks Tom down a hallway of individual sleeping pods.

DANTE

Best thing about this place is the women. They're out of time, feeling displaced. After awhile, guys like me start to look like a privilege not a right.

TOM

It's really that easy?

DANTE

That's the future for you. World's gone to shit but you get laid like it's your birthday.

He stops at a numbered room.

DANTE (cont'd)

Hand on the plate.

Tom's palm is SCANNED and the door SLIDES OPEN.

INT. RESIDENCE POD - CONTINUOUS

Dante CLAPS TWICE and the light comes on. Tom is impressed.

DANTE

Clothes are in the drawer, TV's listed by decade.

TOM
Television?

DANTE
Right. Television.

Dante hands him the remote and exits.

Tom sits on the edge of the bed and turns on the HOLOMONITOR, using the remote to navigate through 200 years of entertainment in one enormous database...

ULTIMATE FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP - 2025

ANNOUNCER
Oh SHIT! A brutal elbow to the chin--

SMALL WONDER - 1984

TED
Honey, there are hundreds of practical uses for her--

KOREAN GAME SHOW - 1992

KOREAN HOST
Nay shipsheeyo! Kamsa hamnida!

THE BACHELOR - 2003

BACHELOR
Man, this is so hard--

THE ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW - 1962

Andy, Barney and Opie in the Sheriff's Office.

ANDY (ON TV)
I wouldn't worry about the dogs, Opie, they'll be fine.

OPIE (ON TV)
What about that lightning?

BARNEY (ON TV)
Aw, a dog can't get struck by lightning. He's too close to the ground. Lightning strikes at tall things. If there were giraffes out there, we'd have a problem.

Tom chuckles. He adjusts his pillow, relaxes his aching muscles and enjoys the future of comedy.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. ISA CENTRAL COMMAND - MORNING

A MODIFIED 1943 JOHN DEER FORKLIFT fitted with monster tires atop towering shocks lowers a SEALED CRATE to the ground.

Two dozen UNION MARINES wait anxiously for this delivery.

The forklift backs up and ISA TEMPORAL CARGO WORKERS go to work on the complex series of locks--it has traveled far.

Tom watches nearby, wearing provided clothes, future casual. Bennie stands beside him, impatiently cracking his knuckles.

TOM

What's up?

BENNIE

Quantum tunnels max out at 400 pounds, can't move much hardware. These shipments are like Christmas.

The crate OPENS OUT to reveal a tightly packed CACHE OF FUTURISTIC WEAPONS.

The Marines RAID THE CACHE. Reese lifts up a HOLLOW POINT MACHINE GUN with GRENADE LAUNCHER.

REESE

Yeah, mama like...

ON DANTE

Opening a fiberglass case of SMALL BLACK DISCS. Helix peers over his shoulder.

HELIX

Roach motels?

DANTE

MicroMines. Fresh off the boat.

He tosses one against a steel crate. It STICKS.

DANTE (cont'd)

Magnetic surface. Fission charge in the creamy center. Just one of these can take down a 747.

HELIX

And they're giving you a whole box. Do they even care anymore?

The Residence Wing door slides open and Maya enters. She LIGHTS UP when she sees Tom. Crane notices.

MAYA

Hey, you look good. Mind if I...?

She tousles Tom's hair a bit and brings it down in front. A bit more Emo, a lot less Jimmy Stewart.

A FEMALE MARINE clicks her tongue at Tom and COCKS her gun hard. Dante slaps him on the back.

DANTE
What'd I tell you?

MAYA
Shut up, Dante.
(to Tom, softer)
Come on. General's briefing in five.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

General Andax paces before a Holomonitor projection of the bunker we saw via satellite in the Chrysler Building. The snow looks like it's really falling in the multi-dimensional space.

Tom, Maya, Crane, Helix, Dante and Reese are here with dozens of Union Marines and ISA Personnel.

GENERAL ANDAX
The Bethany Relay Station is the broadcast center for the Voice of America, used by the government to disseminate propaganda during the war. At this time, it's the most powerful radio tower on the planet.

The 3D image changes into a complete VIRTUAL MAP of the entire structure.

GENERAL ANDAX (cont'd)
This map, taken from original blueprints, suggests entire wings of the complex are unaccounted for...

The map flashes LARGE ROOMS that could fit into the architecture but aren't there.

GENERAL ANDAX (cont'd)
We assume these areas are Brotherhood.

We RISE UP above the structure to a satellite photo of a small town surrounded by farmland.

GENERAL ANDAX (cont'd)
Target is located 10 miles outside the town of Bethany, a main street serving several hundred residents. We'll clear it with a gas leak before we move. Crane will lead the push, all squad leaders report to him.

Crane salutes the General.

GENERAL ANDAX (cont'd)

Our sources tell us Zael plans to stage a coup of the US government on December 14th. That's up to four hundred thousand Brothers waiting for their orders to be broadcast live.

HELIX

Can't we just take out the tower?

GENERAL ANDAX

Yes, but first we'll use it to send a message to Zael's army to stand down.

DANTE

What makes you think they'll listen?

GENERAL ANDAX

Because they'll be hearing it from one of their own.

All eyes shift to Tom.

An ISA Tech opens a glass box. Inside, a SMALL INJECTION DEVICE filled with green liquid.

GENERAL ANDAX (cont'd)

This microspike will allow us to track Zael wherever he goes--any plane of time, any tangent.

(to Tom)

You get this in his system, he can run forever--we'll be there waiting. Think you can handle it?

Tom glances at Maya. Something about her makes him stronger. He takes the microspike.

TOM

Yes sir.

GENERAL ANDAX

Mission launch at 0300 on the 18th. That's forty three hours from now.

MARINE (OS)

We doing a drop?

GENERAL ANDAX

We're staying out of the air. This one has to be quiet.

INT. UNDERGROUND RAILROAD LOADING DOCK - EARLY AM

A corridor originally dug for mining carts has been sculpted into a tunnel large enough to fit the TIMKEN FOUR ACES LOCOMOTIVE now rolling into the loading bay.

The gorgeous chrome beast brakes to a stop, puffing steam.

The third car from the engine OPENS GULLWING-STYLE to reveal six HOVER-CONVERTED US ARMY JEEPS with rear machine gun turrets packed one atop the other.

We move past ISA personnel loading ammo into cargo hold...
Union Marines in hard METAL GEAR stacking heavy weapons...

ON MAYA

cleaning her laser-mounted assault rifle. Crane puts his hands on her shoulders. She JUMPS a bit this time.

CRANE

Easy. I'm one of the good guys.

MAYA

You scared me.

CRANE

You've cleaned that weapon three times now. Everything cool?

MAYA

Not really. This is a suicide mission. He could die in there.

Crane's mood darkens. It always comes back to Tom.

CRANE

It's his fight. Let him win it.

MAYA

He doesn't belong here. We took his life away--

CRANE

What do you care? He's one of them. Let it go.

MAYA

I can't.

CRANE

(forceful)

You want to tell me why that is?

Maya doesn't know how to respond, a deer in headlights. Crane backs off. This is no time to confront her.

CRANE (cont'd)

Watch yourself, okay? I'm all out of loved ones.

He kisses her, enormous gloved hands cradling her delicate face. She watches him disappear into the base.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Tom stares at his face in the mirror. The lines have grown deeper in recent weeks. His hair has a few lone streaks of grey. He's a different man now. Wide awake.

GENERAL ANDAX (VO)
This is not a war for the future.

An ELECTRIC HAIR CLIPPER clicks on. With a hard, unmoving stare Tom SHAVES HIS HEAD to a military 1/4 inch crop.

GENERAL ANDAX (VO) (cont'd)
We are not here to redeem the past.

Tom's brown locks FALL TO THE FLOOR as we slowly move in on his determined face.

INT. VEHICLE HANGAR - NIGHT

58 UNION MARINES, METRONOME AGENTS and ISA BASE PERSONNEL stand in a tight group around General Andax.

GENERAL ANDAX
Marines, this struggle will not save
the world...

We track past Crane in full body armor...Reese, face streaked with eyeblack...Dante jumping in place, ready for a fight...

GENERAL ANDAX (cont'd)
...it will save infinite worlds.
Boundless lives. Humanity, time and
again.

Maya, in hardcore battle gear, prepared for the worst...

GENERAL ANDAX (cont'd)
This war will not be numbered. It
will not be named. It is a variable.
A whisper. World War X.
(rapt silence)
Ooh-rah.

UNION MARINES
OOH-RAH!

They WHOOP and CHEER, amped for battle. We catch Helix among them, shaking his head sarcastically...

HELIX
World War X...that's all it takes, huh?

CUT TO:

EXT. POCONO MOUNTAINS - DECEMBER 14TH, 1945 - DAY

The silver TIMKEN LOCOMOTIVE puffs white steam along a ridgeline through snow-covered mountains. We glide toward it and MOVE THROUGH A WINDOW into the

PASSENGER CAR

packed with heavily armed UNION MARINES. One brushes past us and we FOLLOW HIM down the aisle to the

MOBILE COMMAND CAR

A compact remote version of Mission Control.

ISA SATCOM TECH
Mission Control, this is silver bullet
passing Checkpoint 50, do you copy?

INT. MISSION CONTROL - SAME

General Andax and his men monitor the operation from underground.

COMMAND TECH
Roger Silver Bullet, we're right with
you. Continue on course.

INT. MOBILE COMMAND CAR - SAME

Crane enters to find Maya hunched over a monitor watching SATELLITE VIDEO of the Bethany Relay Station.

ON THE MONITOR

We can barely make out a LONE FIGURE in the snow, walking toward the main gate. The video image DISSOLVES TO...

EXT. BETHANY RELAY STATION GATE - RURAL OHIO - DAY

The lone figure, wearing a thick jacket and hood that obscures his face, trudges toward a razor-wire fence stretching to the horizon in both directions.

He approaches a small CHECKPOINT STATION and two BROTHERHOOD GUARDS in matching white parkas.

BROTHERHOOD GUARD
This is a restricted area.

The bundled figure REMOVES HIS HOOD AND GOGGLES.

Tom's hair is CROPPED CLOSE revealing the RED BIRTHMARK that continues up the back of his neck to form an ELABORATE PATTERN on his scalp.

The Brotherhood Guard recognizes him as one of his own.

BROTHERHOOD GUARD (cont'd)
 What brings you here, Brother?

TOM
 My name is Tom Wade. I've come to
 speak with Zael.

BROTHERHOOD GUARD
 The Father?
 (snorts)
 Are you joking?

TOM
 I have information about the
 resistance.

BROTHERHOOD GUARD
 Resistance? What resistance?

TOM
 Please, Brother. There's no time.

The Brotherhood Guard looks Tom up and down, then turns to
 his colleague in the booth, who shrugs.

BROTHERHOOD GUARD
 Call up, tell 'em we have a guy here
 says he's got some intel.
 (to Tom)
 I'll have to frisk you.

Tom holds out his arms as the guard pats him down.

EXT. BETHANY RELAY STATION - DAY

Tom and the Brotherhood Guard approach the station in a
 standard-issue Ford GPW Jeep.

The building itself is bland government architecture of the
 time, no sign of any futuristic modifications.

They park and enter through an enormous steel door.

INT. BETHANY RELAY STATION - CONTINUOUS

A long hallway of offices visible through glass windows, each
 room packed with radio transmitters and morse code telegraph
 machines. A live VOA BROADCAST plays over the speaker system...

VOICE OF AMERICA RADIO (OS)
*...that liberty is the right of all
 men, and no people shall be slaves to
 tyranny in a righteous world...*

The place is buzzing with "GOVERNMENT WORKERS", all Brotherhood.
 They turn and stare as Tom is led toward a bank of elevators.

The metal doors open and a tall man in a crisp suit appears. We recognize him immediately--NESMITH, alive and well.

BROTHERHOOD GUARD

This is him.

NESMITH

Indeed. I'll take it from here.

INT. HOLDING ROOM - DAY

The elevator opens into an ALL WHITE SPACE, clean and empty. Large glass windows offer a striking view of the snowfield stretching to the horizon.

Nesmith walks to the window, his back to Tom.

NESMITH

You've risked your life coming here.
You know that.

TOM

I should fear my own?

NESMITH

If you've betrayed them, yes. It's no secret what happened in New York.

TOM

I didn't kill anyone.

NESMITH

You escaped with the enemy.

TOM

They believed I was on their side.

Nesmith turns to face him.

NESMITH

Are you?

TOM

The Father is Truth.

NESMITH

I see. And now that you've deserted your captors...you come here to offer us intelligence?

TOM

Only to Zael. No one else.

A gleam of aggression flashes in Nesmith's eyes.

NESMITH

You think that's a choice of yours?
We have ways of extracting
information from the uncooperative.
Remember, this is war.

TOM

Yes, it is. Now take me to him.

Nesmith opens his mouth to speak, then suddenly looks elsewhere, as if listening to an invisible voice in his ear...

NESMITH

Yes, sir.
(to Tom)
You have your wish.

Nesmith walks across the room to a lone door. It smoothly SLIDES OPEN revealing a long white corridor.

Tom walks past him into the hallway. The door slides shut behind him. He walks cautiously forward.

INT. BROTHERHOOD COMMAND - CONTINUOUS

The door slides open into an ENORMOUS HIGH-TECH SPACE with multiple HANGING GLASS CHAMBERS connected by moving stairways.

Inside the chambers are MEN IN FUTURISTIC CLOTHES operating banks of monitors and satellite tracking equipment.

These men are not Brotherhood. They ZAELIAN FOLLOWERS of a distant time, embedded in 1945 as an integral part of a complex cross-temporal terror plot.

One of the ZAELIAN TECHS motions toward a long stairway leading up to a single door.

They all stop their tasks to watch Tom as he marches up the stairs into

ZAEL'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

A tight hexagon with bookshelves on every wall. A solid oak desk is covered with maps from various time periods. A Holomonitor runs a fluid screensaver of the Great Barrier Reef.

Suddenly the floor MOVES and the bookshelves seem to SINK. The ceiling lowers toward him then SLIDES OPEN as this hydraulic floor rises into

ZAEL'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

An ENORMOUS SPACE with a PLATE GLASS WINDOW SLANTING DOWN THE FACE OF ONE WALL, filling it with winter morning light.

The room is FULL OF ARTIFACTS from throughout history--works of art, invention, sculpture...but mostly WEAPONS.

What was once the bookshelf-lined study is now a collection of furniture in the center of a vast expanse of floor.

There is a man in a crisp blue suit at the window.

He turns to reveal his face...

...he is a MIRROR IMAGE OF TOM, perhaps twenty years older. The resemblance is unmistakable.

ZAEL

Hello, my son.

EXT. RURAL OHIO - DAY

The shiny silver TIMKEN LOCOMOTIVE tears through an open stretch of snowpacked farmland.

INT. MOBILE COMMAND CAR - SAME

There is a BLIP on the radar. Then SEVERAL.

SATCOM TECH

We've got bogies, five in number, flying high. These are not local.

CRANE

It can't be. They don't know we're coming.

SATCOM TECH

You sure about that, sir?

The blips move CLOSER.

INT. BROTHERHOOD COMMAND - SAME

We BOOM IN on the most prominent of the hanging glass control rooms to reveal a bank of monitors with LIVE VIDEO of the Timken on approach.

A battleworn ZAELIAN DEFENSE COMMANDER paces behind a line of TECHS, eyes on the live feeds as they descend rapidly...

ZAELIAN TECH (OS)

Eyes on the target. Arming.

EXT. OHIO AIRSPACE - DAY

A squadron of BROTHERHOOD ATTACK DRONES pierce the clouds in triangle formation.

These are junky but oddly aerodynamic flying machines--crude amalgamations of available mid-20th century metals housing futuristic internal flight computers.

With the airborne smoothness of an avian nature documentary, we FLOAT BACK to the next pair of drones: BOMBERS with precision guided ION CHARGES ready to drop.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - SAME

General Andax watches the radar as the incoming bogies multiply in number.

GENERAL ANDAX
Jesus...ready active air defense.

INT. PASSENGER CAR - SAME

An ALARM SOUNDS. The Union Marines grab their weapons and run single file down a spiral staircase into the

VEHICLE STOWAGE CAR

where they pile into their assigned HOVERJEEPS, each one carrying FOUR MARINES and a REAR TURRET GUNNER.

SATCOM TECH (VO)
One mile and closing...

We TRACK DOWN the narrow aisle past CRANE AND MAYA in one vehicle...HELIX AND REESE in the next...DANTE checking the turret gun ammo on a third...

The Union Marines ready their weapons and pray quietly in whatever way they know how.

EXT. OHIO AIRSPACE - SAME

The attack drones descend toward the train, now visible cutting across the flat land below them. They fold out MODIFIED AUTOCANNONS on either wing.

SATCOM TECH (VO)
They're right on top of us, sir.

INT. MISSION CONTROL - SAME

A drop of sweat rolls down the General's temple.

GENERAL ANDAX
Engage.

EXT. TIMKEN LOCOMOTIVE - SAME

The rear of the train opens and the Hoverjeeps ROLL OUT. The thick wheels GRIND INTO SNOW, find their bearings, then FOLD UP as the hoverboosters kick in.

The drones unload a BARRAGE OF INCENDIARY ROUNDS. They hit with tremendous force, blasting gaping black holes in the side of the Timken.

The Hoverjeeps FIRE BACK and suddenly we're in the thick of an INTENSE BATTLE.

ON CRANE AND MAYA

Crane FIRES from the rear turret while Maya drives around huge smoking craters.

CRANE
Get underneath that one!

Crane SHOTS IT, sending the low-flying drone into a flaming nosedive. Maya checks the rearview mirror and sees the drone spinning out of control after them.

She makes a HARD RIGHT and it rockets past the Hoverjeep, scorching the earth in an explosive CRASH.

ON HELIX AND REESE

Helix drives alongside the train while Reese FIRES SHORT BURSTS from the passenger seat. Their TURRET GUNNER is hit, flash-burning him to oblivion.

HELIX
Shit! It's right on us!

REESE
Just drive.

Reese CLIMBS INTO THE BACK and SPINS THE TURRET GUN on the pursuing drone. It FIRES back at her, alternating cannon fire and EXPLOSIVE TIPPED MISSILES.

Helix SWERVES the Hoverjeep, explosions BURSTING ALL AROUND.

REESE (cont'd)
BRAKE!

Helix FLOORS THE BRAKES and the drone ZIPS OVERHEAD. Reese SWIVELS THE TURRET AROUND, facing forward.

REESE (cont'd)
Gun it.

Helix DOWNSHIFTS and they TAKE OFF IN PURSUIT. The drone banks right but Reese has it in her sights...

TCH-BOOM! The drone spirals downward and CRASHES BEHIND THEM as they speed away.

INT. ZAEL'S CHAMBER - DAY

Zael walks through his vast collection of weapons. Swords, crossbows, shields, a Napoleonic cat o' nine tails.

He runs his finger along the edge of an ancient knife that curves at a slight angle.

ZAEL
Nepalese Kukri blade. Carved from the
horn of water buffalo over a thousand
years ago. Never been used.

TOM
I wouldn't take you for a thief.

ZAEL
These aren't stolen. My men present
them when they return from battle.

Zael picks up a futuristic LIQUID METAL ENERGY MACHETE and activates it, drawing the fluid metal into a guide until a jolt of energy HARDENS IT and it glows blue and deadly.

ZAEL (cont'd)
I'm told you have information for me.

TOM
I've been embedded with the ISA. I
know the location of their base.

Zael POWERS DOWN the blade. The metal returns to liquid form and flows back into the chamber. He places it on the rack.

ZAEL
You could have told this to your
Brothers. Yet you insisted on coming
here. Why?

TOM
I wanted to see who made me.

Zael regards him, proud.

ZAEL
You have courage. I've always admired
that about you.

Zael spots an elaborate JAPANESE KATANA SWORD.

ZAEL (cont'd)
Ah. That's what I need.

He removes it from its sheath and holds it out to Tom.

ZAEL (cont'd)
Go ahead. Take it.

Cautiously, Tom grips the handle. It's heavy.

ZAEL (cont'd)
I'm going to end the charade now,
Tom. I know you're not here to help
me win this war.

TOM
You're wrong.

ZAEL
Don't insult me.

Zael walks to his desk, leaving Tom with the sword.

ZAEL (cont'd)
Your life has not been a series of
random events. We created you as a
conduit, a living breathing wiretap
for actionable intelligence. That ISA
spike in your leg? We put a better
one in here...
(points to Tom's head)
...thirty years ago. Recorded every
word since the day you were born.

He taps the screen on his computer and plays an AUDIO FILE. We
recognize Tom's voice, speaking to "Evelyn" in Central Park.

TOM (VO)
(recording)
*...I know it doesn't make sense, but
nothing ever has. Not for me...*

EVELYN (VO)
(recording)
You really think you're one of them.

TOM (VO)
(recording)
I know I am.

Tom lowers the Katana sword, stunned.

ZAEL
We knew they'd tagged you as an
inside man. We let you find those
coordinates just like everything
else. Do you think real reporters
find clues floating in the river?
(off Tom's look)
That's what I love about your generation.
You people will believe *anything*.

TOM
You used my whole life...

ZAEL

Didn't everyone? Your life made my victory possible. Thanks to you, we know the location of the ISA base-- the actual location, not the lie you were about to tell me.

Zael's warm, paternal demeanor has evaporated completely now. This is not a good man.

ZAEL (cont'd)

Rest assured, the Union Marines headed here to take out my radio station will be dead within the hour.

A familiar rage boils up within Tom...the same fury he unleashed on so many schoolyard bullies...

ZAEL (cont'd)

Oh...does that make you angry, Tom? It does. Well, far be it from me to rob a man of his revenge.

Zael steps within striking distance of the sword in Tom's hands and guides it back up toward his neck.

ZAEL (cont'd)

The ISA sent you to kill a terrorist. Do it.

Tom holds the blade perfectly still against Zael's throat. He does not tremble.

ZAEL (cont'd)

Come on, you know the smell of blood and were made to draw it quickly. *Cut me.*

Miraculously, Tom represses his anger and LOWERS THE SWORD.

ZAEL (cont'd)

You can't. Why? Genetic programming? We're not that advanced. No, you can't kill me because your conscience won't allow it. Because way deep down...

(looks him in the eyes)

...you know who you are.

EXT. RURAL OHIO - SAME

Dante rides shotgun in with several Marines, searching the blue sky for a target. Suddenly his Hoverjeep FLIPS FROM A JOLTING EXPLOSION BENEATH IT.

Dante is THROWN FROM THE VEHICLE as it flips, losing his rifle as he rolls into a SNOWY DITCH.

The drone BANKS RIGHT and doubles back to finish him.

Dante remains still as it closes in, locking in its target, gaining speed...then he DROPS AND ROLLS, avoiding a hailstorm of cannon blasts.

As the drone BUZZES OVERHEAD, he pulls a vintage 1945 BARETTA from his vest and UNLOADS THE CLIP into the undercarriage.

It spins off course and careens WILDLY INTO ANOTHER BOMBER. They collide in a glorious burst of fire.

DANTE
Oh SHIT! Who saw that?
(looks around, no
witnesses)
Nobody fuckin' saw that?

EXT. ABOVE RURAL OHIO - SAME

The remaining DRONES arm themselves with amber-glowing CLUSTER BOMBS and descend toward a

STEEL BEAM BRIDGE

stretching out over a FROZEN RIVER.

The drone bombers BANK LEFT and DROP THEIR PAYLOADS in quick succession. The BRIDGE EXPLODES, twisting the railroad tracks up like a bonsai.

INT. MOBILE CONTROL CAR - SAME

The BURNING BRIDGE lights up the monitors, approaching fast.

SATCOM TECH
Brake! ALL SYSTEMS BRAKE!

EXT. BRIDGE - SAME

SPARKS FLY on the wheels as the train skids out over the remaining stretch of bridge...

...and PLUMMETS OVER THE EDGE. The steam engine SHATTERS THE ICY CRUST and PLUNGES INTO WATER. The contents of the COAL CAR spill black onto white. The cars BUCKLE and FOLD as more cars FALL INTO THE ICE like timber logs, water rushing through the windows.

The Mobile Command Car TIPS UPWARD as it is PULLED OVER THE EDGE of the bridge...then it miraculously STOPS, hanging vertically over the river.

IN THE MOBILE COMMAND CAR

Horrified ISA TECHS cling for their lives to the radar tracking consoles.

The car below it BREAKS OFF, smashing into the crumpled mountain of steel and ice below.

ISA TECH #2
Jesus...up! Climb up!

The Techs CLIMB UP toward the open top of the command car as it is PULLED DOWNWARD...

ON CRANE AND MAYA'S HOVERJEEP

Crane spots the two ISA Techs climbing out of the Command Car hanging over the edge of the blasted bridge.

CRANE
There!

MAYA
I see them. Hang on.

Maya accelerates and PUNCHES THE HOVERBOOSTERS. The jeep FLIES OUT OVER THE BRIDGE...just in time for the two Techs to each grab one of Crane's outstretched arms as the train FALLS OUT FROM BENEATH THEM and plunges into the ice.

The Hoverjeep COMPLETES THE JUMP OVER THE RAVINE and SKIDS OUT ON THE OTHER SIDE, sending the two Techs tumbling into the snow, broken but safe.

EXT. RURAL OHIO - MINUTES LATER

The 28 remaining Marines regroup and stock their packs. MEDICS attend to wounded in a makeshift ICU within a circle of parked Hoverjeeps.

Crane speaks into a FIELD RADIO on the hood of his vehicle.

CRANE
Command, we count fourteen dead,
eight wounded. Transporting
casualties to the rallying point.

GENERAL ANDAX
(ON RADIO)
How many more do we have?

CRANE
Seventeen, sir. Proceed to the
Township?

INTERCUT WITH MISSION CONTROL

General Andax stares at the bank of Holomonitors.

GENERAL ANDAX
Defenses are stronger than expected.
We're outnumbered.

CRANE

I don't think retreat is an option,
General.

The General SPOTS SOMETHING ON THE RADAR. His face falls.

GENERAL ANDAX

No, it's not.

Everyone in the room now has their eyes on the radar, blip
nearing the center, right over their heads...

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA AEROSPACE - SIMULTANEOUS

A DRONE BOMBER SOARS ABOVE THE CLOUD COVER. It's chassis
opens and drops a ROUND BLACK STEEL ORB. We DESCEND WITH IT
through the clouds...

...and into the heart of the STRIP MINE concealing ISA
Mission Control. It CUTS THROUGH THE SOIL, tearing up dirt
until it PIERCES the ceiling of the main hangar...

INT. MISSION CONTROL - CONTINUOUS

General Andax watches through the observation window as the
black ball DROPS...bounces twice on the concrete floor...

GENERAL ANDAX

Damn.

...and EXPLODES, shattering the glass into sand and engulfing
the General and his men in blue flame.

EXT. STRIP MINE - SIMULTANEOUS

The basin RUMBLES a bit, shaking the pebbles on the surface.
Then NOTHING. Only birds.

EXT. RURAL OHIO - SAME

The radio GOES DEAD. Maya GASPS, covering her mouth.

Crane looks to a SATCOM TECH. He types furiously into his
laptop, sees something horrible, shakes his head.

HELIX

They got our number, man. Pull out.

MAYA

We can't leave Tom.

DANTE

Forget that guy. He ratted us out.

MAYA

Don't say that. He knows who he is.

DANTE

That's exactly what I'm telling you.

CRANE

We're not backing down now. They hit the only portal we've got. The way out is through that station.

Reese COCKS her shotgun.

REESE

Good. I'm not done killing yet.

INT. ZAEL'S CHAMBER - DAY

Zael walks up a ramp to a GLASS BROADCAST BOOTH connected to copper pipes that feed into the wall.

ZAEL

We're at the beginning of a new era, Tom. An age of redemption, when we can use a vast knowledge of history to repair our mistakes.

He places his hand on a metal plate and the glass OPENS.

ZAEL (cont'd)

This country will soon become a great shining city on a hill...only to fall like Rome herself, crushed by hubris and greed. But I can prevent that. In 1945, people still trust their government. The Information Age is embryonic. Here I can overtake this burgeoning empire...and save America from itself.

TOM

You believe that's your right.

ZAEL

It is *here*. This is my tangent. I made it, it's mine. Why should the Union declare war on a man who only wants a small piece of time?

TOM

But your men don't know what they're fighting for.

ZAEL

Oh, they do. I gave them something to believe in, Tom. Power is temporary, it's seasonal. But *belief*...with belief I can own eternity.

Zael types a code into a keypad and the broadcast console ILLUMINATES. We hear RADIO STATIC.

ZAEL (cont'd)
Today, on my orders, a million men
will rise...

EXT. USS SARATOGA - PACIFIC OCEAN - SIMULTANEOUS

The ALARM SOUNDS as this aircraft carrier CHANGES COURSE.

IN THE CONTROL TOWER

A NAVY CAPTAIN, clearly Brotherhood, navigates with the leather-bound BOOK OF ZAEL in hand.

ZAEL (VO)
Brotherhood commanders will redeploy
their vessels to key tactical
positions around the country...

INT. US CAPITOL BUILDING - WASHINGTON D.C.

We track down a hall of OFFICES to reveal suited US SENATORS waiting patiently by their radios...

ZAEL (VO)
In Washington, a majority of the
House and fifty-three members of the
Senate will change affiliation to
Zaelian Party...

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Local BROTHERHOOD COPS hand out SHOTGUNS in the locker room. One tunes the radio in anticipation of the broadcast...

ZAEL (VO)
Police in townships across the nation
will show authoritative force at the
first sign of resistance...

Another COP, non-Brotherhood, enters the locker room. The men all GLARE AT HIM. He backs slowly out...

INT. BROTHERHOOD LODGE - NEW YORK CITY

The robed GRAND MASTER holds the book high above his head. The RADIO on the proscenium is attached to speakers directed toward a FULL HOUSE OF BROTHERHOOD, more than 200 MEN.

ZAEL (VO)
Believers will take to the streets,
making it known that a day of great
change has come...

As we BOOM OVER these men we see they all have RIFLES.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - MACON, GEORGIA

A BROTHERHOOD FAMILY with SIX BOYS, 12 to 19, waiting by the radio. This would feel like a Norman Rockwell painting if they weren't all CLEANING THEIR SHOTGUNS.

ZAEL (VO)

And in every town, every city,
fathers and sons will calm their
fellow men, assure them they are safe
and secure...that the prophecy is
fulfilled at last...

SERIES OF SHOTS - AROUND THE COUNTRY

LAWYERS...DOCTORS...PROFESSORS...BUSINESSMEN...all holding THE BOOK OF ZAEL, awaiting word that the great battle has finally begun.

INT. ZAEL'S CHAMBER - DAY

Zael's eyes are alive with near-religious fervor.

ZAEL

This is not fantasy, Tom. It is real.
And it is happening now.

CUT TO:

EXT. BETHANY, OHIO - MAIN STREET - DAY

Hoverjeeps roll through the center of town in brigade formation. There is an unnerving silence here.

A shadow MOVES inside a tavern.

Crane signals for Dante and TWO MARINES to clear the building. They jump off the moving Hoverjeeps and storm into the tavern.

INT. TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Dark and dusty. Shafts of outside light refract in bottles of bourbon. Dante hears the SHUFFLE of feet.

He trains his machine gun on the bar and signals for the Marines to investigate.

They split up, flank the target and level their weapons at THREE NATIONAL GUARD SOLDIERS ducked low behind the bar.

MARINE

It's a couple of civs.

Dante lowers his gun.

DANTE

You boys Army?

NATIONAL GUARD #2
National Guard, sir.

DANTE
What are you doing here?

NATIONAL GUARD #2
They cleared the town for a gas leak.
We stayed back to swipe some booze.
(notices the THICK WEAPON)
Nice gun, fella.

DANTE
Okay look...you gotta get out of
here. It's not safe.

NATIONAL GUARD #3
Y'all look like soldiers...there a
war on?

DANTE
This ain't your war, Guardsman. Take
your booze and go.

MARINE #1
Hey...we need men, give them a gun.

DANTE
No. Bad idea.

NATIONAL GUARD #2
Yeah, give us a gun.

DANTE
What's your Guard ID?

NATIONAL GUARD #2
What?

DANTE
Your number. Give it to me.

NATIONAL GUARD #2
Okay, jeez...4021-3355.

Dante types the number into his handheld device.

DANTE
Harry Burkhart. You'll have 3 boys,
11 grandkids, 26 great-grandchildren.
If you die today, none of them will
ever exist.

Harry thinks on this for a moment.

HARRY
That's war, ain't it?

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

The Marines UNLOCK THE BACK of a Hoverjeep and hand the National Guardsmen their own HUGE FUTURISTIC WEAPONS.

DANTE

Alright, listen up. Ammo clip, safety. RPG launcher. Trigger one is the ION blaster, trigger two is hard projectile.

Harry POPS UP his sniper scope.

HARRY

What's this?

DANTE

Sniper mode.
(lifts it up)
It's got auto aim. The computer adjusts to the target.

NATIONAL GUARD #3

Computer?

Suddenly the BARBER SHOP next to them EXPLODES.

MARINE (OS)

POSITIONS!

BOOM! An shoulder-launched rocket hits a Hoverjeep, FLIPPING AND ROLLING it into a vintage Nash coupe.

The Marines SHATTER WINDOWS and take cover inside storefronts while others run up stairs to second floor perches.

ON CRANE

with Maya in the lead Hoverjeep. He lifts his binoculars.

INSERT - BINOCULAR POV

The second wave of Brotherhood defense--more than fifty GENETICALLY SUPERIOR MEN WITH ADVANCED WEAPONS--storm the north end of Main Street.

ON THE NATIONAL GUARDSMEN

crouched behind a John Deere tractor with Dante and the Marines, tracer bullets WHIZZING overhead.

NATIONAL GUARD #1

Who the hell are these guys?

DANTE

They're bad, promise.

The Guardsmen watch in awe as these hulking future warriors unload HEAVY ROUNDS on the approaching enemy.

MARINE
Whooo! Get some!

Frightened and exhilarated at once, the Guardsmen pick up their weapons and FIRE ON THE BROTHERHOOD.

INT. ZAEL'S CHAMBER - DAY

Zael picks up the chrome RADIO MICROPHONE and types a code into a modified TOUCHSCREEN built into the old machine.

ZAELIAN TECH (VO)
100% coverage, sir. On your mark.

The microphone POPS. Zael looks through the glass at Tom... then READS FROM A PREPARED TEXT.

ZAEL
(into microphone)
Sons of Zael rejoice. Today we begin
a great journey...

ON TOM

as Zael's voice echoes through the chamber. The questions of his life have been answered, the source of his anger revealed. There is only one thing left to do. *Choose.*

IN THE BROADCAST BOOTH

Zael speaks to his followers with paternal authority.

ZAEL
Today you will bestow a gift upon the
people of this great land...

BROTHERHOOD LODGE - NEW YORK CITY

ZAEL (ON RADIO)
You will allow them to know me...

USS SARATOGA - PACIFIC OCEAN

ZAEL (ON RADIO)
*...to accept the Truth into their
hearts...*

POLICE STATION - PHOENIX, ARIZONA

ZAEL (ON RADIO)
*...with this gift, you will make the
world a better place for your
children...*

SUBURBAN HOME - MACON, GEORGIA

ZAEL (ON RADIO)
...and your children's children...

US CAPITOL BUILDING - WASHINGTON D.C

ZAEL (ON RADIO)
*...and all those who will hear of
 this day for generations to come.*

AROUND THE COUNTRY

A seemingly endless number of FOLLOWERS listening to their radios as if God is speaking directly to them.

ZAEL (ON RADIO)
*This day will not end without
 sacrifice. But know this, my sons...*

INT. ZAEL'S CHAMBER - SIMULTANEOUS

Zael straightens a bit as he approaches his favorite line.

ZAEL
*...we have nothing to fear but fear
 itself.*

Suddenly the glass broadcast booth SHATTERS AROUND HIM.

Zael DROPS THE MICROPHONE and spins around to discover TOM holding a VIKING BATTLE AXE in both hands.

INT. FAMILY LIVING ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

The Norman Rockwell Family is surprised by the sound of breaking glass and their God's sudden wrathful anger.

ZAEL (ON RADIO)
What the fuck?!!

INT. ZAEL'S CHAMBER - SIMULTANEOUS

Tom LIFTS ZAEL and THROWS HIM OFF THE ELEVATED PLATFORM to the chamber floor. The Father flies FAR and hits the wall hard. We can hear the bones CRUNCH.

Tom lowers the axe, picks up the microphone and speaks.

TOM
 This man is not your Father.

CUT AROUND THE COUNTRY

To the confused and disoriented followers of Zael listening to this new voice on the radio.

TOM (ON RADIO)
Your book is a lie.

Shock and dismay on a thousand faces.

TOM (ON RADIO) (cont'd)
Turn off your radios.

IN ZAEL'S CHAMBER

Broken glass falls around Tom as he speaks.

TOM
 Brothers...open your eyes.

Tom lifts the axe and SINKS IT INTO THE BROADCAST CONSOLE.
 The transmitter SHORTS OUT in a hail of sparks.

He raises it to strike again but this time his axe is BLOCKED
 BY THE KATANA SWORD. Zael is back on his feet and ARMED.

He KICKS Tom off the platform to the floor. His battle axe
 CLATTERS away.

Zael LEAPS DOWN fifteen feet, sticking the landing with the
 same genetically-enhanced accuracy he embedded in his
 offspring. This dude is BADASS.

He stands over Tom, sword in hand, blood dripping from the
 corner of his mouth.

ZAEL
 You really shouldn't have done that.

Zael brings the Katana down for a swift beheading...

...but Tom ROLLS AWAY and the steel SPARKS on the floor.

Zael recovers quickly but Tom is ALREADY GONE, hidden in the
 maze of rare weapons. He puts both hands on the sword, enters
 a trained FIGHTING STANCE and STALKS TOM LIKE A LION.

When he rounds a corner, Tom suddenly APPEARS and swings at
 him with the futuristic LIQUID METAL MACHETE. The contact
 with the steel Katana makes it RAIN BLUE FIRE.

The two men GLARE AT EACH OTHER through the glow emitted by
 this meeting of ancient technology and new.

EXT. BETHANY MAIN STREET - ROOFTOP - DAY

Reese and Helix fire HEAVY ROUNDS at the wave of oncoming
 Brotherhood soldiers from atop a brick building.

A whole TRUCKLOAD of them screech into the town's lone gas
 station and roll out.

HELIX

Jesus, how many do they have?

REESE

They're gonna need more.

Reese cocks the RPG LAUNCHER and FIRES AT THE GAS PUMP.

It EXPLODES IN A MUSHROOM OF FLAME, taking the TRUCK and Brotherhood Soldiers with it.

ON THE NATIONAL GUARDSMEN

Deep in the shit. Our boys are DEADLY with their new weapons, dropping the enemy left and right like sharpshooters.

HARRY

Whoohoo!! Get some!!!

ON CRANE AND MAYA

Ducked behind one of the last functioning Hoverjeeps, returning fire in short bursts. A bullet GRAZES Crane's arm.

He hits the ground, spouting blood. Maya crouches over him, smashed brick raining down from the building above.

MAYA

It's not bad...hang on...

She RIPS out a medpack to dress the wound.

CRANE

Forget it. We don't have time.

MAYA

No, you're shot--

CRANE

He'll run. You want to lose him now?

Maya knows he's right. She SLIDES ACROSS THE HOOD OF THE HOVERJEEP into the driver's seat.

Crane pulls a strap tight around his elbow to cut off the bleeding, picks up a gun with his good arm and crawls into the passenger seat.

MAYA

(into wrist device)

Reese, we're going in! Cover me!

ON THE ROOFTOP

Reese spots the moving Hoverjeep and grabs her SNIPER RIFLE.

REESE
Covering fire!

Helix loads a fresh mag into his scoped pistol and they PICK OFF Brotherhood as Maya weaves around them in the Hoverjeep.

Reese is especially hardcore, nailing BRUTAL HEADSHOTS from 300 feet out. Do NOT cross this girl.

INT. BROTHERHOOD COMMAND - DAY

The Techs scramble to gain control of their botched broadcast.

ZAELIAN TECH
(into microphone)
Sons of Zael...pay no attention to--

The Defense Commander KNOCKS the microphone away.

DEFENSE COMMANDER
Shut it off.

He looks up at the bank of monitors: various TELESCOPE ANGLES on Main Street as the Union Marines take out the last of the Brotherhood Soldiers. Bodies everywhere.

ZAELIAN TECH
They're still coming, sir.

The Zaelian Commander EXHALES. Long day.

ZAELIAN COMMANDER
Send in the hounds.

INT. ZAEL'S CHAMBER - DAY

ZCHTZ! ZCHTZ! Sparks fly as Tom and Zael DUEL across the chamber floor.

Tom thrusts and parries with dizzying speed, his liquid metal blade leaving TRAILS OF LIGHT as it clashes with the Katana.

Zael matches him easily, maintaining a safe distance, testing Tom's skills, which are better than even we expected.

ZAEL
You fight well. You would have been one of my best men.

TOM
Sorry to disappoint you.

Tom SWEEPS ZAEL'S LEGS and the older man falls on his back. Tom brings the sword down in a swift FINISHING MOVE as Zael rolls away, back on his feet.

ZAEL

So aggressive! And they thought they could change your nature...fools....

Tom holds off, unsure what Zael means by this.

ZAEL (cont'd)

(realizing)

My God. They didn't tell you, did they?
Metronome killed your parents, Tom.

We SPIN AROUND TOM as Zael completes the story of his life.

ZAEL (cont'd)

They boarded that ship. Murdered every man, woman and child. They took you away. Heartless, cold-blooded killers...

Tom REELS as a distant memory crashes over him...

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. STEAM SHIP - 1915 - BELOW DECK - DUSK

The cabin door CREAKS OPEN and a pair of HEAVY BOOTS descend the steps. The Masked Leader, now obviously CRANE, cracks a flare to reveal the women and children cowering in fear.

He reaches out and WRAPS HIS ENORMOUS GLOVED HANDS around the infant Tom. His Mother HOLDS TIGHT, choking on tears.

YOUNG MOTHER

No...please...

CRANE

Let him go, Mother...

He takes the child and hands it to a lithe, muscular FEMALE RAIDER. We look close at her eyes. It's MAYA.

She freezes, her muscles locked, staring at the wailing mother, crumpled on the floor in searing heartache.

CRANE (cont'd)

Go now!

Maya wraps the baby in a blanket and CLIMBS THE STAIRS.

YOUNG MOTHER

No...NO!!...

FLASH FORWARD TO:

INT. ZAEL'S CHAMBER - DAY

Tom is winded...his calibration of good and evil, wrong or right...now irreparably warped.

ZAEL
Some friends. They slaughtered
innocent people that day. Then they
sent you here to kill me, knowing
full well you'd die trying...

Tom STANDS TALL. No longer willing to be anyone's puppet.

TOM
Not today.

Tom ATTACKS. The blades FLASH as he forces Zael back along the enormous ceiling-high window, their bodies in silhouette against the bright white landscape.

Tom DISARMS Zael and KICKS HIS CHEST, sending him stumbling into a RACK OF ANCIENT WEAPONS. The rack TIPS OVER and they CRASH TO THE FLOOR.

Zael regains his balance, uses his foot to kick a CELTIC NORSE SWORD up into his hand and the DUEL CONTINUES.

Tom is pushed back by the power of Zael's new sword. He passes a rack of ANCIENT ARMOR, grabs a wood-carved PRAETORIAN CAVALRY SHIELD and lifts it in defense.

THWACK! The sword breaks through the shield like a cracker.

Zael SLICES Tom's arm as he swings hard. The Liquid Metal blade flies out of his hand and SMASHES THE HUGE GLASS WINDOW, shattering it completely, opening this room to the FRIGID WINTER AIR.

Zael GASHES TOM'S LEG, bringing him to one knee. As he raises his Norse Sword for a death blow, Tom grips a fallen medieval SPIKED BATTLE CLUB and swings it like a baseball bat into Zael's side.

Ribs SHATTER and Zael doubles over, spitting blood. Tom DUCKS out of sight into the maze of weapons.

Zael stands, spiked club still embedded in his torso, clenches his teeth and PULLS IT OUT.

EXT. BETHANY MAIN STREET - DAY

Helix and Reese run through blood-soaked snow to the last Hoverjeep, where Dante, two remaining Marines and the National Guardsmen are reloading their guns.

REESE
Saddle up. We're taking out that tower.

DANTE
 (re: National Guardsmen)
 What about these guys?

HELIX
 Leave 'em here.

THHHST...BOOOM! The ENTIRE BUILDING across the street is HIT BY A MISSILE. It COLLAPSES IN A CLOUD OF SMOKE AND DEBRIS.

Helix picks up his sniper pistol and peers through the scope.

INSERT - SNIPER SCOPE

Our first blurry look at Zael's last line of defense:
 Brothers piloting weaponized CHROMEHOUND-LIKE WAR MECHS.

These 15-foot steel beasts are designs of the future constructed from recycled metals of 1945--civilian car grills, rusty airplane wings, copper plating green with patina.

There are THREE OF THEM walking like giants from the Relay Station, snow turning to packed ice beneath their steel feet.

Their arms alternate MACHINE GUN ROUNDS and GUIDED MISSILES that can level entire buildings from a half mile out.

ON HELIX

Stunned by the sheer size of these monsters. He turns to the National Guard troops, faces caked with ash.

HELIX
 Y'all know where we can get some planes?

EXT. RELAY STATION - DAY

The snow-covered farmland is ROCKED by defensive autocannon fire as Maya and Crane swerve toward the station entrance.

They SKID TO A STOP at the front steps. Maya shoulders a HEAVY RAIL GUN and the pair of them shoot their way inside.

INT. RELAY STATION - CONTINUOUS

Maya and Crane kick down the front door to find the long hallway nearly empty. Maya checks a map on her wrist device.

MAYA
 (points to elevator)
 There.

They run toward the bank of elevators, past RADIO ROOMS full of unarmed Sons of Zael, worker bees cowering in the corners, profoundly confused by Zael's broadcast. They don't even know who to shoot at anymore.

As they near the elevators, one opens to reveal a Tall Man, instantly familiar to Crane...

NESMITH, bloodshot eyes curdled with vengeance.

CRANE

Take the stairs, baby. I got this.

MAYA

You sure?

CRANE

I'm sure.

Maya shoulders her Rail Gun and runs UPSTAIRS.

Nesmith tosses his revolver aside, removes his blazer and holds his hands out to show he is unarmed.

Crane nods, accepting the invitation. He drops his assault rifle and kicks it across the tile floor.

These men do not crack wise. There is nothing clever to be said. This shit is about to get RAW.

Nesmith CHARGES CRANE and unloads a flurry of punches, reminding us just how superior these Brotherhood guys are.

Crane BLOCKS and REDIRECTS these jabs like a mixed martial arts master, energized by the unmatched skill of his opponent.

Nesmith finally connects and Crane HITS THE WALL, leaving a man-sized dent.

NESMITH

Get up.

Crane stands...but Nesmith PILE DRIVES HIM BACK DOWN. We hear his shoulder CRACK when it hits the floor.

NESMITH (cont'd)

Again.

Crane rises, his arm visibly DISLOCATED. He stands tall, HITS HIMSELF IN THE SHOULDER to knock it back into place, flexes his fingers, right back in it.

CRANE

That all you got?

NESMITH

Not even close.

Nesmith ATTACKS but Crane is ready. They exchange PUNISHING BLOWS without any sign of pain or surrender.

INT. ZAEL'S CHAMBER - SIMULTANEOUS

Zael stalks Tom through the maze of ancient weapons, bleeding from his abdomen.

ZAEL
Tom? Can you hear me?

ON TOM

Behind a rack of Persian rugs, silent, breathing hard.

ZAEL (OS)
I can't stay long now.

ON ZAEL

Checking every available reflection for a glimpse of his prey.

ZAEL
This can still end well...

He spots a 17th Century CROSSBOW PISTOL, breaks the glass case with his Norse Sword and LOADS A STEEL ARROW.

ZAEL (cont'd)
After all...what kind of God would I
be...without forgiveness?

CLICK. The barrel of an 1866 Winchester Rifle presses against Zael's temple. We PULL BACK to reveal Tom at the other end.

TOM
Drop it.

Zael's eyes dart around, looking for a way out of this.

ZAEL
As you wish.

In one SWIFT MOVE, Zael spins around, slams the Winchester into Tom's jaw and KICKS him through the open window.

He RAISES THE CROSSBOW for a killshot but MISSES, hitting the Winchester instead. It clatters off the ledge and FALLS 200 FEET DOWN to a concrete balcony below.

His lone piece of ammo spent, Zael tosses the crossbow aside and charges onto the snowpacked roof.

EXT. RELAY STATION ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Out of weapons, Tom and Zael go HAND-TO-HAND. There's no skill or grace to this fight, just two very powerful men pummeling the living shit out of each other, leaving an almost beautiful pattern of blood in the snow.

EXT. NATIONAL GUARD AIRFIELD - SOUTHWESTERN OHIO - DAY

STAN, 23, a young National Guard pilot who's never seen action, sits alone with a sandwich near the mess tent.

The pay phone RINGS. Stan looks around, surprised, then casually answers.

STAN

Hello?

EXT. SNOWFIELD - SAME

Dante, Reese, Helix, the Marines and the National Guardsmen cling tight to their seats as the HOVERJEEP AVOIDS MECH CANNON BLASTS on approach to the Relay Station.

NATIONAL GUARD #1

Stan! Is that you?

INTERCUT WITH STAN

STAN

Carl?

NATIONAL GUARD #1

Listen to me, we've got a breach! I need air support!

Dante SWERVES AROUND the feet of the oncoming Mechs while Marines and National Guardsmen FIRE from the HoverjEEP.

STAN

What? Where the hell are you guys?

NATIONAL GUARD #2

I'm thirty miles out! Don't clear it, tell the tower it's a maintenance run--

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM! Reese FIRES THE REAR TURRET GUN, punching basketball size holes in the Mechs copper plating.

STAN

Carl, I can't just up and take a plane--

BOOM! A Mech blast FLIPS THE HOVERJEEP...one perfect barrel roll in midair and it LANDS UPRIGHT AGAIN, speeding forward.

NATIONAL GUARD #2

Shut up, Stan, this is real! We need a pair of P-51's, 39 degrees 6'1" North by 084 degrees 17'58 West!

INT. RELAY STATION TELEGRAPH ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

SMASH! Nesmith THROWS CRANE THROUGH PLATE GLASS onto a table littered with strips of ticker paper.

Crane is bloodied now, looking every bit like a mortal man who's been fighting a genetically modified super-human.

But he's not done yet. He RISES and delivers a vicious ROUNDHOUSE KICK that hooks Nesmith in the neck and drills his face into a bank of radio equipment.

Nesmith stumbles away, his consciousness JOLTED, giving Crane enough time to whip off his military-issue leather belt and WRAP IT AROUND HIS NECK.

He threads the buckle fast and PULLS IT TIGHT. Nesmith's face goes BRIGHT RED and he PUSHES OFF THE WALL with his legs, forcing them back down onto a wood desk.

They knock over a vintage TELEPHONE, tipping the wire-connected earpiece off its cradle.

OPERATOR (VO)
Operator, what listing please?

Crane holds Nesmith's head down with the belt and delivers a three-fingered JAB to his throat, opening his mouth enough to receive the telephone earpiece.

Nesmith's eyes bug out, aware of what's coming next...but it's too late.

Crane DRIVES THE PHONE RECEIVER INTO HIS MOUTH with one forceful punch, cracking his jaw and sucking the life out in an instant.

Nesmith's eyes remain open in shock, his body flayed out on the table. We can hear the operator's voice on the other end of the line, now lodged deep in his brain.

OPERATOR (VO) (cont'd)
(inside Nesmith's head)
Cincinnati Bell, how may I help you?

INT. BROTHERHOOD COMMAND - DAY

THWACK! Maya KICKS DOWN THE DOOR and enters the enormous chamber of hanging command booths.

The Zaelian Techs all stop and look down at this woman standing alone with a very large gun.

The Defense Commander steps forward, unsure what comes next.

A moment of dead silence...

...then Maya fires up the Rail Gun and UNLEASHES HELL.

The Zaelian Techs SCRAMBLE to save themselves but this weapon is just too destructive.

She SHOOTS THE WIRES holding up the elevated command booths and they CRASH INTO EACH OTHER, tumbling like Jenga pieces.

The Zaelians die screaming. Maya BLASTS AWAY without remorse.

EXT. RELAY STATION ROOF - SAME

CRACK! Tom gets in a solid RIGHT HOOK and Zael tumbles down the angle of this roof and off the edge, gripping tight to the rain gutter.

Tom rises, towering over his creator as the gutter LOSES BOLTS, slowly failing him.

ZAEL

No! Tom, please...not like this...

CLANK! Another bolt flies off and the gutter SINKS LOWER.

ZAEL (cont'd)

I meant to do good...believe me...

CLANK! The gutter slants to such an steep angle that the frozen water inside it slides out and FALLS, shattering on the hard concrete below.

ZAEL (cont'd)

Oh God, don't let me die...

Tom looks deep into Zael's green eyes, mirrors of his own. Zael's fingers start to give...

...but Tom GRABS HIS ARM.

ZAEL (cont'd)

Yes...thank you my son...

Tom grips Zael's wrist tight and raises his other arm. Something metallic GLIMMERS in his hand...

...the ISA's TRACKING SPIKE INJECTOR. Zael's hope fades.

TOM

I'm not your son.

Tom PLUNGES THE NEEDLE INTO ZAEL'S SHOULDER. The liquid FLOWS INTO HIS BLOODSTREAM, tagging him forever...

...then Tom LETS GO. Zael FALLS AND SLAMS HARD INTO THE SNOWY GROUND. Motionless. Tom peers over the edge, watching the body for any sign of life. There isn't one.

EXT. SNOWFIELD - DAY

Dante STEERS between the Mechs as Reese targets one with a shoulder-launched rocket.

REESE

Steady...

She FIRES. The rocket ZIPS PAST the Mech, continuing on its path into the sky.

REESE (cont'd)

Fuck!

BOOM!!! The Hoverjeep is HIT, sending them all FLYING as it BURROWS INTO THE SNOW.

HELIX

Get out! Move!

The Mechs turn and SPRAY BULLETS into the crashed Hoverjeep. The gas tank ignites and it GOES UP IN FLAME, taking one of the last remaining Marines with it.

THHT! THHT! Dante is HIT TWICE IN THE LEG and falls to the ground, immobile. The Lead Mech rumbles forward to finish the job, KICKING THROUGH the burning Hoverjeep as it goes.

DANTE

Helix!

Dante reaches into his bloody cargo pants and pulls out one of his MICRO-MINES...

Helix RUNS FOR HIM as the Lead Mech CLOSES IN from the other direction, yards away...

Dante TOSSES HELIX the Mine. Helix catches it in midair and RUNS UP THE SIDE OF THE WALKING MECH.

He SLAPS THE MICRO-MINE ITS CHEST and PUSHES OFF, flying though the air and rolling away as the mine beeps red.

KA-BOOM!!!

The entire midsection of the Mech DETONATES, killing the driver instantly, leaving behind only a pair of smoking legs.

The two remaining Mechs turn to face the now-defenseless ISA resistance. Dante puts his hands up. Helix, Reese and the Guardsmen THROW DOWN THEIR GUNS. The Mechs TARGET THEM, preparing for an execution...

...then one of the Mechs EXPLODES HUGE!

The second one rotates toward the threat, but it's too late.

KA-BOOOM!!!

A P-52 MUSTANG BUZZES the battlefield and drops heavy artillery on the second Mech, copper parts spiraling outward as it FALLS HEAD FIRST INTO THE SNOW.

Helix rises to his feet.

HELIX
What? No way! HA!!!

Helix embraces the National Guardsmen, swept up sudden burst of uncharacteristic patriotism.

HELIX (cont'd)
YEAH!!! WORLD WAR X MOTHERFUCKERS!!

INT. P-52 MUSTANG - SAME

Stan looks down at the metal behemoths COLLAPSING IN FIRE.

STAN
(into radio)
Jeez, fellas, what in sam hell were those things?

EXT. SNOWFIELD - SAME

The Guardsmen yell into the radio, ecstatic.

NATIONAL GUARD #2
They're bad guys, Stan! Promise!

ON REESE

Separated from the group, focused amidst the chaos.

As the others cheer behind her, she shoulders her rocket launcher and aims it at the TOWER atop the Relay Station.

She breathes deep, drowning out all sound. Alone with her target.

FFTTTHH!!

Her rocket STREAKS ACROSS THE SKY and HITS THE RADIO TOWER, bringing the whole thing down in a twisted pile of steel.

She tosses the weapon aside, deeply satisfied.

REESE
Mission accomplished, bitch.

INT. BROTHERHOOD COMMAND - SAME

Maya drops her smoking rail gun, the shattered glass command booths now stacked atop one another in smoking ruin. No sign of life anywhere.

She draws her sidearm and runs up the LONG STAIRWAY leading up to Zael's chamber...then stops when she reaches the door.

Tom is standing here, beaten and bloody. His look is one of absolute betrayal. She knows immediately why.

TOM
What did my mother look like?

MAYA
No...oh, no, Tom, I'm sorry...

She steps closer to him. He steps back.

TOM
Were you ever going to tell me?

Her eyes are filled with tears now. They are inches away from each other, closer than they've ever been...

MAYA
I was just following orders...I never wanted to hurt you...

TOM
What do you care...I don't exist...

Something keeps them moving toward each other...a feeling they can't explain but feels irrevocably present...

MAYA
Yes you do.

They KISS like nothing else in the world matters. It's deep and intense and wrong and, for this one brief moment, perfect. The building QUAKES, debris falling around them.

Then CRANE APPEARS at the bottom of the stairs.

He looks through the smoke and shattered glass, seeing nothing but Maya and Tom locked in a meeting of the souls.

He MOVES INTO SHADOW so they can't see him. The man is CRUSHED.

ON MAYA AND TOM

as part of the ceiling FALLS, breaking their embrace.

Crane STEPS INTO THE LIGHT. Maya sees him at the bottom of the stairs and pulls further away from Tom.

Crane swallows his pain and approaches them. If he's broken, he's not showing it right now.

CRANE
Where is he?

EXT. RELAY STATION TERRACE - MOMENTS LATER

They kick down the door to find Zael GONE. Bootprints and a trail of blood lead back into the Relay Station.

CRANE

He's going for the portal. Did you spike him?

Tom takes the EMPTY INJECTOR out of his pocket.

INT. ELEVATOR - SAME

Zael, broken and bleeding, leans against the back wall of this freight elevator as it descends into the earth.

The door opens into a TUNNEL lit with a string of white lights. He limps out and continues down the corridor into a

VAST UNDERGROUND CAVERN

humming with POWER GENERATORS. Barrels of RAW URANIUM line the walls. In the center of this space is an enormous BLACK IRON BOX lined with huge COPPER COILS.

Zael drags himself toward it.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Crane, Tom and Maya exit the elevator and run down the same corridor into the

UNDERGROUND CAVERN

to find the time portal's copper coils glowing and Zael already gone. Crane runs to the computer and taps the screen.

MAYA

Can we track him?

CRANE

He set a random endpoint generator.

(reading display)

Jesus...he went around the horn. This prick's in the Original Line.

MAYA

Mirror it. We'll follow him.

CRANE

No. He's spiked, we wait and do this the right way.

MAYA

He can get it removed. We can't take that risk. I'm going.

Maya takes off her ammo belt and opens the portal door.

CRANE
No. It's too dangerous.

MAYA
We don't have a choice!

CRANE
You're not going out there alone!

TOM
I'll go.

Crane glares at Tom with contempt.

CRANE
Christ, man, haven't you had enough?

Maya puts a calming hand on Crane's shoulder.

MAYA
You can find him, I know you can. We
do this now, he goes down for good.
Right?

She's speaking Crane's language. He buries everything else
this situation is loaded with...and nods affirmatively.

INT. TIME PORTAL - MOMENTS LATER

Tom and Maya enter the steel square space, lit by a single
red worklight. Maya leads him to the center.

She hands him a Browning 9mm pistol and a remote earpiece.

CRANE (VO)
(on earpiece)
Alright, here we go.

INTERCUT WITH CRANE

at the portal interface, STEELY AND EMOTIONLESS as he
automates a mirror of Zael's path through time.

CRANE
(into microphone)
I'll stop the generator when his
beacon comes in range. He's hurt, so
it shouldn't be hard to take him
down. Tom?

TOM
Yeah.

CRANE

You have to stay within 200 feet of the insertion point if you want to come back. Cross over the line, you're an orphan like the rest of us. I'll get some first responders on the scene wherever you end up. Maya?

MAYA

I'm here, Crane.

CRANE

I'm sorry if...if I wasn't...

He stumbles over it, unable to find the words.

CRANE (cont'd)

Be careful out there.

(deep breath)

Alright....initiating quantum tunnel.

Crane POWERS UP THE GENERATOR. There is a SURGE OF POWER and the box STUTTERS a bit in its existence.

IN THE BLACK BOX

The HUM of massive amounts of generated energy overtakes the room, pounding like a headache.

Maya puts her hand out. Tom takes it.

Then the SPACE GOES DARK.

INT. QUANTUM TUNNEL - DAY/NIGHT

We hear the sounds first. Crickets. Birds. Then the environment BLEEDS IN around us like we're remembering it...

A DARK JUNGLE

Infinite stars and over a prairie of RUNNING WILD DOGS...

It FADES OUT as soon as it appears, followed by a series of RANDOM DESTINATIONS that last only a split second, like shuffling through a deck of cards...

CALCUTTA, INDIA - 1748

A market rich with spices and sensory overload.

SHANGHAI CHINA - 1891

Bicycles along the waterfront.

MALL OF AMERICA - 2014

Rabid consumers trample each other into a Best Buy at 6AM.

ENGLAND - 891 A.D.

A peasant leads his donkey toward a stone castle.

NIMES, FRANCE - 1985

A schoolyard full of screaming children.

MAURITANIA - 1523

African villagers weave straw baskets in a clay city.

NEW YORK CITY - 2135

The darkened stairwell of a shabby TENEMENT APARTMENT.

Tom and Maya are JOLTED into this space. Maya checks the readout on her handheld device.

MAYA

This is it.

A door SLAMS on the floor above. Maya draws her sidearm and climbs the stairs. Tom follows close behind, weapon up.

They approach an APARTMENT DOOR cracked slightly open.

A woman SCREAMS inside. Maya KICKS DOWN THE DOOR.

INT. TENEMENT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tom and Maya enter an unkempt urban dwelling of the distant future. INDUSTRIAL HARDCORE RAP plays on the radio.

MAYA

I know this place.

They round a corner to find a WOMAN unconscious on the floor.

MAYA (cont'd)

(realizing)

He was born here...

A GUNSHOT RINGS OUT. Maya's left arm EXPLODES BLOOD and she crumples to the floor.

TOM

NO!

Tom spins in the direction of the shooter to discover

ZAEL

standing in the living room with a REVOLVER pressed to the forehead of a SMALL BOY trembling in his arms.

The boy's eyes are recognizable. This is ZAEL HIMSELF, age 3.

ZAEL
You shouldn't have followed me here.

Tom keeps his gun trained on Zael's forehead. Maya remains motionless on the floor.

ZAEL (cont'd)
One shot. A single bullet and my life's work ceases to exist. A million lives. Your Brothers. Their sons. And, of course...you, Tom.

Tom COCKS his gun.

ZAEL (cont'd)
Don't. The fabric of spacetime is strong, but it's breakable.
(motions to his young self)
I don't see anyone surviving this.
Not even God himself.

He may be right. For all we know of causality, this is the ultimate suicide bomb.

ZAEL (cont'd)
Put down the gun, Tom. It's not worth it. You'll never--

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

Three clean shots in the forehead and Zael DROPS. Young Zael falls to the ground and scrambles away, trembling.

Tom kneels beside Maya. She's hit bad, coughing blood. He takes her in his arms and RISES.

Tom turns to face Young Zael, now on his feet, staring down at his own twitching corpse. The boy does not cry, but this memory will effect him profoundly for the rest of his life.

INT. APARTMENT STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

We TRACK DOWN THE STAIRS with Tom and Maya. He carries her through the building lobby toward the FRONT DOOR...

MAYA
(barely conscious)
You have to go back...you'll be an orphan...

Tom doesn't care. He KICKS DOWN THE DOOR and carries Maya outside into a street of the DISTANT FUTURE.

EXT. BROOKLYN - 2135 - CONTINUOUS

Tom passes the ISA FIRST RESPONDERS dispatched by Crane as they pour into the building to scrub the crime scene. One of them points across the street to a DOOR OUTLINED WITH LIGHT. It OPENS and we see the silhouette of the ISA MEDICS inside...

Maya looks up at Tom, eyes full of tears.

MAYA

No...you can't go home again...

TOM

I know.

As Tom carries Maya toward the door, we BOOM UP to reveal a BRIGHT VERTICAL FUTURE CITY

White lights packed densely together, woven tight with elevated highways. EXPLOSIONS light up the horizon in bursts, quaking the earth.

This world is CURRENTLY AT WAR.

We PULL BACK through the apartment window into

ZAEL'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM

where METRONOME CLEANERS are hard at work--carrying Zael's body on a stretcher, wiping the mother's memory, erasing any sign of conflict...

One of them takes the frightened child into a corner and wraps him in a blanket. He wipes specks of blood from the boy's face, whispering...

METRONOME CLEANER

Shhh...you're safe now...

We know that voice. The Cleaner takes off his mask and confirms our suspicion.

It's MCGRADY.

Miraculously alive and deep inside an enemy agency. A contingency plan has been activated and it's working.

The traumatized child looks up at his newfound guardian. McGrady's warm smile calms his nerves.

MCGRADY

Everything's going to be fine.

On the boy's hopeful green eyes we

CUT TO BLACK.