

Grizzly

by

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WGAW Registration #885178

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EXT. RUNDOWN MOTEL - NIGHT

A sleazy motel surrounded by scrubby, overgrown foliage. Through the flimsy curtains of a room, we see a TV set playing a garish game show. The audience and contestants scream, leap around idiotically, kiss the MC etc.

Outside the motel, human activity becomes audible: feet scraping on concrete, tense whispers, the crackle and buzz of communications equipment.

Shadowy figures materialize into FBI and police. Silently, officers detach themselves, glide noiselessly up the stairs to the motel room door and take positions. One officer nods to another, who reaches out and knocks.

OFFICER #1

Josh Leopold. This is the police.
Open the door.

Silence. Officer #2 holds up three fingers, two, one. A moment before they burst through, the door suddenly opens to reveal JOSH LEOPOLD, about 21, in grimy, sagging jockey shorts, long-haired, barefoot, unkempt, exhausted. His body shows the results of a lack of exercise and junk food.

JOSH LEOPOLD

(looks at officers)

Wow.

That's all he has time to say, because he is instantly grabbed and propelled backward into the room, hurled onto the bed face down, and handcuffed. Josh puts up no resistance.

JOSH LEOPOLD

(face down on the
mattress)

Ow! Hey, take it easy.

Police and FBI swarm through the room, yanking out drawers, opening suitcases, ripping up bedclothes.

OFFICER #3

(to Officer #1)

No weapons.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 (turns head to speak)
 I'm not armed. I never was.

OFFICER #3
 Shut up, you little prick.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 My weapon is my brain, which you
 fascist mesomorphs have no defense
 against..
 (an officer turns his face
 back into the bed)
 ow! mmph mmph
 (talks into the bed)
 Lay off!

FBI AGENT #1
 (searching, to FBI Agent
 #2)
 Where the hell's his laptop?
 (to Josh)
 Where's your laptop?

JOSH LEOPOLD
 (muffled through the
 bedclothes)
 Wouldn't you like to know.

Two officers walk in tfrom the bathroom

OFFICER #1
 Premises are secure.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 There's nobody here. Just me.

OFFICER #2
 (long-suffering)
 You have the right to remain
 silent. Anything you do say can and
 will be used against you in a court
 of law. You have the right to an
 attorney. If you cannot afford an
 attorney, one will be appointed for
 you....

The voice drones on. Josh, face down and nearly smothering,
 gazes at nothing with resignation. Officer GUS DUNCAN sits
 down beside him on the bed. Gus has a thousand miles on him,
 and the last few have been the hardest.

GUS DUNCAN
 Well, it's all over, Josh.

JOSH LEOPOLD
If you say so.

GUS DUNCAN
Should I be saying different?

Josh tries to shrug, but he is immobilized.

GUS DUNCAN
Is it all over?

JOSH LEOPOLD
Sure.

Gus surveys Josh with infinite scorn and skepticism.

EXT. CHEAP MOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

As the police hustle Josh outside, police officer RON KRISKOVIC stops to converse with Gus.

RON KRISKOVIC
I can't believe it. King Hacker.
Ran him to the ground.

GUS DUNCAN
(lighting a smoke)
I feel like I been chasing this little puke half my life. I know more about computers than I ever cared to. I know what every nit-noy police station in every podunk town looks like from here to Maine. Day and night.

RON KRISKOVIC
And it ends here.

FBI Agent #2 overhears and pauses.

FBI AGENT #2
We hope it ends here.

RON KRISKOVIC
(looks around)
Ya gotta admit, it's a perfect place to hit bottom.

GUS DUNCAN
All I know is, I don't care if I never look at another monitor as long as I live. Or another cheap motel.

FBI AGENT #2
Come on. They both have their uses.
(winks)

GUS DUNCAN
(crabby but indulgent)
Yeah yeah I get it.

The FBI agent walks away.

GUS DUNCAN
(sotto voce)
You oughta know, Wheeler.

Ron Kriskovic chuckles grimly.

RON KRISKOVIC
What you mean is, you don't want
our buddy Josh to ever look at
another computer as long as HE
lives.

GUS DUNCAN
Yeah, that's what I mean.

Gus and Ron look watch the agents bring out items and finally
walk Josh out past them.

GUS DUNCAN
Bye Josh.

JOSH LEOPOLD
Bye.

He stumbles as a cop prods him roughly.

Black screen.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Josh Leopold, now in a rumpled suit, stands beside his
unremarkable lawyer. Josh's mother, RONA LEOPOLD, dowdy and
clueless, sobs silently into a kleenex. IVAN LEOPOLD, Josh's
graying father, sits downcast at her side, trying to comfort
her. Josh's sister, JONQUIL, age 14, smart, cute, and loyal,
leans forward tensely, vigilantly, radiating defiance.

JUDGE
(droning on)
...It may take years to fully
assess the damage this one young
person has wrought on our defense
systems and on global financial
institutions.

(to Josh)
You call yourself a hacker. That is
a new term, and an apt one, because
you chopped away at our sustaining
resources with no concern for the
people you hurt.

He leans forward, glaring at Josh.

JOSH LEOPOLD
All I did was reveal
vulnerabilities that...that...

JUDGE
Shut up! Stop pretending you were
doing your victims a favor.

Josh subsides. Jonquil scowls.

JUDGE
Mr. Leopold, you're young. And I'm
sorry to say, you will still be
young when you get out of prison.
That's because my hands are tied by
the law as to how many years I can
keep you away from the public. But
before I sentence you, I want to
deliver a message to you, and to
any of your ilk who think they can
play fast and loose with our lives,
our security, our money, and our
future.

(points at Josh)
You have gone where you do not
belong. You have invaded and
damaged important records and
files. You have accessed
confidential data vital to the
safety of the United States of
America. I could use the word
traitor, but we have not been able
to prove that you gave any
information to our enemies.

JOSH LEOPOLD
(mumbles)
I am not a traitor.

JUDGE
Shut up. For the next thirteen
years, you will be a guest of the
highest security facility in this
nation.

You will not be allowed within twenty feet of any electronic device. Not a computer. Not a cell phone. Not a land line telephone. Not even a calculator. You, Mr. Leopold, are a catastrophe waiting to happen. And I promise you, it will not happen on my watch.

Josh listens blankly. His family looks on in dismay. His mother mops her eyes. But in the back of the courtroom, a small group of young, tattooed, pierced hackers stand and raise their fists, stick out their pierced tongues etc., cheering defiantly.

HACKERS

Josh is the Man. Keep the faith, Josh etc.

They make arcane hand signals that indicate their various hacker affiliations. Watching them, a slight smile spreads over Josh's sweaty face. The bailiffs wrestle the protesting fans out of the courtroom as cameras follow the action.

CUT TO:

EXT. - BUSY AMSTERDAM STREET - DAY

The hustle and bustle of a big city street; store signs communicate that we are in Amsterdam. A few turns past the iconic red light district down some seedier streets brings us to a counter-culture neighborhood. A storefront bears a sign that says in Dutch and English "Computer Repairs" and beneath it in English, Dutch, Asian languages: "Buy and Sell Parts".

INT. CLUTTERED AMSTERDAM SHOP - DAY

At the back of the shop is a door. Behind the door is another room. Inside, edgy young hackers and their stoned girlfriends/boyfriends are gathered around a giant, bulky monitor. Lying about are battered, extremely menacing-looking desktops. Cell phones are everywhere, including the floor. Crazy nests of wires, proms, motherboards, hard drives etc., piles of written code, tapes and CDs litter the place.

Presiding over the room is a large poster --- a blown-up candid of a childish Josh talking with Steve Jobs. Crude lettering beneath proclaims NEVER FORGET. A small shrine is made of computer innards and wire.

The hackers count down in accented English:

HACKERS
(in unison, counting on
their fingers)
Three, two, one.

One of the hackers with "Y2K You" tattooed on his hand full of rings, reaches out and pushes "Enter" on a battered, dirty keyboard. A moment of breathless silence as all gaze at a screen we cannot see. Suddenly a cheer goes up from the hackers. They high-five each other.

CUT TO:

INT. U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Sitting at his monitor, a typical early 2000s bureaucrat startles and then peers closely at his computer. A window pops up showing a bare buttocks. On one cheek is written FREE. The other cheek says JOSH.

Following the buttocks, a crazily gyrating young woman appears. She sticks out her pelvis, her tongue, then pulls up her top to bare her breasts --- and vanishes.

BUREAUCRAT #1
What in the...

Pull back to show the whole roomful of bureaucrats scratching their heads.

BUREAUCRAT #2
Uh, is there any way to run that
again?

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE FORTUNE 100 OFFICE SUITE - CONTINUOUS

A sexy executive assistant, all legs and Gucci heels, is checking out her perfect, glossy fingernails while business leaders confer in the background. We see the FREE JOSH buttocks and impish girl crawl across her monitor. It catches her eye but she only gives a little frisson of irritation and turns away to see her nails better in the light.

CUT TO:

INT. COLLEGE LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

We see many computers all bearing the FREE JOSH message. A scraggly cheer breaks out in the library.

CUT TO:

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE MAIN SHOWROOM FLOOR

Dozens of computers suddenly flash the message. Some of the nerds watching cheer as other shoppers pause and gawk.

As the cheering dies away...

CUT TO:

Josh, head brutally shaved, enters a grim, soulless high-security prison. Escorted by dour guards, he descends by steel-walled elevator into the bleak depths. A heavy metal door slams in his face as he gazes out its small, barred window. The last thing we see are his haunted eyes.

The scene dissolves. We descend, drowning, into an undulating, gelid matrix. A blurred, claustrophobic subterranean landscape pulsates with vicious snarls, threats, thuds of beaten flesh, cries of pain. The depths grow darker, turn deep indigo, then finally black. We hear labored breathing as if through a tunnel or diver's gear.

Panting up, then fades gradually.

Silence.

EXT. ISOLATED PRISON GATE - GRAY EARLY MORNING

Josh Leopold, years older, exits the prison yard in a rumpled, outdated suit, holding a small leather bag. An old car with his father, Ivan, at the wheel has been waiting. It starts, jerks into motion, pulls up in front of Josh and stops. Ivan, grayer and frail-looking, gets out and grabs Josh in his arms, tears spilling from his eyes.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Hi, Papa.

Ivan Leopold says nothing. He looks deep into Josh's weary eyes, fondles his face.

IVAN LEOPOLD

Come home, my son. Your sister is waiting.

Ivan hugs his son clumsily. He takes the bag, fumbles with the car trunk.

JOSH

I'll get it, dad.

Josh throws his bag into the trunk, slams it shut.

INT. CAR - DAY

Josh and Ivan get into the car. The doors close with a hollow, empty thunk. They sit beside each other, silent, uncomfortable.

IVAN LEOPOLD
 (starting the car)
 We'll stop on the way and visit
 Mama's grave.

Josh nods. The car follows the road out of the prison complex and onto a highway.

IVAN LEOPOLD
 Mama... she never stopped loving
 you or believing in you.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 I... wish I could have said
 goodbye.

IVAN LEOPOLD
 It's better you remember her the
 way she was. Not like at the end.
 (beat)
 But they should have let you visit
 her.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 I never broke any rules. I always
 did what they told me... I taught
 math to the other prisoners. I...

IVAN LEOPOLD
 Aaah... what do they know from a
 mind like yours?
 (beat)
 A waste. All of it.

Josh gazes grimly out the window.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 I killed her.

IVAN LEOPOLD
Cancer killed her.
 (shakes head in dismay)
 It's all in the past now. We have
 to live.

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE PRISON - DAY

The car drives into the gray landscape, taillights disappear.

EXT. FREEWAYS AND CITY STREETS - DAY

As the car drives, Josh looks out the window like an alien visiting earth. He gawks at digital billboards and modern cars, buildings, ads, styles.

EXT. JOSH LEOPOLD'S HOME - DAY

The car drives down a lower-middle class street and stops at a modest one-story house. The paint is worn, and the garden is overgrown. Josh gets out and looks around.

JOSH

I don't see Mama's rose bushes...

Ivan comes up beside him.

IVAN

They died, all of them. We tried to care for them, but only she had the touch...

Josh takes the suitcase from Ivan's hand and they ascend the stairs to the front door. Ivan opens it.

INT. JOSH LEOPOLD'S HOME - DAY

Josh and Ivan enter, and a cat comes meowing up and rubs against his leg. Josh bends to pet it as his sister JONQUIL runs into the room. Jonquil has grown into a beautiful young woman --- unconventional, with inner strength and honesty. Joyous, she hugs Josh. Josh pulls back a little; he cannot help his Asperger's aversion to closeness. Jonquil smiles understandingly and releases him.

JONQUIL

Now I can be happy.

She looks at Ivan and smiles.

JONQUIL

It's so good to have you here again, Josh.

IVAN LEOPOLD

(to Josh)

Your sister is being considered for an fellowship at Stanford. What an honor!

Ivan smiles proudly and affectionately at Jonquil.

JONQUIL
Oh Papa, lots of people are being
'considered'.

JOSH
When do you find out?

JONQUIL
Sometime in May.

IVAN
She's in the finals from thousands
of applicants.

JOSH LEOPOLD
(in Russian to Jonquil)
Congratulations!
(in English to Ivan)
At least one of us makes you proud.

JONQUIL
Oh, stop it! Papa is proud of you
too.

JOSH LEOPOLD
What's to be proud of?

JONQUIL
Of...your brains. And your
potential.

Josh laughs bitterly.

IVAN LEOPOLD
I'm proud of you both. Mama and I
had brilliant kids
(beat)
--- all three of you.

Jonquil looks downcast.

JOSH LEOPOLD
I know you wish it was me that died
instead of Sergei, papa. I wish it
too.

JONQUIL
Josh!!

Ivan shakes his head and tries to hug Josh, but Josh walks
into his room. Jonquil and Ivan look at one another
helplessly.

IVAN

It will take time. It has been for
him the deepest pain.

INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM - DAY

The bedroom is exactly as Josh left it --- a nerd/geek's teenage bedroom. Posters of Transformers, sci-fi heroes and superheroes. Posters of John von Neumann, Richard Feynman, Alan Turing.

Josh has to "touch" the door frame in a certain way before he enters. He also does a few more OCD things like stand in the center of the room and turn each way. He surveys himself unhappily in the mirror. Then turns the mirror to the wall. He walks to the desk, his face reflected in a large, out-of-date monitor.

Josh sits on the bed and looks around.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

CUT TO:

INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM - DAY

The room is much the same but decorated with more childish "technology" from the 1980s/90s. Josh's mother, RONA, younger and pretty, shows Josh, age about 12, a new outfit she has bought him. The outfit is hopelessly loud and dorky.

RONA LEOPOLD

See what I bought you at K- Mart
Josh? Is stylish, no?

Josh surveys the new clothes.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Wow! Thanks Mama. I like it.

RONA LEOPOLD

Get dressed and come have breakfast
so you're not late to school.

Eagerly, Josh lays the new clothes on the bed and starts to dress.

CUT TO:

INT. JOSH'S MIDDLE SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Josh, in his new clothes, is being taunted and mocked by a gang of bullies.

BULLY #1
Hey! It's Axl Rose!

BULLY #2
Where'd you find that getup, the
Salvation Army?

The bullies laugh, and one of them trips Josh. Josh sprawls amid his notebook papers. A couple of bullies grab Josh and haul him to his feet.

BULLY #1
He's gotta touch every locker he
walks by 'cause he's bug-fuck nuts.
Here Josh, use your head.

The bullies hoist Josh and bang his head against every locker. Another kicks his notebook across the hallway.

BULLY #2
Commie bastard! Traitor!

They watch laughing as Josh picks himself up, nose bleeding. Bully #1 is sporting a bunch of fighter pilot gear.

JOSH LEOPOLD
(fighting tears)
You'll never fly a jet. You're way
too stupid.

BULLY #1
Oh yeah? I'm smart enough to beat
the crap outta you.
(defiant)
And I will too get jets!

JOSH LEOPOLD
(through blood and tears)
You'll fly if your farts can get
you airborne.

Bully #1 socks Josh, who falls. The bully kicks Josh when he's down. The others laugh, and quickly sober as the bully looks around menacingly.

CUTE GIRL
(giggling)
You guys, that's not very nice.

The bully and his buddies close in, and wail on Josh.

END FLASHBACK

CUT TO

JOSH LEOPOLD'S BEDROOM - PRESENT DAY

Josh opens the obsolete laptop on his desk, wipes dust away with his sleeve. He turns on the computer and tries to type.

JOSH LEOPOLD
(to himself)
They took it all.

Josh goes to his closet and takes out an old Halloween jack o' lantern full of toys. He throws the toys out, removes the bottom and strips away the orange vinyl. A CD is beneath the vinyl.

At the sound of feet scraping outside his door, he stuffs the CD into his shirt.

Ivan taps, then opens the door.

IVAN LEOPOLD
I'm making for us lunch Josh. Come have to eat with your sister.

JOSH LEOPOLD
I will Papa. Give me a minute or two.

Ivan nods and closes the door. Josh reaches into his shirt, takes out the CD and looks at it lovingly.

JOSH LEOPOLD
(whispers)
Hello gorgeous.

INT. PAROLE OFFICE WAITING ROOM - DAY

A receptionist sits at the front of a stark, fluorescent room with metal folding chairs. Men and women parolees, who have obviously had a hard time in life sit on the chairs waiting. A few wives and children have accompanied the men; the kids run around and play with toys they brought. Some of the men thumb through tattered sports magazines.

Various officials walk in and out past the armed security guard. Every time a parolee's name is called, he has to pass through a metal detector and then be frisked by the security guard before being allowed into the office area.

RECEPTIONIST
Josh Leopold.

Josh rises in his ill-fitting suit, self-conscious and nervous.

RECEPTIONIST

Room 134.

Josh walks through the metal detector. The laconic security guard then frisks him, and Josh recoils at the man's touch.

SECURITY GUARD

Stand still.

After being frisked, Josh is waved down a hallway.

SECURITY GUARD

134 is second right.

Josh looks straight ahead and walks down the bleak hallway, pausing before Room 134. He opens the door.

KEN SEVERSON, the parole officer, looks up.

KEN

You're to knock before entering.

JOSH LEOPOLD

I.. I'm sorry.

KEN

Close the door and knock.

Josh closes the door, waits a second and knocks twice.

KEN

Okay, come in.

Josh enters. He stands, uncomfortable.

KEN

(gesturing)

Have a seat.

Josh sits on the folding chair in Ken's office. Ken flips through a file, reads, looks at Josh, reads again.

KEN

(still reading)

You're currently living with your father and sister at 1618 Monte Vista, correct?

JOSH

Yes sir.

KEN

That's a big favor your dad and sister are doing you --- letting you move in with them.

JOSH

Yes. It is.

KEN

You're aware of that, are you?

JOSH

Yes.

KEN

You've been away a long time. It's going to be awkward for them at first. And for you. That's to be expected.

JOSH

Uh huh.

Ken looks keenly at Josh.

KEN

Is that what you've noticed?

JOSH

No. I mean, it's going okay.

Ken observes Josh for a few moments while Josh looks straight ahead.

KEN

Are you complying with the agreements you made as to your limited internet use.

JOSH

Yes sir.

KEN

You realize any violation will result in your being forbidden to use a computer at all.

JOSH

Yes sir.

Ken types a few things into the computer. Josh bites at a hangnail, extremely uncomfortable. Ken leans back and tries to be more informal.

KEN

From what I see here, you were a very bright computer student. So what made you turn to the dark side? You could have had a great career...

Josh looks even more shut down and uncomfortable.

JOSH LEOPOLD

I wanted to prove the systems.

KEN

Prove? You mean like, test?

JOSH LEOPOLD

Yes, find the weak points, where they were vulnerable.

KEN

(cynical)

So you were actually 'helping' your victims by attacking them.

JOSH LEOPOLD

....by showing them where they were vulnerable. Wouldn't you want to know?

Ken stares at Josh.

KEN

You don't think what you did was wrong?

JOSH LEOPOLD

I've admitted that what I did was wrong. I served my sentence.

KEN

Do you feel your sentence was unjust?

JOSH LEOPOLD

No. Sir.

KEN

Well, we've all done things we regretted. Hopefully you've put that mistake behind you.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Yes sir.

KEN

We'll talk some more about this as time goes on.

Josh looks straight ahead.

KEN

Have you started your job search?

JOSH

Yes.

KEN

I'll be checking up on that. I don't expect high-tech companies to want you around once they do a background check.

Josh blinks.

KEN

I suggest you start with a run of the mill job till you get your feet under you. Here's a restaurant needs food service workers. They're willing to consider an ex-con.

Josh stiffens slightly at the words. Ken hands Josh a piece of paper.

KEN

Call them tonight.

JOSH

Okay.

KEN

Anything else you want to bring up? Any concerns?

JOSH

No sir.

KEN

All right.

He notes his watch, writes in the file folder, then closes it.

KEN

That's all for now. Stop at the desk and sign out before you leave. I'll see you...

(checks file)
... a week from today at 3:00.

JOSH
Okay. Thank you.

KEN
Take care of yourself, Josh.

Josh rises and exits. His jaw muscle is working, and a layer of sweat covers his face.

INT. PAROLE OFFICE HALL WAY - DAY

Josh walks past the security guard into the waiting area. He stops at the front desk. The woman behind the desk stamps a form and hands to it Josh.

Josh takes the form and walks outside.

EXT. PAROLE OFFICE PARKING LOT - DAY

Once outside, Josh takes a deep breath. Carefully, he walks at an even gait away from the building and out into the parking lot. Suddenly he stops and vomits. Panting, he gazes around and wipes his dripping mouth with his arm. A tough-looking bimbo sitting in a car nearby is watching him. She looks away quickly. Josh gets into his father's car and drives off.

EXT. JOSH LEOPOLD'S HOME - DAY

Josh drives up to his house, parks and gets out. He has to walk around the car and check the doors a couple of times to make sure it is locked.

INT. JOSH LEOPOLD'S HOME - DAY

Josh walks in the front door. Ivan Leopold is sitting in a worn out chair reading a newspaper.

IVAN LEOPOLD
How did it go?

JOSH LEOPOLD
Fine.

INT. LEOPOLD KITCHEN - NIGHT

Josh enters the kitchen and takes a Mountain Dew from the refrigerator. He drinks thirstily.

Jonquil is making a cup of tea.

JONQUIL
Have some tea, Josh. Here...

Josh takes the cup she extends.

IVAN
(from the living room)
You'll feel better, being on the
side of the law.

JOSH LEOPOLD
Whatever you say.

Ivan comes into the kitchen.

IVAN LEOPOLD
I don't mean to... but you did put
us all through hell, Josh.
Especially Mama.

Josh puts the tea down, wheels and stalks out of the kitchen.
Jonquil looks chidingly at Ivan.

JONQUIL
What a thing to say. Why do you
talk to him like that, Papa?

IVAN LEOPOLD
I say always the wrong thing.

JONQUIL
Why do you bring up Mama? He feels
bad enough already.

IVAN LEOPOLD
And I don't? With my phlebitis and
bad heart and God knows what else?
And now worries about him?

Jonquil puts her arms around her father. They both gaze in
the direction of Josh's room, looking worried.

INT. JOSH LEOPOLD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sitting on the bed, Josh rises and pulls the curtains shut,
making sure they're tightly closed. He takes his CD out of
the pumpkin and inserts it in the computer.

Moments later, a light from the booting computer infuses the
room with a ghostly glow that illuminates Josh's troubled
face.

He takes off his suit and throws it into his closet, then lies in bed in his saggy underwear, gazing up at the ceiling, his fists clenching and unclenching. Suddenly, he rises. He turns on cacophonous technomusic and dances jerkily alone. He catches his image in the mirror, grabs at his belly fat and grimaces at himself.

Josh rummages again in his closet and takes out an odd, quirky outfit and puts it on. He slicks back his hair. He sits at the computer and types.

Moments later, SOPHIE, a cute girl in her late teens/early twenties appears on the monitor. Her short hair and lithe, slender figure are feminine; she is dressed unconventionally with odd tattoos and piercings.

SOPHIE

(in Dutch)

Yah, who is it there?

(in English)

Oh! Josh! It's you!!! You are out?!

She turns and calls out behind her.

SOPHIE

(in English)

Hey everybody, it's Josh!

Other young people group behind her, smiling and waving. Josh is excited, nearly wriggling with delight. Another young girl, EMMA teasingly elbows Sophie out of the picture.

EMMA

Hi Josh! You missed me too?

JOSH LEOPOLD

I missed everybody.

EMMA

I was only six years old when you went to prison! My mother used to talk about you all the time.

Josh looks troubled at this.

JOSH LEOPOLD

How is your mother now?

EMMA

(frowns)

Oh she died. She took too much heroin.

(makes a motion of injection)

I found her too.
 (wrinkles her face)

JOSH LEOPOLD

I...

EMMA

Now we are alike you and me.
 Orphans.
 (calls out)
 Sophie? Where did you go? Come back
 and talk to Josh!
 (to Josh)
 What time is it there? You are up
 late.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Yeah, I have to be quiet.

Sophie returns.

SOPHIE

(flirting)
 You stayed up so late just to see
 us? You will be tired in the
 morning.

Josh flushes with delight at the sight of Sophie.

EMMA

Oh look at him turning red. Josh
 likes you best Sophie... I'm mad on
 you!

She pretends to beat Sophie up. Josh grins. The girls woo-woo
 and giggle. A boy comes to the screen.

BOY HACKER

Hey Josh, I need to ask you
 something about Javascript.

JOSH LEOPOLD

(shakes his head)
 I'm not supposed to talk about
 computers online.

BOY HACKER

Aw, come on man. one question.
 Blink once if it's yes and twice if
 it's no.

JOSH LEOPOLD

It's always no now.

SOPHIE

Leave him alone. They can put him back in prison just for talking to us.

BOY HACKER

Asw, they won't. He's too old to do any damage.

Josh scowls.

JOSH LEOPOLD

How come you want me to answer questions for you if I'm so old?

BOY HACKER

(angry)

Ha, you probably don't even know the answer. Your days are over. All your 'war dialing' and 'spanning tree' and ARPAnet. You're so Twentieth Century, man!

JOSH LEOPOLD

Fuck you.

BOY HACKER

Yeah, fuck you too, old geezer.

SOPHIE

(to the boy)

Leave Josh alone. Shut up!

JOSH LEOPOLD

He don't know how to change his own shorts.

BOY HACKER

Yeah, you probably piss and crap your shorts, old man.

The boy laughs.

SOPHIE

Ha, you could get in trouble just for talking with Josh.

BOY HACKER

Oh bull! Nobody gives a damn what he does anymore.

SOPHIE

I don't care what you think.
(to Josh)

Josh? I have to go get some sleep
We were having a party all night.

She stretches provocatively and yawns.

BOY HACKER
Yeah and she sleeps with ME!

Sophie shoves him away.

SOPHIE
(to Boy Hacker)
Go away! You stink!
(to Josh)
I hate him. Are you coming soon
here to Amsterdam to visit me?

JOSH LEOPOLD
I can't travel out of the U.S.
because I'm a felon. But you can
come here and visit me.

SOPHIE
Yes! Can you send ticket?

JOSH LEOPOLD
Sure!

Sophie waves the others away.

SOPHIE
(in Dutch)
Get lost!
(to Josh)
I want to talk alone with Josh.

The others laughing, depart and Sophie puts her lips up to
the monitor and says something inaudible.

Josh laughs.

SOPHIE
(secret smile)
Don't tell. It's a secret. Bye!

At a noise outside, Josh instantly clicks off the computer.
Ivan opens the door and walks in, looks around.

IVAN LEOPOLD
What are you doing dressed up? Are
you going somewhere?

JOSH LEOPOLD
No. I'm fine.

IVAN LEOPOLD
I heard voices. Who are you talking
to?

JOSH LEOPOLD
Nobody.

IVAN LEOPOLD
It was those Dutch weirdos, wasn't
it? You're not to have anything to
do with them.

Josh looks stoically ahead.

JOSH LEOPOLD
I said hello. It's no big deal.

IVAN LEOPOLD
Watch out, Josh. They'll put you
back in prison.

JOSH LEOPOLD
I wasn't doing anything wrong!

IVAN LEOPOLD
Josh, you're my son and I love you,
but your sister is just starting
her life. If you do anything to
spoil her chances...

JOSH LEOPOLD
Oh for God's sake.
(anger growing)
It's always Jonquil this and
Jonquil that. I'm not dead, you
know. Yet.

IVAN LEOPOLD
Of course not. I just...

Ivan comes forward to hug Josh, but Josh turns away.

IVAN LEOPOLD
What are you wearing?

JOSH LEOPOLD
Clothes.

IVAN LEOPOLD
You look like a weirdo from 1970s.
You want people to laugh?

Josh closes his eyes and grits his teeth.

IVAN LEOPOLD

All right, all right. I get out.

Ivan leaves. Josh sits alone staring into the dark.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A chic Silicon Valley watering spot, noisy and trendy, filled with young hipsters and entrepreneurs, lawyers, real estate tycoons, all schmoozing and imbibing. A pretty girl enters the bar and air-kisses a couple of friends. She gives a man a "secret look." He picks up his tie, which is shaped like a shark, and flips it at her. Laughing, she makes a "call me" signal.

Drinking a Mountain Dew, Josh stares out at this scene from the door to the kitchen.

BEGIN MONTAGE

As the evening wears on, Josh works busing and washing dishes, and cleaning up spills etc. People talking, eating, toasting each other. People get drunk, spill champagne. Somebody tries to break dance and falls. As he Josh watches everything around him with a blank stare. He is the ultimate outsider. Occasionally somebody comes up and tries to shake his hand, drunkenly friendly. A young man asks Josh to take a picture of himself and his girl kissing. Josh turns and strides out.

END MONTAGE

INT. JOSH LEOPOLD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Josh sits at his computer and types on the keyboard. Moments later, Sophie appears, sucking on a lollipop, looking delicious herself.

SOPHIE

(intimate voice)

Hey Josh!

JOSH LEOPOLD

(grins)

I went to a party tonight. Lots of startup billionaires there. They were all shaking my hand.

SOPHIE

Really? Oh wow, I am not surprised to hear.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Sophie, I've gotta see you in person. This is not enough. Can't we get together?

SOPHIE

I wish I was there with you right now...

(smiles)

I wish I was sitting in your lap.

Somebody in the background bursts out laughing.

JOSH LEOPOLD

(to Sophie)

Who's listening in?

(shouts into screen)

Hey get the hell outta there!!

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ivan and Jonquil hear Josh shouting. They look at each other. Jonquil frowns.

JONQUIL

(calls out)

Josh? You okay?

No answer. Ivan puts his head in his hands.

IVAN

I am worried for him. He is again with the hackers.

JONQUIL

Oh no. How do you know?

IVAN

I know. They are somewhere in Europe. Maybe Amsterdam. I listen at the door.

JONQUIL

Poor Josh.

She puts her hand over Ivan's.

INT. JOSH LEOPOLD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Josh is sitting stiffly in his chair, upset.

JOSH LEOPOLD

(to Sophie)

Why are you staying with those low
lives?

SOPHIE

But Josh, I live here. We are all
like brothers and sisters.

(beat)

They pay you a lot, where you work?

JOSH LEOPOLD

Everything I make goes to the
government.

JONQUIL

(pouts)

What for?

JOSH LEOPOLD

To repair all the damage I did.
I'll never pay it off.

SOPHIE

But how can we be together then?
(mock worried)

JOSH LEOPOLD

I'll think of something.

Suddenly Sophie is yanked away, and GEERHAARD, a tall,
muscular young guy in a "beater" shirt with long hair and
tattoos, sticks his face in front of the camera.

GEERHAARD

Hey old man, leave this girl alone
or I kill you. She is seventeen,
you fuckin' convict. Pervert. Go
away!

Josh recoils. Sophie breaks away and comes back to the
monitor.

SOPHIE

Josh, this is only my... brother
Geerhaard. He is very controlling
of me.

(glares at Geerhaard off
screen)

I will call you back.

The monitor goes blank. Josh stands up and paces. He goes to
the center of the room and does his OCD thing, touching
corners etc.

INT. HACKER APARTMENT - DAY

Geerhaard and Sophie are arguing.

SOPHIE

(in Dutch)

You're going to spoil it all. I told him you're my brother. If he goes away we'll never get anything.

GEERHAARD

I can't stand that creep. Putting his greasy pervert eyes all over you.

SOPHIE

Baby, the only eyes I care about are yours. I promise.

She kisses Geerhaard. He holds her away and gazes at her curiously, analytically.

GEERHAARD

What is going on in that twisted little mind of yours?

SOPHIE

Think about it Geerhaard. That man is in love with me.

GEERHAARD

Ugh! That makes me want to puke.

SOPHIE

What won't he do for me?

GEERHAARD

That guy will never earn money.

SOPHIE

No dummy. He can get into anything. A bank even... or somebody's credit card account. Somebody rich.

GEERHAARD

Like who?

SOPHIE

I don't know.

Geerhaard rolls his eyes, pretends to spit.

GEERHAARD

Americans.

Sophie laughs.

INT. GUS DUNCAN'S CAR - NIGHT

The night is quiet. Gus sits at the wheel watching Josh's house. As he watches, the lights inside go off --- except for Josh's bedroom. Gus takes a deep breath, shakes his head.

GUS DUNCAN
(to himself)
I hate computers.

Ron Kriskovic suddenly sits up from the back seat, where he has been sleeping. He yawns.

GUS DUNCAN
You get your beauty sleep out,
Sunshine?

Ron checks his watch: 1:15 a.m.

RON KRISKOVIC
Tell me somethin', Gus. Are you
going to keep tailing this little
bastard for the rest of your life?

GUS DUNCAN
(staring hard at the light
in the bedroom)
No tellin'.

RON KRISKOVIC
(stretching)
How about you lemme try talkin' you
out of it.

GUS DUNCAN
(still staring)
Be my guest.

RON KRISKOVIC
First of all, there are a million
guys out there now hacking and
planting their viruses and worms.
All over the world. They're as
common as horseflies.

GUS DUNCAN
Boys with toys.

RON KRISKOVIC
If only they were.

GUS DUNCAN
This guy's different.

RON KRISKOVIC
Look Gus, you're entitled to your opinion. But frankly, nobody's too worried about a has-been hacker from the nineties.

GUARD
Well they oughta be.

RON KRISKOVIC
...and another thing.

GUS DUNCAN
Yeah?

RON KRISKOVIC
There's no motive. He did his time, he grew up.

GUS DUNCAN
If you think that, then you don't know him.

Ron looks at Gus with irony and a little pity.

GUS DUNCAN
Let's just say, it may come in handy one of these days to know where Josh is and what he's up to.

Ron gets out and comes around, gets into the front seat.

RON KRISKOVIC
Well, right now I need to piss, and I need to eat. Let's go.

Gus doesn't respond; just keeps staring.

RON KRISKOVIC
Buddy, the word from up top is to lay off him.

For a long moment, the two men look into each other's eyes.

RON KRISKOVIC
Just cause you're retiring, don't think they can't still lean on you.

GUS DUNCAN
Hey, I've got an investment in this guy.

He cost me a marriage chasin' him
all over hell and gone. My kids
still don't talk to me... Right
now, I think of Josh as my
retirement hobby. Some take up
golf...

Ron laughs and shakes his head.

RON KRISKOVIC

(laughs)

Whatever floats your boat, Pal.
We've all got a few lost years.

GUS DUNCAN

(laughs grimly)

Decades.

(gazes sharply at Josh's
window)

Mark my words, he's up to
something.

RON KRISKOVIC

Don't let him get to you.

Gus starts the car.

GUS DUNCAN

(sighs)

Anyway, thanks for keeping me
company on my 'lonely vigil.'

RON KRISKOVIC

Don't mention it. But next time,
can we just have a brew and watch
the game?

Gus laughs sardonically.

GUS DUNCAN

Deal.

The car pulls out and disappears into the night.

INT. TRENDY BOOKSTORE - DAY

A sign announces:

Tonight 6 p.m. - 8 p. m.

Howard Portius speaks on his book, *Warfare's New Horizon*.

A mixed group: skeptical literary types and right-wingers,
gazing suspiciously at each other. HOWARD PORTIUS speaks at a
small lectern in the front of the room.

Portius is commanding, aristocratic, late sixties, dressed in military fatigues, lace-up boots.

Josh, standing amid the shelves, pretends to read, but is actually listening to the speaker.

A nearby flyer states:

Billionaire Howard Portius retains the steely, take-no-prisoners resolve that made him a fearsome warrior in Vietnam and later, a ruthless corporate raider. Scruples are not his strong point: winning is.

PORTIUS

Never has the United States of America faced a greater menace than we do today. For that reason, Americans must be prepared to set aside certain laxities --- some call them 'liberties' --- but our own liberty itself is at stake. The enemy is here, now, and he is at our throats. Our very survival is at stake.

SARCASTIC HECKLER

Achtung, Herr Portius, what about that little scrap of paper called the Bill of Rights?

Portius ignores the heckler. A store security guard wearily gazes elsewhere.

HECKLER #2

You're exercising your right to free speech right now. Under your laws, you wouldn't even be permitted to speak!

HOWARD PORTIUS

(points at heckler)
Under my laws, YOU sure as hell wouldn't!

The security guard bestirs himself and moves on the heckler, talks to him for a second and moves away. He resumes staring, chewing gum.

HOWARD PORTIUS

We can't keep our heads in the sand and survive. Today, real Americans are soldiers, each and every one of us on a vital mission. They may call us vigilantes, they may call us...

(gestures with amusement
at the obscene sign of a
protestor)
...unprintable names. They may even
call us criminals. But one day our
descendants will thank us. The
future belongs to the bold. God
bless America.

Some of the small audience rise, applauding, shouting God Bless America. Others hiss and boo. A sign "Gott Hilf Amerika" is waved. Josh lingers, awaiting his chance to speak with Howard Portius. Two of Howard's serious-looking bodyguards move in on Howard as he descends the lectern. Josh makes his way toward Portius.

JOSH LEOPOLD
(speaking through the
bodyguards)
Mr. Portius, I enjoyed your speech.

HOWARD PORTIUS
(nods)
Thank you.

Josh has to crab-step to keep up with the striding Portius and his bodyguards.

JOSH LEOPOLD
Do I understand you to mean that
breaking the law isn't immoral if
it's done to defend the country?

HOWARD PORTIUS
(pauses to speak to Josh)
I prefer you use the word 'save.'
'Defend' minimizes the threat. I am
saying that each of us must act to
fulfill the duties of patriotism,
whether by doing battle in the
military or on the home front.

JOSH LEOPOLD
I understand.

HOWARD PORTIUS
(gazing hard at Josh)
You look familair. Do I know you?

JOSH LEOPOLD
You may. Josh Leopold.

Howard Portius gazes intently at Josh, the wheels turning. A look of recognition appears on his face.

HOWARD PORTIUS

I trust you're on our side, sir...
this time.

JOSH LEOPOLD

I always was on 'our' side.

HOWARD PORTIUS

(weighing Josh's words)
You know, I believe you.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Thank you, Sir. That means a lot.

Josh's eyes fill with tears. Howard pats him on the shoulder.

INT. LIGHTSPEED HISTORICAL VENTURES HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Deceptively spartan, tucked away in an obscure corner of an industrial park, the headquarters could be any one of a million companies --- manicured lawn, a rectangular, nearly windowless building, curved sidewalk, unimpressive, empty lobby. One man sits at a reception desk. A couple of nondescript armchairs and meaningless magazines on a glass coffee table. Paul and Greg sit on a cheap, tacky sofa.

GREG

(sotto voce)
Where are they hiding all that
venture capital?

PAUL

Maybe it's all about looking frugal
these days. No fancy furniture, no
massage therapists.

Greg lifts an eyebrow cynically.

Clive Hennisbarger and Anatoly Shalamov appear, with Josh Leopold.

ANATOLY SHALAMOV

Heyyyy, Paul, Greg, nice to see you
again.

They pump hands all around.

GREG

Uh... quite a setup you folks
have....

Anatoly laughs out loud. Greg looks uncomfortable.

CLIVE

Unlike some startups, we'd rather put our capital into technology and hiring the best people.

GREG

When do you launch?

CLIVE

You tell us. We've got the beta version up and running flawlessly. As far as we're concerned, we could start selling product tomorrow.

GREG

Great!

PAUL

We can have the campaign ready to go by the end of May.

ANATOLY SHALAMOV

Then we have our launch date.

He indicates the data center and they all start walking.

ANATOLY SHALAMOV

Let us give you the 'grand tour.'

CLIVE

The game "Distant Origins" uses photonic nanotechnology, many times faster than electronic. That's why the visuals are so rich. One day soon electronics will be as obsolete as vacuum tubes and kerosene lanterns.

GREG

My family had a kerosene lantern. It always worked when the electricity went out.

PAUL

Thanks for sharing that, Greg.

CLIVE

Of course there are still elements we don't fully understand, such as quantum unpredictability.

GREG

En Anglais?

PAUL

Please don't tell me the characters
in the game can make decisions on
their own.

CLIVE

(laughs)
That wouldn't make it much of a
game.

ANATOLY SHALAMOV

Ha ha. It's hard enough getting
people around here to make
decisions on their own.

All enter a large fluorescent-lighted bare room and seat
themselves on metal chairs.

ANATOLY SHALAMOV

(points to a black box off
to one side)
You may not believe it, but this is
one of the fastest computers in the
world.

GREG

You're kidding. So small?

ANATOLY SHALAMOV

(grins)
In our world, size does not matter.

They all chuckle.

ANATOLY SHALAMOV

Wanna go to France --- about 30,000
years ago?

GREG

Beam me up!

CLIVE

At that time man was on the way to
creating cave art and hafted tools.

GREG

Hafted?

PAUL

They'd learned to attach blades to
handles. Big step forward.

ANATOLY SHALAMOV

Hafted weapons put the laws of
physics on your side.

Anatoly picks up an unhafted flint tool and hurls it with surprising strength at the soundproofed wall. It hits the wall and clatters to the floor. Then he takes a mean-looking flint knife attached to a crude handle and hurls it at the same wall. It thunks deep into the wall with great force and quivers menacingly.

PAUL

Ouch!

Anatoly chuckles modestly. Greg glances uncertainly at the knife. Clive sees and grins to himself.

CLIVE

Hafted weapons plus team strategy
made us lethal hunters.

PAUL

...allowing us to probably
elimi++++nate our fellow humans,
the Neanderthals.

CLIVE

Well... that's still a matter of
speculation.

PAUL

... plus wipe out the European
buffalo, the woolly mammoth, the
gant ground sloth, and countless
other species.

Greg is embarrassed.

GREG

We humans were badasses from day
one, heh heh.

ANATOLY SHALAMOV

That's why Man is so successful.

PAUL

... as are rats and cockroaches.

Everybody is silent.

PAUL

It seems that every discovery we
make, we find a way to kill with
it.

ANATOLY SHALAMOV

I can see why you feel that way...

Paul is on a tear.

PAUL

(uncharacteristically
emotional)

The wheel, fire, gunpowder, flight,
atomic power, biology, computers.

GREG

Whoa buddy.
(to the others)
He's takin' over.

CLIVE

Of course there have been countless
benefits to the human race. The
computer has...

PAUL

(interrupts)

Dependence on computers is our
Achilles heel. For every benefit,
they create a new way to wage war.

GREG

(sotto voce to Paul)
Unplug, bro!

PAUL

(to the group)

Sorry.

ANATOLY SHALAMOV

(turning to the computer)

Well, Paul, you should love this.
Our holographic characters can
speak an authentic 'primitive
language,' along with every other
language on the planet, of course.
With subtitles.

(indicates the headsets)

They put on headsets.

Holographic figures emerge.

GREG

Shееit!

EXT. PREHISTORIC FOREST - DAY

Virtually approaching a Cro-Magnon village, with characteristic huts. The Cro-Magnons speak their proto-language, translated by subtitle.

CRO-MAGNON MAN #1
 (handing a tool to
 another)
 Hekk, vindga meiði. [This edge is
 keen.]

CRO-MAGNON MAN #2
 Veit hvers hann af rótum renn.
 [This is the night of the dead.]

The characters move into a formation and chant around a fireplace. A young man and young woman dance provocatively to primitive rhythms. Suddenly, the attack begins. Another tribe invades the enclave and the demo game vividly and bloodily plays out using stone tools. The warring sides decimate one another in bloody combat with weird sound effects. Following the battle, sabre tooth tigers and huge wolves move in to scavenge the carcasses.

LATER

EXT. LIGHTSPEED HISTORICAL VENTURES HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Paul and Greg are walking out together.

PAUL
 Sorry if I stepped in it there.

GREG
 No worries.

Josh exits the building behind them and quickly catches up.

JOSH
 (to Paul)
 Hey Paul. Could I talk to you a
 minute?

PAUL
 Absolutely.

Paul and Josh walk off to one side.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 I... I've been telling my father
 and sister about you, the
 advertising... and they want to
 meet you. I was wondering if you'd
 like to come to dinner Friday
 night? It's the Jewish Sabbath.

PAUL
(a little uncomfortable)
Uh, this Friday?

JOSH LEOPOLD
Or, uh... next, if you're busy.

PAUL
Actually Friday's fine. Sure.
That's very nice of you...

JOSH LEOPOLD
I'll text you directions.

PAUL
Thanks Josh. Bye.

The two walk toward the parking lot. They do not notice Gus Duncan and Ron Kriskovic sitting in a car parked a short distance away.

GREG
What was that about?

PAUL
I just got invited to dinner at the happy hacker homestead.

GREG
Wow.

PAUL
Why me?

GREG
Simple. You're the creative director. Josh was blown away by the ads... he told his dad and...

PAUL
Yeah.

GREG
(thinks)
I've been doing a lot of thinking about stone age women...

PAUL
(grins)
Really? *That* kind of thinking?

GREG
I'm afraid so.

PAUL

Seek help.

They laugh.

INT. LIGHTSPEED HISTORICAL VENTURES DATA CENTER - LATER

Anatoly and Clive are playing basketball with a tiny net and tiny basketball. Josh stands nearby.

CLIVE

(to Anatoly)

We really ready to launch next month?

ANATOLY SHALAMOV

Why not? We could launch right now.

CLIVE

Hey Josh, you mind if I ask you something kind of personal?

JOSH LEOPOLD

No.

CLIVE

.....do you ever get the urge to hack something? Just to see if you still can? I'll be honest, I did some hacking way back when.

JOSH LEOPOLD

The truth? Systems today are as full of holes as a lace handkerchief.

Clive looks knowing.

JOSH LEOPOLD

It's almost too easy to slice through a firewall. They wouldn't even know I was there.

CLIVE

In and out at the speed of light.

JOSH LEOPOLD

But now, I want to use my talent only.... for America.

CLIVE

(grins)

Atta boy! Don't fuck with the U.S.A.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 We've got to make the world
 understand that American hands are
 at the controls.

Josh shoots a basket with a force that nearly disconnects the basket.

INT. LEOPOLD FAMILY HOME - EVENING

Josh opens a door to see Paul standing in the doorway, holding a bottle of wine. Paul walks in. Ivan and Jonquil greet him. Paul stares a moment too long at beautiful Jonquil.

IVAN LEOPOLD
 Welcome, Paul. Sit down.
 (takes the wine and looks
 at it)
 Thank you for this.
 (to Jonquil)
 Jonquil, take his coat.
 (gestures to table)
 You see, we're all ready. I cooked
 for you something special. Brisket!

JONQUIL
 (taking Paul's coat)
 Dad's brisket is famous!

IVAN LEOPOLD
 My wife used to cook this recipe.

A table is set up for the Jewish sabbath with candles, bread etc. A movie is playing on the TV. Paul stops and stares.

PAUL
 Quest for Fire!

Jonquil grins at him.

JONQUIL
 You've seen it?

PAUL
 It's one of my all time favorites.

JONQUIL
 Mine too!

They stare at each other and laugh.

PAUL

The great thing about that movie is how they show prehistoric times the way they probably were.

JONQUIL

No dinosaurs, no British accents....no slick ad campaigns....

She looks at Paul mischievously and he pretends to sweat, tugs at his collar. They laugh.

IVAN LEOPOLD

(from kitchen)

All right everybody. We can start.

JONQUIL

Since Mama passed away, Papa insists on making sabbath dinner. It sort of keeps her alive for us.

All gather around the table.

IVAN LEOPOLD

Even if you're not Jewish, the Sabbath ceremony nourishes the soul. This ceremony brings us to our spiritual center, no matter how off course we have gone.
(glances at Josh)

Paul is shy. Ivan smiles at him.

PAUL

Well thank you. My soul needs all the nourishment it can get.

Jonquil rises and begins to perform the blessing over the candles.

LATER

All are talking.

IVAN

(to Paul)

So Josh tells me you're an advertising genius....

PAUL

(laughs modestly)

I'm no David Ogilvy, believe me.

IVAN
Who is this, Ogilvy?

PAUL
Oh, he's sort of the god of
advertising.

IVAN
You are married, Paul?

PAUL
Er...not yet.

IVAN
So you help out your family...

PAUL
Sure. And my brother's still in
college. I help him a little too.

IVAN
That's what a family does. Help
each other.

JONQUIL
What else do you like to do?

PAUL
Actually my dream job is digging up
prehistoric relics in a desert
somewhere. I'm a frustrated
archeologist.

JONQUIL
Why frustrated? Why don't you do it
then?

Paul shrugs.

PAUL
You can't always live your fantasy.

JONQUIL
Why not?

JOSH LEOPOLD
Look where that got me!

There is an uncomfortable silence.

IVAN LEOPOLD
(to Josh)
You miss what put you in prison?

JOSH LEOPOLD

I don't *miss* it. I was making a joke. It was a long time ago.

IVAN LEOPOLD

Look at all the people your behavior hurt. Including us, your family.

JONQUIL

(to Ivan)

Daddy, Josh suffered the most.

IVAN LEOPOLD

(to Paul)

...and we're off! Welcome to a Jewish home. An argument a minute.

LATER

Jonquil plays the piano and sings a sweetly sad Russian song. She has a beautiful voice.

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM - LATE THAT NIGHT

The phone rings in the dark. Paul, alone, gropes for it.

PAUL

What? Hello...

(beat)

Clare! How are you?

CLARE'S VOICE

I woke you up. I'm sorry.

Paul sits upon an elbow. He would rather be asleep.

PAUL

No...not at all.

CLARE

I just... I thought you were going to call when you got back from dinner tonight.

PAUL

I'm sorry. I meant to... I just came home and fell asleep in my clothes.

He is in his pajamas. He looks at the clock. 11:34.

CLARE
 (not buying it)
 That's okay. It happens.

PAUL
 I... I've been... it's just...

CLARE
 I understand.

PAUL
 Hey, come on...

CLARE
 Bye.

The phone clicks off. Paul stares into space.

PAUL
 Oh hell.

He turns over and back to sleep.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - DAY

Josh Leopold and Howard Portius are walking across the bridge. The panoramic beauty of the San Francisco Bay is spread out before them, but they take no notice. Josh's long hair blows in the brisk wind. Howard Portius is ramrod straight and simply but elegantly dressed.

HOWARD PORTIUS
 I confess, Josh, I was more than a bit shocked when I got your email.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 Why?

HOWARD PORTIUS
 As I'm sure you know, my personal email address is extremely confidential, known only to a few trusted friends...

JOSH LEOPOLD
 (smiles modestly)

HOWARD PORTIUS
 ...and now to you, of course.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 Mr. Portius, your email is extremely secure. That's why I used it to contact you.

HOWARD PORTIUS

All right, Josh. I will let your invasion of my personal network pass for now. What is it you wanted to talk about here?

JOSH LEOPOLD

The middle east.

HOWARD PORTIUS

What about the middle east?

JOSH LEOPOLD

I'll give you a thought problem.

HOWARD PORTIUS

A thought problem? Go ahead.

JOSH LEOPOLD

If nineteen knuckleheads with boxcutters can bring down the World Trade Center, think what one very skillful hacker can do with a very fast machine and a little privacy.

HOWARD PORTIUS

You mean destroy the communications networks of terrorists and the countries that support them? I like that idea.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Child's play. We've hacked the terrorist networks to pieces already. It doesn't do more than inconvenience them temporarily. Or worse, it gives them the chance to feed us false information. No, what I'm talking about is what this country would love to do, but can't.

HOWARD PORTIUS

You're speaking in riddles.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Sorry.

HOWARD PORTIUS

Just tell the truth. What are you proposing?

JOSH LEOPOLD

Victory.

Howard Portius stops and looks at Josh incredulously.

JOSH LEOPOLD
Nuclear. Victory.

HOWARD PORTIUS
What are you talking about? A dirty
bomb? A suitcase bomb?

JOSH LEOPOLD
That's so Nineties... or is it
Fifties...?

HOWARD PORTIUS
(a frisson of irritation)
I don't like these kinds of games
Mr. uh...

JOSH LEOPOLD
Neither do I. I like submarines.

HOWARD PORTIUS
Oh. You can make a submarine go?

JOSH LEOPOLD
I can make it go... BOOM.

Howard Portius flinches at the word "boom."

Beat.

HOWARD PORTIUS
Get your crazy ass out of my sight
before I call the cops. I should
anyway.

Josh doesn't move.

HOWARD PORTIUS
(starts to turn away)
Anyway, that's impossible.

JOSH LEOPOLD
I despise that word.

HOWARD PORTIUS
You realize that I can report you
for just saying this, and you'll go
straight back to jail.

JOSH LEOPOLD
That puts me totally in your hands.

HOWARD PORTIUS

H...how do you... how can you...

JOSH LEOPOLD

It's simple. I go where the knowledge is.

HOWARD PORTIUS

B...But the firewalls....?

JOSH LEOPOLD

(laughs, dripping with scorn)

Firewalls. They should call them fire NETs, they're so leaky.

HOWARD PORTIUS

I see.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Sometimes I deposited small pieces of code within the systems I visited, just to be sure I could find my way in. I call this code my grizzlies. They just hibernate away, like bears until they're needed. Then I wake them up.

HOWARD PORTIUS

You're trusting me with an awful lot of information, I'm warning you.

JOSH LEOPOLD

I do trust you, Mr. Portius.

He stops walking, looks out over the Bay, and faces Portius.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Last week I started waking up my grizzlies. And like bears do, they woke up hungry. For data. So.... I sent them on a hunt.

HOWARD PORTIUS

A hunt.

JOSH LEOPOLD

They have now gobbled up the technical specifications and security codes for the control apparatus of one of our nuclear subs.

I've already downloaded key U.S.
wartime communications protocols.

HOWARD PORTIUS

On your own computer? You have that
stuff?

JOSH LEOPOLD

Oh God no. They keep a pretty close
eye on my hardware and software.
It's on a computer at my job.

HOWARD PORTIUS

Just like that? America's most
vital, closely guarded information.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Just like that.

HOWARD PORTIUS

You, sir, are a very dangerous man.

JOSH LEOPOLD

As are you.

Josh begins to pace and gesticulate, caught up in his vision -
--- and his boasting.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Of course I had access to this
information years ago, but I
couldn't think of anything to do
with it. I could have erased or
corrupted it, of course but what
would be the point? I really do
love my country.

HOWARD PORTIUS

What did you do?

JOSH LEOPOLD

I'm not about to give away all my
trade secrets, Mr. Portius. Just
know that I have the tools I need
at my fingertips.

He looks at a sunbeam shining down on the bridge.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Try catching THAT.

He passes his hand through it, snatching at thin air.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Light. Impossible to capture, yet quite simple to harness. Photonics.

HOWARD PORTIUS

And once you've 'harnessed' it?

JOSH LEOPOLD

Think of your TV. Your remote control uses infrared pulses to turn the TV on and off, right?

HOWARD PORTIUS

Yes....

JOSH LEOPOLD

Well, I can use photonic pulses to control the systems on a sub. I can initiate the launch, activate the sequences, confirm all passwords and identities. From wherever I am.

HOWARD PORTIUS

Hack a nuclear submarine?

JOSH LEOPOLD

The proper term is crack. I can take control of the system and deny access to anybody but myself.

Just then, Josh and Howard are overtaken and passed by two U.S. sailors in uniform, holding hands with two girls, lighthearted and happy to be on liberty. Josh and Portius watch pensively. One sailor turns and salutes a smiling "thank you" for letting them pass.

HOWARD PORTIUS

But wouldn't the crew simply abort the launch? Even scuttle the ship....

JOSH LEOPOLD

They won't because they can't. Anyway. they won't realize what's happening until it's too late. They will be taken over. Incommunicado. Prisoners on their own ship.

HOWARD PORTIUS

That's insane!
 (stops and looks
 quizzically)
 You're sure of all that?

JOSH LEOPOLD

And of course our men wouldn't be injured in any way. I'm not about actually killing anybody.

HOWARD PORTIUS

What's your game? Hold the world hostage?

JOSH LEOPOLD

The game is brinksmanship... or leadership... or power, whatever you want to call it. As an individual, I can do what the government doesn't dare.

They reach the end of the bridge. Howard is about to speak, but Josh speaks first.

HOWARD PORTIUS

Why me? I won't take part in your sedition.

JOSH LEOPOLD

If you want to call it that.

Howard Portius raises his eyebrows expectantly.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Why you? Because first of all, I need a secure network, which you have. It actually took me days to defeat your security system. That's high praise.

Howard Portius listens without expression.

JOSH LEOPOLD

And I need a place to work.

HOWARD PORTIUS

Why should I supply you with resources?

JOSH LEOPOLD

Because you cae. Because you want to reclaim the U.S. government from the sellouts and traitors holding it hostage. You want to preserve the American dream. I've read your books, and I agree. We're under assault as never before.

Howard looks at him, thinking.

HOWARD PORTIUS

We are that.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Terrorists would never hesitate to do this to us, if they could. And someday soon, they will have that ability.

HOWARD PORTIUS

You're preaching to the choir.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Our chance to act is now. Imagine if Hitler had been stopped in 1930. Or even 1939? Why should we cling to diplomatic niceties that have never worked?

Howard Portius looks into the distance.

HOWARD PORTIUS

I love this country. More than life, more than principles.

JOSH LEOPOLD

...and you can see the truth behind the lies. The 'diplomacy'... the situational ethics. I want to make sure that we will never have to grovel for oil again.

Howard Portius pauses, thinking.

JOSH LEOPOLD

I'm no military man, Mr. Portius. I need the benefit of your experience and knowledge.

Howard Portius thinks, watching Josh, looking up at the bridge around them.

HOWARD PORTIUS

I'll let you know. And when I make my decision, it will be final.

They come to the end of the bridge.

JOSH LEOPOLD

When I went to jail, I swore to go straight, stop hacking.

Howard looks at Josh keenly.

JOSH LEOPOLD

I had not been out for a week when the Towers came down. I lost friends.

HOWARD PORTIUS

As did I.

JOSH LEOPOLD

...and I was so sure, afterwards, that we were gonna take those bastards out. We go into Afghanistan. We go into Iraq. All the time I'm thinking, NOW we'll get Al Qaeda. Every day there's another plot, another threat, another suicide bombing. How long do we wait?

Howard Portius looks into the distance, thinking hard.

HOWARD PORTIUS

You're naive if you think even a nuclear bomb will scare away Al Qaeda.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Maybe it won't. But it will prove to them once and for all that when they sow the wind, they reap....

HOWARD PORTIUS

(interrupts)
The firestorm.

For a beat, neither speaks.

HOWARD PORTIUS

And afterwards?

JOSH LEOPOLD

For you, and for America, utter deniability. For me....

They look at each other.

JOSH LEOPOLD

I would need your help to leave this country for a safe destination.

HOWARD PORTIUS

Yes, that would probably be wise.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 In the aftermath of the
 ...detonations, I can slip away.

HOWARD PORTIUS
 A new identity....

JOSH LEOPOLD
 I'll leave you to figure that out.

INT. GUS DUNCAN'S CAR - SIMULTANEOUS

Gus is at the wheel. He nearly gets rear-ended as he slows and cranes his neck to watch Josh and Howard Portius walking on the bridge, then watches them disappear in the rear view mirror.

GUS DUNCAN
 (to himself)
 Oh my my, what have we here?
 (to an irate motorist who
 has flipped him off)
 Yeah, yeah, keep your shirt on
 (mutters to himself)
 Asshole.

He drives along with traffic. Seconds later he flips the car around in a death-defying maneuver and gets going the opposite way, looking up and down the walkers on the bridge. But Josh and Howard have disappeared.

EXT. DRIVEWAY OF BEAUTIFUL BIG SUR RESORT -DAY

Paul and Clare come up the driveway in her car. Clare is at the wheel. Paul is leaning back with his eyes closed.

INT. CLARE'S CAR - DAY

CLARE
 Okay, you can open them now.

PAUL
 (looks around, stunned)
 Wha...what is this place? Where are
 we?

CLARE
 Some little dive I heard about...

She stops the car.

PAUL
 Awww, baby. What have you gone and
 done? You can't afford this place.

CLARE

I broke open my piggy bank.

PAUL

You said we were going to a motel in Monterey. At least let me take care of this.

CLARE

I won't hear of it! This is my treat, all the way.

She leans over and kisses him. Paul kisses her, then turns and looks out the window, obviously feeling guilty as hell. The magnificent resort is pure luxury. As soon as they pull up at the door, a uniformed doorman hands them out of the car. An impeccably dressed bellman removes their luggage and whisks it away. The resort door opens the moment they reach it, and the two are ushered in by an elegant concierge.

CONCIERGE

Good morning.

Paul nods. Clare is practically skipping with anticipation. Each panoramic window looks down on the ocean.

INT. RESORT - CONTINUOUS

CONCIERGE

May I offer you refreshments before I show you to your suite?

CLARE

We're fine. That's all been arranged for.

They walk down a hallway into a luxurious suite.

INT. LUXURIOUS SUITE - CONTINUOUS

Paul gazes around, dazzled.

PAUL

All I can say is..... I'm speechless.

CLARE

Coming from you, that really means something.

(puts her arms around him)

I know how stressed out you've been. You needed a break from Josh Leopold and that whole high-maintenance account.

PAUL
You read my mind.

CLARE
Oh, you haven't seen the beginning
of how I can read your mind!

They fall upon the bed, kissing.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Paul and Clare are dressed for dinner, looking out on the
beautiful view as the sun sets.

CLARE
(putting her arm around
him)
Feel on top of the world yet?

PAUL
Oh, about ten stories above that.

They walk toward the dining room.

CLARE
You're certainly at the top of your
profession. My boss saw one of your
commercials on TV last night.
Everybody is talking about Distant
Origins.

PAUL
You want to know the truth?
Advertising has nothing I want.

INT. ELEGANT DINING SALON - CONTINUOUS

They seat themselves. Champagne appears.

CLARE
Come on. Most men would give
anything to be sitting where you
are.

PAUL
(grins)
That I won't argue with.

CLARE
You know what I mean.

PAUL
You know, in college I majored in
anthropology.

I always thought that would be my career. Working on this Distant Origins game brought back so many dreams I thought I'd forgotten. Goals I had before advertising came and got me.

CLARE

You mean you once wanted to dig up artifacts and... skeletons? All that?

PAUL

All that.

CLARE

What's stopping you? Go for it.

PAUL

It's not exactly a living.

CLARE

You think I care about things like that?

PAUL

How many anthropologists do you see here?

They look at the opulent surroundings and wealthy guests.

CLARE

I think they're all hanging out in the bar.

They laugh.

CLARE

Seriously, Paul, I want to say something...

(mugs)

Oh, here it comes, he thinks. No, it's not what you think. I just... I want you to know that I have no expectations.

PAUL

I...

CLARE

No. I mean I brought us here for a reason. I want us to enjoy each other with no strings attached.

PAUL
What brought this on?

CLARE
I've just been doing a lot of thinking. We're both young, both very involved with our careers. It's not the right time for...for settling down. Maybe someday.

PAUL
That's really how you feel?

CLARE
And...and I want us to be free. I mean we'll still go out... Still

She gestures to the surroundings

CLERK
...still have great times. After all, we share a lot of the same....tastes.

Paul grins.

CLARE
But from now on, let's just see each other on the weekends. So we have some independence in our lives. And if work interferes, or you have other plans...

Paul makes a gesture of protest

CLARE
...or I do...

Paul blinks.

CLARE
Then we can always take a raincheck.

Beat.

CLARE
Okay?

PAUL
I want whatever you want.

CLARE

Good. And now, we've gotten the serious part out of the way...let's have some FUN!

INT. PARKING LOT - LIGHTSPEED VENTURES - DAY

Paul arrives with advertising boards for the new campaign.

PAUL

(to receptionist)

You think it's okay just dropping in on him without calling first?

RECEPTIONIST

Oh Josh gets a kick out of the ad campaigns. He loves being in on the process. He just goes on and on about you guys.

PAUL

Well that's good to know.

The receptionist waves him through. Paul walks down the hallway, whistling confidently. When he reaches Josh's computer lab, he taps on the glass window. Josh looks up and starts a little. He doesn't look particularly glad to see Paul. He comes to the window.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Yes?

PAUL

Hey, it's me!

JOSH LEOPOLD

(puzzled)

Did we have a meeting scheduled today?

PAUL

Uh... no, I mean, I was in the neighborhood, I thought you might like to see some of the new ads.... Hey, I'll come back another time.

JOSH LEOPOLD

I'm sorry. Come in. I was just a little surprised. Nobody ever tells me anything around here.

PAUL

Hey, Josh, this is me. Did I just step on my dick?

Paul glances at the computer. Code is crossing the screen at a dizzying speed.

```
7/tcp Echo [95,JBP] localhost
discard 9/tcp Discard [94,JBP]
localhost  systat  11/tcp Active
Users [89,JBP] localhost  daytime
13/tcp Daytime [93,JBP] localhost
netstat 15/tcp Netstat localhost
```

PAUL

What the hell is that?

Josh is uncomfortable.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Just code. I suppose you've never seen that.

Josh shepherds Paul away from the computer.

PAUL

Well take a look at these. The second ad rollout....

Paul brings up the boards and tries to spread them out on the table, Josh looks over the ads, but is preoccupied.

PAUL

I can see you're not into this. Hey, man, I'm gone.

JOSH LEOPOLD

I hate to throw you out but... it looks like it's going to be another all nighter tonight.

Paul's attention is again arrested by the screen. Suddenly, his eye falls on Howard Portius's book, lying on top of a paper.

PAUL

Hey, you're not reading THAT drivel, are you? That asshole is dangerous. He's a classic paranoid....

Before Josh can stop him, Paul has picked up the book. Beneath it is a vivid colorful computer chart with a table of calculations:

Anticipated mortality: 2 million immed., another 500,000 in the first 48 hours. Following that, death rate will drop dramatically as US and UN emergency responders reach ground zero.

Circumference of lethal cloud: + or - 200 miles

Primary target: Riyadh; Secondary target: Damascus

PAUL

Wo, what's that, a scenario for a sci-fi movie?

JOSH LEOPOLD

(snatches paper away)

It's ...government projections in the event of a nuclear first strike. Portius asked me to do some research for a paper he's writing. You know Paul, you really are one nosy son of a bitch! Do I make you explain the books you read to ME!?

PAUL

Sorry.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Anyway, some of his stuff makes a lot of sense.

PAUL

Oh yeah, like pushing for nuclear war?

JOSH LEOPOLD

....in this day and age. Or don't you care about national security?

PAUL

OF course I care.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Your idea of terrorism is probably a competitor's ad campaign that breaks before yours.

PAUL

Fuck you very much.

Beat.

PAUL

Josh...

JOSH LEOPOLD

What?

PAUL
 (on impulse)
 Are we all right? I mean...

JOSH LEOPOLD
 Everything's fine. Just pressures
 of work. Look, I'm sorry.

Paul is leaving.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 Hey, Paul?

PAUL
 Yeah?

JOSH LEOPOLD
 Remember that bar we went to, "The
 Underbelly." The night your boss
 made you chauffeur me around?

Paul is a bit surprised at this sudden change.

PAUL
 Yeah?

JOSH LEOPOLD
 How about taking in that scene
 again? I could use a break. As you
 see, I'm wound up like a clock.
 ...I mean, unless you've already
 made plans with Clare.

PAUL
 No. We're uh, actually kind of
 ...cooling it for a while.

Josh looks at him sharply.

PAUL
 Her idea, not mine. We're confining
 ourselves to the weekends.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 Tomorrow then?

PAUL
 You got it.

Paul motions goodbye and leaves. As soon as Paul is gone, Josh
 opens his cell phone and dials.

INT. ROWDY COUNTER-CULTURE BAR - NIGHT

The bar is in full swing. Paul and Josh are playing chess.

JOSH LEOPOLD
You're not half bad at this.

PAUL
For an advertising guy.

JOSH LEOPOLD
Sorry I bit your head off
yesterday.

PAUL
All is forgiven.

Beat.

PAUL
Checkmate.

JOSH LEOPOLD
FUCK!

He studies the board.

JOSH LEOPOLD
How did I not see that coming?

PAUL
The only game more cutthroat than
chess is advertising.

JOSH LEOPOLD
And war.

PAUL
If you consider war a game.

JOSH LEOPOLD
You don't?

PAUL
If it is a game, it's a deadly one.

JOSH LEOPOLD
Then we play to win, right?

PAUL
Whatever you say...Heyyy!

Josh's sister Jonquil stops at their table in surprise. Her trendy pants and top show off her beautiful body.

JOSH LEOPOLD
What are YOU doing here?

JONQUIL
I happen to hang out here, which is perfectly legal now that I'm 21.
(she looks at Paul)
This isn't exactly your kind of place.

PAUL
What's MY kind of place?

JONQUIL
I don't know. Some elite San Francisco watering spot.....

PAUL
(looking at Josh significantly)
Oh we tried that once.

JOSH LEOPOLD
Does dad know you come here?

JONQUIL
Josh! What's wrong with me getting out a little?

A couple of heavily tattooed Marilyn Manson-like characters walk past.

JONQUIL
Besides, if YOU lived with Dad you'd know how much I need a break. So I came here with friends. Is that a crime?
(she pulls Paul to his feet)
C'mon, Paul. Let's dance.

Josh and Jonquil; begin dancing. Jonquil is very sensuous and Paul, initially a little inhibited, starts having a good time. Josh, watching from the table, is NOT HAPPY. He brusquely waves aside a couple of hacker-type guys who recognize him.

EXT. ROWDY COUNTER-CULTURE BAR - LATER

The bar is closing. Young people pour out into the street, noisy, capering around, calling on cell phones. Josh plods out with them, nerdy, resentful and remote. Paul and Jonquil are drunk, having way too good a time.

Jonquil catches Josh's displeased glance. She returns a humorously defiant "I'll do what I damn please" look and sticks out her tongue at him.

PAUL

Wo, I'd better take a cab home. I'm in no shape.

A few cabs are lined up on the street. Paul hails one.

JOSH LEOPOLD

(to Jonquil)
I'll take you home.

JONQUIL

But my friends.
(looks around, sham pouts)
I don't know where they are.
(calls out to nobody in particular)
Heyyyy.....friends.....

JOSH LEOPOLD

I'm sure they're not in any shape to drive either.

JONQUIL

(starts to climb into Paul's cab behind him)
Paul can drop me.
(to Josh)
Byeeee.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Jonquil.

But it is too late. The door slams and the cab takes off, leaving Josh standing alone in the street.

INT. CAB - NIGHT

Paul is trying to keep his hands off Jonquil, who is practically sitting in his lap.

JONQUIL

Come on, don't pay any attention to him. Josh is simply....weird.

PAUL

Jonquil, this is not right.

JONQUIL

Why? Because of JOSH? I don't see him in here.

She giggles and looks around and under the seat.

JONQUIL

Nope. No Josh. No dad either. Just us.

Paul gives in and kisses her. They embrace passionately.

INT. AD AGENCY - MORNING

Paul walks in, past the receptionist. Jeannie waves to him from her desk, smiling confidentially. Paul waves back.

GREG

Hey, how's it hangin'?

PAUL

You don't want to know.

GREG

Yeah? Well you got company in your office. Hint: Cup your balls.

Paul rounds a corner and sees Bill Bevins and Ralph Stukey, the agency CEO waiting for him, looking grim.

PAUL

(walking in)
What?

RALPH STUKEY

Paul, we got a call this morning from Josh Leopold.

BILL BEVINS

Three calls, to be exact, and he's pissed off as all hell.

PAUL

Oh no.

RALPH STUKEY

What gives? I thought you were buddies.

PAUL

We ran into his sister last night at a club.

RALPH STUKEY

And?

PAUL

And none of your business.

BILL BEVINS

Hey, fuck you. This agency is my business. This account is my business. I sweat blood over bringing this guy along and you fuck it up playing ass bandit with his kid sister.

PAUL

I dropped her off at her apartment because she was drunk....

BILL BEVINS

Because you got her drunk. God damn it, Paul. You know, we lose this account, and a lot of heads'll roll at this agency. And not just yours.

PAUL

Mine would be the first.

BILL BEVINS

You got that right.

RALPH STUKEY

Paul, it makes no sense to let your dick ruin your career. You got me?

Paul starts to speak.

RALPH STUKEY

No Clever comebacks. I mean it. Stay away from Josh Leopold's sister. And stay away from whoever else you're doing that you would not want me to know about.

PAUL

Fine.

BILL BEVINS

What is it with you? You've got Clare....

PAUL

I do not.

BILL BEVINS

Well then that's because of your own....

PAUL

Hey, man. My personal life is my business.

BILL BEVINS
Just don't make it the agency's
business.

PAUL
Anything else?

RALPH STUKEY
That's it.
(to Bill)
C'mon.

As they leave. Paul takes a deep breath, lets it out, shakes his head, and gets to work.

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Paul is watching the meaningless, babbling TV, pensive and unhappy. Finally he shuts it off, picks up the phone, dials, listens for a moment.

PAUL
Hi. Me. Sorry. Bye.

Paul hangs up, turns off the light, turns over, tries to sleep.

Beat.

Paul turns the light back on, gets up, uses the bathroom, gets himself a glass of water in the kitchen. When he walks back into the bedroom, he walks into an attack.

PAUL
What th...

Struggles, falling sound.

Black screen. Panting up.

EXT. PRIMITIVE FOREST - DAY

POV fleeing through a dense, dripping forest in agonizing slow motion. Glimpses of arms and legs reveal that the quarry is a young man. The feral grunting of an unseen pursuer crashing behind him fuels his panic. Giant lianas and primitive vegetation obstruct his path. Strange eyes peer from the foliage. As the assailant inexorably closes in, a cry of terror and despair is wrenched from the young man.

PAUL VOICE OVER
No. No, no, go away. No.

INT. A BARE ROOM WITH WHITE WALLS - TIME UNDEFINED

Paul sits up suddenly in a single bed, throwing off a thin, military style blanket.

PAUL
(shouts aloud)
No!

Silence. Paul looks around in disbelief, disoriented. He is still wearing his pajamas, but his beard shows that 24 hours have passed. He leans over the side of the bed and vomits. The door opens, a face looks in on him. A nondescript man enters with cleaning supplies. Paul watches helplessly.

PAUL
Who are you? Where am I?

The man does not answer.

PAUL
PLEASE! Help me.
(he both clutches and
shoves the man, who
nearly loses his balance,
but regains it and
continues cleaning)
Where am I? What happened?

Wordlessly, the orderly yanks Paul to his feet. Paul shuffles after him. He throws Paul into a bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Paul stumbles to a sink and winces under the antiseptic glare of the bright lights. A towel, soap and shaving cream are on the basin.

ORDERLY
Clean yourself up.
(the man extends a small
plastic disposable razor)
I assume you have the intelligence
not to try to weaponize this.

PAUL
(grabs razor, groggy)
I assume you have the intelligence
to go fuck yourself.

ORDERLY
Fresh clothing is on the bed.

The man leaves.

INT. LOWER FLOOR OF PORTIUS MANSION - LATER

Paul, wearing fatigue pants and a shirt, tugs at his door, expecting it to be locked. Instead, it opens suddenly and Paul tumbles back onto the floor. He raises himself on one elbow and climbs painfully to his feet. Peeking out the door, he sees a long hallway. Cautiously, he leaves his room, walks down the hallway. At the end is a flight of stairs. There is nowhere else to go. Paul stumbles up, into a giant, elegant living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF PORTIUS MANSION - SAME

Paul gapes. Through a large sliding glass door, he sees Josh and Howard Portius sitting on a large sundeck. Howard Portius catches sight of Paul, motions to Josh. They both rise and enter the living room through the sliding glass door.

PAUL

Who.... Where....

PORTIUS

Mr. Windom. Welcome. It appears that you received somewhat too large a dose of medication. For that I do apologize. It will wear off in time with no ill effects.

PAUL

Where am I?

HOWARD PORTIUS

You are my guest. I know this must be frightening.

PAUL

What have you done to me?

(to Portius)

Who are you?

(to Josh, accusingly)

This is a filthy piece of work.

JOSH LEOPOLD

September 11 was a filthy piece of work.

PAUL

What?!

JOSH LEOPOLD

Paul, you may not know what you know, but you know too much.

PAUL
 You lying little bastard. This is
 about your sister.

Paul tries to go for him. A bodyguard intervenes and
 restrains him. Portius waves an OK and Paul is held.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 The next time you refer to my
 sister, I will kill you.

HOWARD PORTIUS
 (calming Josh with a hand)
 Paul, why don't you sit down.

After a beat, Paul slumps into a chair. The guard hovers.

HOWARD PORTIUS
 (speaks to a servant)
 Bring Paul some ginger ale and
 crackers to settle his stomach.

PAUL
 I don't want your food.

HOWARD PORTIUS
 Accept that we have to keep you for
 a short period of time.

PAUL
 But why?

HOWARD PORTIUS
 It's a matter of national security.

PAUL
 You are a paranoid crank living in
 a bad war novel.

HOWARD PORTIUS
 Our nation does quarantine people
 when that is in the national
 interest. To protect our citizens.

PAUL
 Protect from WHAT?

HOWARD PORTIUS
 From terrorism.

PAUL

(jerks a thumb at Josh)
 Josh Leopold is protecting America
 from terrorism? Is this Alice in
 Wonderland or something?

BODYGUARD

Sir, can I shut this self-righteous
 little asshole's mouth for him?

Portius raises a hand indulgently to calm his bodyguard.

PAUL

I don't know what your game is, but
 you have fucked up big time,
 Mister. I'll be going.

He turns toward the sliding door onto the deck. The bodyguard
 moves swiftly to block his path.

HOWARD PORTIUS

Paul, surely you realize that we
 cannot just turn you loose.

Paul stares at Howard Portius.

PAUL

You're terrorists!

JOSH LEOPOLD

Ha! That's rich.

HOWARD PORTIUS

Until the recent attacks on
 American soil, I would have never
 been involved in ...depriving
 anyone of his freedom. But extreme
 danger mandates extreme tactics.

Paul watches him.

HOWARD PORTIUS

Have you ever lost somebody you
 love to terrorism?

PAUL

No.

HOWARD PORTIUS

I have. Others have lost much more
 than I. It's time for payback.

PAUL

What are you talking about?

HOWARD PORTIUS

Joshua is enabling us to strike at the middle east with our most fearsome and powerful weapon.

Paul stares, dumbfounded.

PAUL

And that would be...

HOWARD PORTIUS

A nuclear warhead.

PAUL

Who the hell do you think you are?

HOWARD PORTIUS

The guardians of this nation. Since other have abandoned that responsibility. It falls to us citizen soldiers.

PAUL

Vigilantes, you mean.

HOWARD PORTIUS

If you want to use that word.

PAUL

What you're planning would destroy the fabric of our country more than anything Al Qaeda could think up.

HOWARD PORTIUS

It's a bleak duty, and I do not relish it.

PAUL

I'll tell you who does relish it.

That psychopath.

(Paul points at Josh)

He's hijacked YOU!

The bodyguard gestures to Paul and looks questioningly at Howard Portius, but Portius shakes his head slightly.

HOWARD PORTIUS

(to bodyguard)

I have nothing to fear from this man.

(to Paul)

Some important processes are underway.

You visited Josh unexpectedly and saw things you should not have seen.

Paul looks around helplessly.

PAUL

Somebody's going to miss me.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Not for a while. I called your boss and requested that you work at Lightspeed. He was more than happy to oblige me. And since you've kept Clare at arm's length, she will not be bothering you either.

HOWARD PORTIUS

You don't seem to have many friends, Mr. Windom. You really lead a very selfish existence. You certainly don't have much to do with your family. Your father drinks, your mother whines. That pretty much sums up your childhood, does it not? You don't like relationships because you're afraid history will repeat itself.

PAUL

What are you going to do to me?

HOWARD PORTIUS

Good question.

(to the guards)

Perhaps Mr. Windom would like to rest for a while. This interactions has been quite stressing for him.

Two men grab Paul and wrestle him to the ground. He gets another shot as he struggles, and goes limp.

EXT. LIGHTSPEED HISTORICAL VENTURES HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Clare drives up and parks.

INT. LIGHTSPEED HISTORICAL VENTURES HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Clare enters with trepidation but determination. She walks into the spartan reception area.

CLARE

(to receptionist)

Uh... My name is Clare Cowan.

I'm a...an acquaintance of Josh Leopold.

RECEPTIONIST
I'll ring his office.

CLARE
I... I'm here looking for Paul Windom, from the ad agency. They told me he was here working on the ad campaign with Josh.

RECEPTIONIST
Oh Paul. No, I haven't seen him. You can ask Josh yourself.
(calls)
Well, he doesn't seem to be answering. Would you like to leave a message?

CLARE
I'll wait in his office...

RECEPTIONIST
I'm sorry, we can't allow unauthorized persons into the data center. I'll keep paging him.

Clare subsides impatiently into a chair.

Time passes. Clare goes back to the receptionist.

CLARE
No response at all?

RECEPTIONIST
I guess he may have stepped out.
(offers the phone to Clare)
Would you like his voice mail?

Clare shakes her head. She leaves the building in helpless angst.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

As Clare exits the building, Gus Duncan gets out of a car and approaches her.

GUS DUNCAN
Pardon me, Ma'am.

CLARE

(alarmed, backs up toward
the building)

Yes?

GUS DUNCAN

Ms. Cowan, my name is Gus Duncan. I was one of the policemen who arrested Josh Leopold back in the nineties.

CLARE

Has... Josh done something wrong?

GUS DUNCAN

You mean, do I think he's up to something?

CLARE

Is he?

GUS DUNCAN

I have never believed for a minute that Josh would go straight.

CLARE

My boyfr... my friend Paul, seems to be missing. He works for the ad agency handling the Lightspeed account. The agency wanted Paul to make Josh feel... accepted.

GUS DUNCAN

That's a tall order. How long has Paul been missing?

CLARE

I don't really know. We were...kind of taking a break from the relationship. Paul's office says he's working here, but the receptionist says he hasn't been here at all.

GUS DUNCAN

Did you speak to Josh?

CLARE

He's not here either.

GUS DUNCAN

Have you ever heard of Howard Portius?

CLARE

He's some industrialist...

GUS DUNCAN

He sold his company years ago for billions, funds right-wing causes. September 11 turned over a lot of logs and out from under one of them crawled Howard Portius, hunting terrorists, real and imaginary. Not long ago, I saw Josh and Howard together, it hit me real wrong. I'm an old gumshoe, and I gave a hunch that if you find Josh and Howard, you may find Paul.

CLARE

Paul's in trouble. I just know it.

GUS DUNCAN

Howard Portius has a little empire up in the Sierras, well-guarded by his private army of fellow nut cases, of course.

CLARE

Do you think Paul's alive?

GUS DUNCAN

Good question.

(at Clare's look of horror)

I apologize, Ms. Cowan. Damn me for thinking out loud.

Clare bursts into hysterical sobs.

CLARE

Call the police. We have to find him.

GUS DUNCAN

That may be a problem. I seem to be about the only cop who's still interested in Josh Leopold. He's gone mainstream. And there's more than that.

CLARE

What!?

GUS DUNCAN

Howard Portius still swings a lot of weight.

CLARE

I'll call the police. Doesn't anybody care that Paul is missing? That his life may be in danger?

Gus Duncan opens his cell phone and punches a speed dial button.

GUS DUNCAN

Ron? Can you get together right away? Josh is up to something.
(pause)
I wish I knew.

INT. LIGHTSPEED HISTORICAL VENTURES HEADQUARTERS - LATER

Ron Kriskovic pulls up. Clare and Gus are waiting for him in the parking lot.

RON KRISKOVIC

(to Gus as he exits the car)
This better be good.
(to Clare)
How are you.

GUS DUNCAN

Ron, this is Clare Cowan. Her boyfriend has disappeared. And she believes Josh and Howard Portius had something to do with it.

RON KRISKOVIC

That so?
(looks at building)
All right. Let's have a look see.

The three walk toward the building

RON KRISKOVIC

I've been kinda missing Josh anyway. There's been a creep deficit in my life lately.

Gus laughs. Clare is too anxious to laugh.

They enter the building. Ron flashes his badge to the receptionist.

RON KRISKOVIC

We're here to see Josh. Thank you.

The three blow right past the receptionist. As they approach Josh's office, he sees them through the window. He is affronted and angry.

INT. JOSH LEOPOLD'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

RON KRISKOVIC

Heyyyy Josh. You wanna tell us what you've been up to lately? Why am I so sure it's something evil?

JOSH LEOPOLD

You have no business here. I suggest you leave. Now.

GUS DUNCAN

We'll take that under advisement. Where is Paul Windom?

JOSH LEOPOLD

(to Ron and Gus)
I don't know.

GUS DUNCAN

Josh, stop your lying. I think you know where he is.

JOSH LEOPOLD

I do not.

RON KRISKOVIC

Looks like you didn't get your fill of prison, Josh. You're headed back where you came from.

JOSH LEOPOLD

You don't know what you're talking about.

RON KRISKOVIC

...where People like you belong.

RON KRISKOVIC

Why don't we just take you in and so a little questioning right here and now?

JOSH LEOPOLD

You're arresting me? What for?

RON KRISKOVIC

I'll think of something.

INT. POLICE STATION - DEEP NIGHT

Josh is being released from jail. He is alone. Only a skeleton staff of the police station is still around.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 (to a desk clerk)
 Where can I get my wallet and possessions?

DESK CLERK
 (jerking his thumb)
 Property's over there.

The clerk looks back to his paperwork, not interested in Josh any longer. Josh walks to a window, passes a ticket across the counter to an indifferent clerk. After a few seconds, his wallet and keys are returned to him. He walks wearily outside. At the curb, a car pulls up. At the wheel is Jonquil. Josh looks in at her, silently opens the car door, and gets in.

JOSH LEOPOLD
 So?

JONQUIL
 Josh, what is this all about?

JOSH LEOPOLD
 Don't ask.

Jonquil shakes the steering wheel in frustration.

JONQUIL
 Okay.

Beat.

JONQUIL
 You hungry?

JOSH LEOPOLD
 Yeah.

He looks out the window of the car onto the street, his face twitching as he tries to control his emotions. Suddenly Josh begins to cry in dry, racking sobs. The car's taillights disappear into the night.

INT. PORTIUS MANSION - MORNING

Serene and remote yet menacing. Ragged mist shrouds the Portius mansion in all its rustic isolation.

From a balcony, efficient, robotlike waiters are setting up an elegant lunch. Josh Leopold and Howard Portius are meeting.

HOWARD PORTIUS

(amused)

And what reason did they give for arresting you?

JOSH LEOPOLD

They guessed I had something to do with Paul Windom's disappearance. But they couldn't prove a thing. Naturally, I denied everything. I'm clean as a whistle. They certainly didn't have the inspiration to search my computer files for stray bits of defense department data. THAT is all safely hidden away in the development software for that ridiculous game, Distant Origins.

HOWARD PORTIUS

So THAT's where it is?

JOSH LEOPOLD

The best place to hide something is in plain view, as Edgar Allen Poe observed 150 years ago. Thank God the police don't read much Poe. Every character in Distant Origins contains a small mountain of U.S. Defense Department top secret code.

From above, the noise of Portius's guardian helicopters breaks the pristine silence. Howard Portius glances indifferently.

HOWARD PORTIUS

Nevertheless, the government is soon going to make a move. We have to be sure that the launch is irrevocably set in motion.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Oh, it is. The sequence should run by itself now, whether I'm around or not.

HOWARD PORTIUS

That's good, because we can't know what will become of us when they invade. We may not live to see the....outcome.

JOSH LEOPOLD
I, for one, don't plan to.

HOWARD PORTIUS
The country will need patriots.

JOSH LEOPOLD
It won't need me. Anyway
(looks down and around)
You seem pretty secure up here.

Below, Portius's small army of vigilante soldiers is drilling and patrolling. Howard Portius looks down. Not a muscle moves in his face.

HOWARD PORTIUS
I think it's time we get rid of our prisoner. He is provoking a great deal of interest, and it is focusing on you. That means it will soon focus on me. Paul has to go. And all evidence of him.

JOSH LEOPOLD
Whatever you say. Just keep me out of that. In fact
(Josh rises)
I need some rest.

Howard Portius motions to Josh.

HOWARD PORTIUS
Make yourself comfortable in the guest quarters. I'll have lunch sent to you.
(he begins to speak into his transceiver. Josh stops him)

JOSH LEOPOLD
Don't bother. I'll take a nap. When I wake up, perhaps we can have tea.

HOWARD PORTIUS
I look forward to it. You know, Josh, I get bored as hell up here. Having you around to talk to, a great mind like yours, has meant a lot to me. I'll be sorry when we part ways.

JOSH LEOPOLD
Me too.

HOWARD PORTIUS
...as we must.

JOSH LEOPOLD
I'll see you in a couple of hours.

HOWARD PORTIUS
Sleep well.

INT. PORTIUS MANSION - SIMULTANEOUS

Josh Leopold walks down the hallways to a sparse guest room. On the way he waves to a couple of guards.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Howard opens the door and looks out the hallways. When a scanning camera above is turned away, Howard exits and hurries down a labyrinth to Paul's room in another wing.

JOSH LEOPOLD
(to the guard)
I've got a few things to settle
with this guy.

GUARD
We're not supposed to....

JOSH LEOPOLD
This is personal. He was fooling
around with my sister. I have to
find out...

GUARD
(head motions)
Go on in.

As the guard hovers, Josh pushes into Paul's room.

GUARD
Need any help?

JOSH LEOPOLD
Naaa. He's practically comatose.

Paul is barely conscious. He bristles at the sight of Josh.

PAUL
Get the fuck out of here.

The door closes.

JOSH LEOPOLD

(hushed)

Get up.

(he looks closely at Paul)

How bad are you? Oh boy.

PAUL

What are you doing here?

JOSH LEOPOLD

I'm getting you out. Portius is planning to have you killed. He wants no trace of you here when the government invades. Get a hold of yourself, man. We've gotta run for it.

PAUL

Huh?

JOSH LEOPOLD

I'm working for the government. I'm a mole. I sold Portius a bill of goods. He thinks he's about to launch a nuclear sub.

Despite the danger, Josh bursts out laughing.

PAUL

He's not?

JOSH LEOPOLD

Go on.

PAUL

It's a hoax? The Grizzlies?

JOSH LEOPOLD

Oh the grizzlies. Cutting-edge nineteen nineties hacker technology.

Paul is dumbfounded.

JOSH LEOPOLD

What do you think, our country is a bunch of idiots? And why do you think I got out of prison early.

PAUL

I didn't know that. But your job....

JOSH LEOPOLD

That's real. And I'd like to live to enjoy some of that money. So stop looking stupid, man. Shake it out.

Paul stumbles to the bathroom and throws cold water over his face.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Howard's desire to hijack a nuclear sub and launch Armageddon is real enough. He's been putting out feelers all over the world. And with his money it's only a matter of time until he finds somebody. The CIA got wind of it and decided to insert me. Come ON, man. Walk. Walk.

(Paul stands and staggers)

JOSH LEOPOLD

Oh that won't do.

PAUL

Can't you get in touch with the cops?

JOSH LEOPOLD

No time. I thought you were safe for a while. These two obsessed cops had me arrested yesterday. You're lucky he didn't just kill you while I was in jail.

Josh laughs grimly.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Good old Gus and Ron. My two nemesisses.

(looks puzzled)

Nemesi? C'mon.

Josh picks Paul up and walks out with him. The guard starts at the sight of him.

JOSH LEOPOLD

I'm taking him upstairs. Mr. Portius wants to speak with him again.

GUARD

You sure you can handle him?

JOSH LEOPOLD

I'm fine.
 (to Paul)
 Walk, you bastard.

As soon as they are out of sight of the guard, Josh makes a detour down another hallway. They pass two guards who nod at Josh. When they are barely past him, one guard speaks sotto voce to another.

GUARD

That little prick gives me the creeps big time.

GUARD #2

Fuckin' A.

Josh and Paul hear. Josh does not respond. Paul is walking better, stumbling and staggering a little. Suddenly, they see a side door.

JOSH LEOPOLD

C'mon. This is as good as any.

Quietly they make their way out a side door.

EXT. PORTIUS MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Through a tangle of brush, they stumble. Paul is barefoot. Above, they hear guards talking amongst themselves, mere feet away. Down into the misty woods they descend, as thick vegetation tears at them.

JOSH LEOPOLD

It's only a matter of time till we're spotted. He's got sensors all over the place.

Behind them are shouts.

JOSH LEOPOLD

AND there they are.

PAUL

We're fucked.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Oh, I've got a few tricks up my sleeve.

PAUL

You do?

JOSH LEOPOLD
No, but it sounds good.

Terrified, Paul stumbles and struggles down the thickly wooded mountainside in the chilly mist, following Josh in a scene eerily reminiscent of the Distant Origins game. He stumbles, spraining his ankle, bloodying his foot. Paul picks him up, helps him limp along. By now there are pursuers crashing through the brush. Shots are fired.

They see a flash of machetes. The silent descent continues. Josh and Paul have a head start, but they are in deep trouble. They narrowly avoid a couple of pursuers through sheer luck.

At the bottom of the hillside, Paul and Josh reach Josh's car, get in and after a heartstopping moment of fumbling with the keys, start up and tear away. The mountain road is rutted, precarious, and shrouded in fog. With Josh at the wheel, they hare around the turns, nearly going over the edge several times.

They are pursued by cars and motorcycles. The tension builds as Josh drives grimly and Paul clings to the side of the car, nauseated and disoriented. The car finally emerges onto a freeway on-ramp and enters the afternoon rush hour. Dodging in and out, they lose their pursuers in the crush of traffic. Paul and Josh find themselves driving down Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley.

PAUL
We've got to go to the police.

JOSH LEOPOLD
You can do that honor. I've had a bellyful of cops.

PAUL
How did Howard Portius become a law unto himself in a civilized country?

JOSH LEOPOLD
We once trusted him. It was U.S. government contracts that made him rich.

PAUL
Can't win em all.

JOSH LEOPOLD

(explodes suddenly)

Go on back to your smug little ad agency world and let people who are willing to bloody their hands --- and their consciences --- try to keep you safe. Fight the dirty battles, the dirty wars for you.

PAUL

Hey, what brought that on?

JOSH LEOPOLD

You want to know why I really saved you?

PAUL

It wasn't because you think I'm a jewel in the crown of the human race.

JOSH LEOPOLD

I saved you because of my sister. She thinks the sun rises and sets on you. I'm sure that immature crush will wear off.

PAUL

I'm sure.

JOSH LEOPOLD

...when her own tastes mature. She will naturally prefer a man who is on her moral and intellectual level.

PAUL

Ouch. Thanks again.

JOSH LEOPOLD

But in the meantime, I don't wish to cause her any more pain than I already have. Perhaps by saving you, I can redeem myself for all that emotional anguish I caused her.

PAUL

It's nice to know I'm a means to an end.

JOSH LEOPOLD

Take it for what it's worth.

They arrive at Paul's condominium and Paul gets out, slamming the door hard. Josh drives away. He drives along a deserted roadway until he comes to some railroad tracks. He parks in some bushes by the side of the tracks. Then he opens the glove compartment and takes something out.

INT. LAW LIBRARY - DAY

Jonquil Leopold is studying. Suddenly her cell phone goes off. She looks around embarrassed and quickly answers, whispering in her hand.

JONQUIL

Hello? Yes this is she.

She listens for a few seconds.

JONQUIL

(loud)

What!? What are you saying?

In great consternation, Jonquil rises and flees without her books for the door of the law library.

EXT. LAW LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Jonquil runs outside and collapses onto her knees.

JONQUIL

Oh no. No. No. No.

She buries her head in her hands, wailing and sobbing, the cell phone thrown to one side. Curious bystanders pause at the sight of her.

EXT. PORTIUS MANSION - DAY

U.S. Agents are making their way in force up the mountain road toward the stronghold of Howard Portius. The guards make only a halfhearted and confused attempt to stop them, but the agents are inexorable. The agents burst through the door and confront Howard Portius, reading a book calmly on his couch.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF THE PORTIUS MANSION - SIMULTANEOUS

Agents and police swarm are all over the house, moving swiftly, securing the premises. Agents are seen questioning the bodyguards, whose behavior ranges from sullen and defiant to clueless to anxiously cooperative.

U.S. AGENT #1

Mr. Portius, Josh Leopold committed suicide a couple of hours ago.

He left a note detailing your complicity in an attempt to corrupt and the conspiracy and your part in it. It is my duty to place you under arrest.

Howard Portius turns a glare of icy scorn on Paul.

HOWARD PORTIUS

I am sorry to hear of Mr. Leopold's death. I do not know what that has to do with me. As to his note, time will prove that he was mentally unbalanced. He had a very vivid imagination.

The agents nod. One agent motions Howard Portius to his feet.

U.S. AGENT

Mr. Portius, I am going have to handcuff you. It's protocol.

HOWARD PORTIUS

(as he is handcuffed)

I understand. When may I notify my attorneys?

INT. AD AGENCY - MORNING

Paul enters, serious and remote. The other employees greet him, but Paul avoids their queries and walks straight into his office. Greg detaches himself and taps on Paul's door, opens the door.

GREG

Everything okay?

PAUL

How's it going, Greg?

GREG

Talked to Clare?

PAUL

Not your business?

GREG

Hey, man, you don't have to remind me of that. I just want you to know.

Beat.

GREG

She's been pretty distraught. She went out to Lightspeed looking for you. Said she was going to find you if it killed her.

Beat.

PAUL

She said that?

GREG

Yeah. You all right, man?

PAUL

It's a fucked up world, Greg.

Greg nods and leaves. Paul picks up the phone and punches the buttons.

PAUL

Hi, uh, I'd like to speak with Clare Cowan. When will she be back? Will you please tell her that I...that Paul called. Thank you.

He looks around, troubled, then attacks a stack of work. Bill Bevins walks in and sits down.

BILL BEVINS

Paul. How are you doing?

PAUL

Been worse. Hey, where's Jeannie?

BILL BEVINS

Laid off. The Lightspeed account is gone, you know. Kaput.

PAUL

What? Distant Origins? They're not launching?

BILL BEVINS

Nope. The systems are hopelessly corrupted. There's a ton of government computer code and specifications stored ...the government commandeered all of it after Josh committed suicide.

PAUL

Wait a minute. Josh said the whole thing was a hoax.

BILL BEVINS

What whole thing? He was a hacker,
he hacked. And he maliciously
ruined the software of his own
benefactors.

PAUL

He told me he was a CIA mole.

BILL BEVINS

What?!

PAUL

Jesus Christ.

BILL BEVINS

Almost sixty million in venture
capital down the drain. Hope you
like writing little flyers for shoe
stores.

INT. CLUTTERED AMSTERDAM APARTMENT - DAY

The hackers and their girlfriends are stoned, hanging out,
typing at the computers, obviously up to no good. Suddenly
the door literally jumps as somebody outside bangs on it.

HACKERS

Heyyyyy. What's up? Jesus Christ
man. Cool it.

When he opens the door, the Amsterdam police are standing
there, in full riot gear. The four male hackers and three
girls make a halfhearted attempt to conceal equipment, but it
is no use. The evidence of what they are up to is all over
the place. Reefers, hash pipes, porn, fast food wrappers,
illegal CDs and pirated code. Outside, the sirens of more
police cars as they pull up.

DUTCH POLICEMAN #1

(looks around in disgust)

Phew! They live like pigs. These
are somebody's children.

He notices a hypodermic syringe.

DUTCH POLICEMAN #1

(to the others)

Needles here. Don't touch anything.

DUTCH POLICEMAN #2

What did you expect? Bibles?

HACKER #2

Hey, we never did anything to hurt you, man, why you hate us so much?

DUTCH POLICEMAN #2

Because you're irresponsible and dangerous. And you're diseased slobs. You destroy things.

HACKER #2

We do a service. We find the weaknesses in the system.

DUTCH POLICEMAN #2

Yeah, you're saints. Remind me to thank you.

HACKER #4

Don't you bust in here and judge us, you fascist.

A senior police official walks up.

HACKER #1

Why are you here? What is this?

SENIOR OFFICIAL

There is word of a
terrorist plot put into
motion by your hero
there.
(gestures to the poster of
Josh on the wall)

HACKER #1

Hey, Josh is way cool.

DUTCH #1 POLICEMAN

Josh Leopold is dead.

HACKER #1

You're lying

DUTCH POLICEMAN #2

He shot himself in the head about ten hours ago.

The hackers jump to their feet in consternation.

HACKERS

No!

Two of the girls start to cry, very theatrically.

HACKER #1

This is a tragedy. But why do you bring the whole police force here?

SEXY GIRL

Maybe they want some pussy. They don't get any from their fat wives, they have to harass people.

She sashays away, goes to another hacker and kisses him, settles herself and lights up a cigarette.

HACKER #1

Josh Leopold killed himself, what does that have to do with us?

AMERICAN AGENT

Apparently Josh Leopold conspired with an American billionaire to hijack the systems of an American nuclear submarine and launch at least one nuclear strike against the middle east, possibly two strikes.

HACKER #1

That's crisp, man. Which subs?

AMERICAN AGENT

That's what we don't know.

HACKER #1

And you don't know when either.

AMERICAN AGENT

You got it.

HACKER #1

And what are we supposed to do about it?

AMERICAN AGENT

Nobody knows Josh Leopold like you do.

GIRL HACKER

Jurgen, tell the Americans to take care of their own problems.

AMERICAN AGENT

This is not an 'American' problem. If what Josh did was not a hoax, the death toll would be inconceivable. Innocent civilians.

GIRL HACKER

Maybe that will teach you Americans a lesson. You are the bullies of the world.

HACKER #2

Shut up. Don't you see, nobody knows when or how he did it.

GIRL HACKER

His grizzlies will do it for him.

AMERICAN AGENT

His WHAT?

GIRL HACKER

Wouldn't you like to know?

HACKER #1

He had these programs called grizzlies, like the bears, you know? That he put into some systems years ago. They hibernate like bears, in caves. He created caves for them too. It's really neat.

AMERICAN AGENT

Neat.

HACKER #2

Nobody knew they were there, man. For years and years. Then, he could hack in and wake up the grizzlies, give them commands to take over certain functions, or the whole system. It was way cool.

AMERICAN AGENT

How much do you know about these grizzlies.

HACKER #2

We kind of know how he did it, but nobody could do what he did. He was as smart as Einstein.

DUTCH POLICEMAN #1

And as evil as Satan.

HACKER #2

Don't diss the dead, man.

The policeman rolls his eyes.

AMERICAN AGENT

Well, right now you know a hell of a lot more than we do about Josh Leopold.

(to Hacker #1 and #2)

Feel like taking a trip to Washington?

HACKER #2

Cool!

GIRL HACKER

Can I come too?

HACKER #4

(shouting)

I don't care what happens to you Americans. Clean up your own messes.

HACKER #1

But innocent people may die. If Josh really did this, he was a monster.

AMERICAN AGENT

Thank you.

The hacker looks up at the poster-size photo of Josh Leopold on the wall. Then he sits down on the floor.

HACKER #1

I got to grieve, man. The world has lost a great mind.

AMERICAN AGENT

His great mind may have just pointed a nuclear missile straight at a whole civilization. And if you do not help, you will be a murderer too.

HACKER #1

You don't know if he did it....

AMERICAN AGENT

We don't. But we need you to help us find out.

The hacker shakes his head.

HACKER #1

What do you want me to do first?

EXT. AD AGENCY PARKING LOT - DAY

Paul and Greg are standing next to Paul's car. Paul is loading the trunk with papers, books, etc.

GREG

I wish you'd reconsider this, man.

PAUL

I've done a hell of a lot of reconsidering, believe me.

GREG

And quitting your job is the most positive thing you could come up with? I mean I know it was traumatic, what you went through, but....you've done a lot of great work here. You could make partner. Bevins said so himself. You've got a future.

PAUL

That's just it. I've got a future. I want to spend it doing something I love. Instead of just going through the motions.

GREG

So... you're heading back to school?

PAUL

I'm taking Clare to see the prehistoric cave paintings in Spain. Then I'll be going to graduate school in anthropology.

GREG

You take care.

Paul gets into his car and starts it.

EXT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Clare strolls around, thumbing through Paul's books. Paul is studying a map.

PAUL

They have some terrific Neanderthal sites in France.

CLARE

I can't wait.

PAUL
Really?

CLARE
Really.

He smiles. They sit together on the couch.

CLARE
(snuggling)
In your expert opinion, was early
man a good lover? Or was he just...
a....beast...

PAUL
Probably the same as today. Part
beast, part... evolved.

They move closer.

CLARE
Not too evolved, I hope.

They kiss.

INT. AMSTERDAM HACKER APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is silent, messy, empty. From inside we see the door knob turn, and a scrawny, very young teenage kid enters, looks around. He is scary smart. The kid spots and gathers porn magazines with obvious delight. He looks through the pile of grass and the hash pipes, lights himself a joint. Then his attention is caught by the computers. He sits down and begins to type at the keyboard, eyes wide. The porn magazines fall to the floor, ignored. The kid is totally absorbed in typing code into the computer.

KID
(clenching fist)
YEAH!

MUSIC UP

ROLL CREDITS. Outside the apartment window, lights gradually wink off as the whole city grid begins shutting down, purportedly as a result of the kid's hacking on the computer. By the end of credits, only one light is left burning, that of the hacker apartment.