

"OBLIVION"

Written by

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FADE IN

EXT - NORTH DAKOTA MISSILE FACILITY - NIGHT

A truck slams to a halt. Out of the back, eight SOLDIERS dressed in black jump out and rush around to the front. The words 'North Dakota, December 1978' appear SUPERScript across the bottom. The Soldiers are illuminated by a bright light, and they halt in surprise. We finally SEE what they see: a giant illuminated disk, shining lights on a blast door rising above the prairie, surrounded by an electrified fence. A sign on the fence reads 'Military Reserve. No Trespassing.' The SERGEANT in charge musters his courage.

SERGEANT

C'mon, guys. We got a job to do.

FIRST SOLDIER

Just what are we gonna do to that?!

While they stand immobile, the disk ends its light show, rises skyward, and zooms straight up until it's lost in the stars.

EXT - THE SKIES OVER TEHRAN - NIGHT

Captioned by 'Tehran, September 1976,' in SEQUENCE we SEE:

- A) Silhouetted against the stars, a commercial PILOT in a 707 notices an incredibly bright Disk to his left.
- B) Two Iranian F-4s, approach the area, at some distance.
- C) From inside the lead F-4, the distance to the Disk counts down on the Weapons Display as the PILOT fingers the trigger. Suddenly, all the avionics go out, and the F-4 begins to drop like a rock.
- D) The second F-4 makes a hard turn away from the Disk, as we WATCH the other Pilot fighting with his deadstick craft. The Disk launches a small bright red light that chases the second F-4.
- E) After falling six thousand feet, the F-4s systems miraculously come back on. The frightened Pilot turns his plane to follow the other retreating F-4. The small red light returns to the main Disk, where they 'join' to form one craft.

EXT - LEMONT, ILLINOIS - NIGHT

Captioned 'Near Argonne National Laboratory, Lemont, Illinois, September 1987,' we SEE two police OFFICERS as their squad car rolls beneath a street light. The driver of the squad suddenly slams on the brakes.

FIRST OFFICER

Holy shit!

SECOND OFFICER

What the hell?

From inside the vehicle, we SEE what they're seeing: a bright purple object slicing down through the clouds, like a plummeting plane on fire. It illuminates the clouds from within as it passes through. In CLOSE UP, we see the terror on both Officer's faces. Just as the object appears headed to crash in a clump of nearby trees, it levels out and goes racing to the north, parallel with the ground.

FIRST OFFICER

Did...did you see that?

SECOND OFFICER

No. (pause) And neither did you!

BEGIN CREDITS

The TITLE, 'Oblivion,' flashes off CAMERA RIGHT, mimicking the flight of the last UFO. The rest of the CREDITS follow, SUPER over single shots of dozens of actual UFOs. Centered below each is the 'official' explanation, each one less and less believable: 'Venus,' 'Mass Hallucination,' 'Flight of Birds,' and so on. The last three shots are STILLS taken from the three events just witnessed. Their explanations: 'Atmospheric Disturbance,' 'Equipment Malfunction,' and the last, after four blinks from the cursor, 'Unexplained.'

END CREDITS

INT - REVEILLE MODELS - DAY (2:00 PM)

We SEE a cute little 3D UFO, gleaming as it rotates. The CAMERA pulls back to show us it's only a rendering on a computer monitor. This is the temporary office of ARNIE KENN,

who is putting the finishing touches on the UFO model.

TOM (O.S.)

Hey, Arnie! Got a call on line three!

ARNIE

(into phone) Hello, this is Arnie.

TINA (V.O.)

Hiya, Arnie. It's Tina at Mac Hacs.
Say, I've got another assignment for
you, if you're interested.

While Arnie and Tina converse, we SEE Arnie adding name tags
to features on the UFO: 'Propulsion,' 'Maneuvering,' etc.

ARNIE

Well, thanks Tina, but I'm happy here.
You know I have an interest in -

TINA (V.O.)

Arnie, we need you on this one.
There's a high-profile court case
going on in Kansas City, and they
need a computer specialist.

ARNIE

You mean, in court?

TINA

Yes, in court. You'd be calling up
all their trial documents on some
kind of proprietary PC-setup.

ARNIE

Oh, I can't, Tina. I don't do Windows.

TINA (V.O.)

No kidding around, Arnie, this is
serious. We're talking double your
normal rate, plus a nice bonus at the
end. They asked for you specifically.

ARNIE

How long's it for?

TINA (V.O.)

Three or four weeks. We'll fly you out, get you a rental car, put you up in a nice hotel - first class all the way.

ARNIE

When would I have to start?

TINA (V.O.)

(takes a breath) Thursday?

ARNIE

Thursday? You mean tomorrow! What about the work here?

TINA (V.O.)

We can have somebody else replace you. I know this is unusual, but their regular guy took sick all of a sudden, and you're the one they want.

We SEE him type in 'Death Ray Control' in one area, then retype it as 'View Screen.'

ARNIE

When do I leave, tonight?

TINA (V.O.)

No, Thursday is just for your training. If you check out on their equipment, you fly out Sunday morning.

ARNIE

Three weeks...I dunno. My wife's birthday is in two.

TINA (V.O.)

Not a problem. She can fly out for the weekend. Look, we really need you on this. We'll owe you a big favor...?

ARNIE

But I have to find a dentist right away. Got a wicked toothache and nobody to see about it.

TINA (V.O.)

Hey, I can set one up for you. I have a friend who's a terrific dentist. I'll get him to see you tomorrow. He owes me a favor, anyway.

Arnie adds 'Crew Quarters' on another area.

ARNIE

I really should talk this over with Jane.

TINA (V.O.)

Sure, sure, I understand. But we need to give these lawyers an answer right away. Look, can you talk to her when you get home, and call me tonight?

ARNIE

Yeah, I s'pose I can do that.

TINA (V.O.)

Thanks, Arnie. You're a lifesaver.

ARNIE

(hanging up) Yeah, I'm a lifesaver. Whenever you're in trouble, just toss me in the deep end.

INT - REVEILLE MODELS - ANOTHER ANGLE

Arnie sticks his head above the cubicle's walls..

ARNIE

Hey, Doug? I got some bad news. Looks like Mac Hacs is switching me to another account. Today's gonna be my last day for awhile.

DOUG

But I thought you liked it here.

ARNIE

I do, but you know how it is with temp workers: a miracle worker today, but a memory tomorrow.

DOUG

Well, the important question is, have you finished the 'Sport Model'?

ARNIE

Take a look.

Arnie leads the way back to his cube, and they approach the screen. He uses the mouse to rotate it and display the insides.

ARNIE

With this new 3D program, the mold makers will be able to work directly off the file. They should have the models themselves rolling into the hobby stores within two weeks.

Two other workers, TOM and CHRIS, approach and look impressed.

DOUG

Wow, this is great!

TOM

So, what, you're bugging out?

ARNIE

Yeah, 'fraid so.

CHRIS

Shame you're leaving. I thought you liked working on UFOs.

ARNIE

(wistfully) Yeah, I did.

INT - ARNIE'S HOME - NIGHT (7:45 PM)

Arnie steps through the front door, and immediately the dog DUFUSS whines to go out and scoots through the crack. Remains of a half-finished TV dinner lay on the dining room table. In the upstairs hallway, he SEES the glow of their home computer. He trudges up the stairs in that direction.

INT - ARNIE'S HOME - NEW ANGLE (UPSTAIRS)

Arnie pokes his head through the door to their home 'office,'

a converted bedroom, dominated by a large-screen Mac, two printers and other paraphernalia. His wife JANE sits, absorbed by what's on the screen, so absorbed she doesn't hear him walk in the room.

ARNIE

Hi! Workin' hard or hardly workin'?

She hurriedly closes the file she had open and spins around.

JANE

Oh, Arnie! I didn't hear you come in.

ARNIE

Whatcha working on?

JANE

Oh, you know that, um, transcription service I used to work for? They're getting some files ready for a big presentation, and I gotta do some quick translations for them.

ARNIE

But you said you never wanted anything to do with them.

JANE

I did. But they brought me something special, and the money's real good.

She turns back to the screen and stalls, waiting to work.

ARNIE

Tina from Mac Hacs called. She says they need me on an assignment in Kansas City for three or four weeks.

JANE

Three weeks? But you'll miss my birthday.

ARNIE

Already told them. She said you could fly out for the weekend. And they're going to double my normal rate.

JANE

(attention on the screen) Gee, I dunno, Arnie.

ARNIE

So, is it okay with you?

JANE

I guess, if that's what you want.

ARNIE

How 'bout a game of chess after dinner?

JANE

I'm not really in the mood for it.

ARNIE

How about a game of Go?

JANE

No, I don't think so.

ARNIE

No Go, huh? Whatcha gonna do?

JANE

I've got a little more work to do.

ARNIE

(reluctantly) All right.

He leaves slowly. She waits until he's out of the room before she enters an encrypted password (quick INSERT). We then SEE only her face, growing wide in surprise at the file she begins to translate.

INT - ARNIE'S HOME - ANOTHER ANGLE (KITCHEN)

Arnie slides a dinner in the microwave, then picks up the portable phone and dials. While he talks, we SEE family pictures on the fridge door, him and Jane in happier times.

ARNIE

Hello, Tina? It's Arnie. Looks like I'm on for Kansas City.

TINA (V.O.)

Great. Here's the address. Got a pen?
Okay, it's 510 North State Street,
21st Floor. I'm not sure which suite
they're in, but you should be able to
find it. Nine AM.

ARNIE

Nine o'clock it is. G'night, Tina.

INT - 510 N. STATE, 21ST FLOOR - DAY (THURSDAY 8:57 AM)

Arnie steps off an old elevator, searching for the right suite. The first two are closed for construction. Around the corner, he finds a bubble-glass door labeled 'Higgencoat Legal Services.' He enters, and SEES an older style desk topped by a cordless flat panel display.

ARNIE

Hello? Arnold Kenn, from the Mac Hacs
Agency?

SECRETARY

Mr. Kenn, welcome, come in. Oh, and
you're right on time. They'll like
that. (nods her head) Go right on in.

Arnie smiles and passes her desk. We SEE that the text onscreen is an odd mixture that resembles both shorthand and weird heiroglyphics.

INT - HIGGENCOAT LEGAL SERVICES, INNER OFFICE (CONTINUATION)

The exterior walls are all windows, displaying the skyline. The room extends all the way around to the right past two visible doors supposedly marked for construction. Only one table, a briefcase and two chairs occupy the room, other than MR. SPARROW and MR. HAWK, both in their late 40s.

ARNIE

Hello? I'm Mr. Kenn. I have an
appointment?

MR. SPARROW

And right on time, too. That is a
good sign, isn't it?

He looks for support to Hawk, who merely stares at the view.

MR. SPARROW

Yes, well. Come in. Arnie, isn't it?

ARNIE

Arnie, sure. So, you requested me?

MR. SPARROW

We certainly did. Your resumé was quite impressive. We selected you out of a long list of others, Arnie.

ARNIE

Not my limited PC experience, I hope.

MR. SPARROW

That's all right. We don't really use PCs, anyway.

Sparrow plops the briefcase on the table between the chairs, and removes some gear that looks like a portable headset.

MR. SPARROW

Sit down, Arnie. Here, try this on.

Arnie sits, slips the gear over his ear. A tube connects it to a mouthpiece, a long wire apparatus fits on his head.

MR. SPARROW

Let me introduce myself. I'm Mr. Sparrow. Graham Sparrow.

Hawk flashes his displeasure at Sparrow using his real first name. Sparrow accepts the rebuke wordlessly and continues.

MR. SPARROW

...And my associate here is Mr. Hawk.

ARNIE

Sounds like the Animal Channel.

MR. SPARROW

Yes. Ha, ha, very good. Good sense of humor. Unfortunately, our machines don't have much use for that.

MR. SPARROW

There now. Comfortable?

ARNIE

Yes, but my head feels a little funny.

MR. SPARROW

Must be your sense of humor. It'll do you no harm, I assure you. This machine makes use of your alpha and beta waves to operate. If I could just ask you a few questions, in order to calibrate the machine? Answer them honestly, but don't work too hard for the answer.

ARNIE

(settling in) Fire away.

MR. SPARROW

Splendid. Your full name, please?

ARNIE

Arnold Gunnerson Kenn.

MR. SPARROW

Excellent. Your address please, and date of birth?

ARNIE

4523 North Dover. Born August 4th, 1971.

MR. SPARROW

Fine, fine. Do you love your wife?

ARNIE

What? Oh, um, yes I do. I really do!

MR. SPARROW

That's fine, Arnie, I believe you. (checks the readouts) And more importantly, the machine believes you, too. (serious) From this point on, what you'll see must remain private. You cannot talk about this to anyone, not even your wife.

ARNIE

(swallows) All right. Private it is.

MR. SPARROW

Very good. (checks) The machine believes that, too.

Sparrow swings out a flat monitor so Arnie can SEE it also.

MR. SPARROW

What we are going to show you are actual files, fifty years of reports, transcripts, video and audio files.

ARNIE

On what?

MR. SPARROW

On UFOs, Arnie. (pause) I believe, according to Tina, you have some familiarity with the subject?

ARNIE

I'm...interested in them, yes.

MR. SPARROW

Good, good. Now, associated with each file is a special number that identifies it. I'd like you to call up... File 21-2105. Just visualize the number and think of it displaying.

Arnie concentrates. Soon we SEE the File on the monitor: a series of twelve B&W stills from a picnic in the 50s. It begins normally enough, until part way through, a strange craft lands nearby, and the picnickers run in every direction.

ARNIE

My God, that's incredible! I've never seen these before!

MR. SPARROW

We've taken great pains to keep it that way. All of these files have been encrypted so that only machines with the proper translator can read it.

Hawk appears more interested than before.

MR. SPARROW

We also have a special feature designed just for the operator, too. When you log on, it triggers a pre-selected file that overrides your memory, so you can't recall any of the facts from the case.

MR. HAWK

(speaking for the first time) It's for your own...safety.

MR. SPARROW

That way, you can maintain your memory of the trial, who the participants are, how you operate the equipment, but you won't be able to pass along any privileged information.

Arnie calls up files at random, hundreds of UFO images.

ARNIE

So this test will check if I can access the files all right?

MR. SPARROW

Partly. Calling up the files isn't really that complicated. The machine does most of the work. The real test is whether you can handle the avalanche of info, and whether we can make you forget it all at the end of the day.

ARNIE

So you're going to erase my memory?

MR. SPARROW

It's not really erasing. More like over-writing. Our system implants memories of tons of paperwork involving a big, boring Big Tobacco lawsuit. Enough to put a rhino to sleep.

The files Arnie's accessing flash past, faster and faster.

MR. SPARROW

But there's more to the testing program today and tomorrow. We also need to make sure you'll be compatible with the legal team handling the trial.

ARNIE

Won't that be you and Mr. Hawk?

MR. SPARROW

Us? In a court of law? Hah hah hah! Oh, that's much funnier than your Animal Channel joke! No, no, after the testing is over, we won't be meeting again - if all goes well.

Mr. Hawk nods impatiently to get on with it. Arnie is still busy accessing hundreds of files, faster and faster.

MR. SPARROW

All this testing is necessary since you're, ummm, predecessor couldn't handle the volume of the files we exposed him to.

ARNIE

What happened to him?

MR. SPARROW

He suffered a sort of...brain freeze.

ARNIE

Like eating ice cream too fast?

MR. SPARROW

(friendly) Exactly! He accessed files too quickly. Too much information, without the right controls, can be dangerous.

Hundreds of pictures flash before Arnie's vacant eyes. His hands grip the arm rest, and he screws his eyes up. The flow of info slows, than halts upon a single image.

ARNIE

Like having a library in your head.

MR. SPARROW

You'll be accessing video and audio files, as well as written reports. It's quite easy to get lost in so much information. Are you having any difficulties?

ARNIE

Not me, Mr. Sparrow. I think I have it under control.

MR. SPARROW

Good. How about another test, eh? Call up 17-55218, page nine, and place it beside file 28-395, page four. Good. Now highlight the second paragraphs of each. Great! Now, while they're both up, call up the audio from AT-215-447.

An audio VOICE OVER is heard, duplicating the testimony of an officer in the two displayed files, describing an unusual UFO.

MR. SPARROW

Perfect! Arnie, I think you'll do just fine.

Mr. Sparrow looks to Mr. Hawk, who turns his attention back out the window.

MR. SPARROW

All right, time to power down. Eh, call up file 01-0047.

A series of images flash by in a blur, with special colored borders that run both clockwise and counterclockwise simultaneously. High-pitched SQUEALS come from the earpiece. Sparrow averts his eyes. When the sound ends, he looks back.

MR. SPARROW

There, all done. (removes gear) How do you feel?

ARNIE

(yawning) Oh, excuse me. All of a sudden I'm kind of tired. How long have we been at this?

MR. SPARROW

All of...fifteen minutes.

ARNIE

Wow! Seems like a lot longer.

MR. SPARROW

Yes, it may. But we will pay you for the full day. We were going to bring you back tomorrow, but I think you're just fine as it is. Good luck next week.

ARNIE

Thanks, I'll do my best.

MR. HAWK

Just a moment! (leans in close)
What's my name?

ARNIE

Oh, gee, I'm usually pretty good with names. it's, ummm...

MR. HAWK

It's Hawk. Mr. Sparrow, and Mr. Hawk.

ARNIE

Mr. Sparrow and Mr. Hawk? Sounds like the Animal Channel.

MR. SPARROW

(disingenuously) Ha, hah. Good one.
Well, tomorrow then.

Sparrow sees Arnie out, then returns to Hawk by the windows.

MR. SPARROW

Well?

MR. HAWK

He'll do. For the time being.

INT - DENTIST'S RECEPTION AREA - DAY (THURSDAY 12:15 PM)

Arnie enters a well-appointed office, and the RECEPTIONIST at the curved wooden reception desk looks surprised.

RECEPTIONIST

Are you Mr. Kenn? You're early! Tina set your appointment for 2:30.

ARNIE

Okay if I hang around until the Doc's ready, maybe read a few bad magazines?

RECEPTIONIST

Sure, if you want to wait, but the Doctor has a pretty busy schedule to -

Just then, DR. HANSEN enters. He's a cheerful fellow in his late 30s, slightly rotund, emanating good cheer.

HANSEN

Arnie, glad to meet you! You win a prize for being early! You know, I could probably fit you in right now.

RECEPTIONIST

But Doctor, what about Mrs. Griffin?

HANSEN

She comes in for a cleaning each month just to have someone talk to her.

He shoots a command to the Receptionist as he leads Arnie in.

HANSEN

Have Patrick handle her, until I'm finished with Mr. Kenn. C'mon in.

INT - EXAMINATION ROOM (CONTINUATION)

Arnie settles into the chair, while Hansen sets up his tools.

HANSEN

So, Tina says you work as a temp for her at Mac Hacs. Aren't you ready to settle down and land a permanent job?

ARNIE

Not at all. Being a temp is the best thing that ever happened to me. Just finished up a stint at Reveille Models.

HANSEN

Say, I've heard of them. Interesting place. They do scale models, right?

ARNIE

Sure do. Great place to work, real good people. And next week, I'm heading for Kansas City, working for some lawyers on a big hush-hush trial.

HANSEN

A trial, huh? Who's getting sued?

ARNIE

Well, I'm not supposed to talk about it. Kind of sensitive. Say Doc, you don't smoke, do you?

HANSEN

Nope. Never picked up the habit.

ARNIE

Then you wouldn't be interested.

HANSEN

Oh? Oh, I got ya. (closer, with syringe) Here we are. It'll be just a few minutes before it takes effect.

Hansen squirts Arnie's gum with a spray, then rubs it in.

ARNIE

Wow, that's a lot better than the needles I remember.

HANSEN

Yep. Surprising what they can do with sprays these days.

Quickly, a small atomizer appears in Hansen's other hand. With a gauze to his mouth and nose, he shoots a puff into Arnie's face. Almost instantly, Arnie's eyes glaze over.

HANSEN

(serious) So, Arnie, what's this trial really about?

ARNIE

U...UFO trial. Something about secret files. I can't recall just what... it's on the tip of my tongue...

HANSEN

Uh-huh. Tell me about Roswell - the inside story.

ARNIE

Oh, uhhh...God, I know it. I just can't recall right now.

HANSEN

(cheerful again) Good. Great!

Hansen picks up another atomizer and sprays Arnie again. He clears his head while Hansen drops the atomizers into his pocket.

ARNIE

(feeling his gum) Boy, this stuff really works fast.

HANSEN

Yes, the miracle of modern chemicals.

INT - EXAMINATION ROOM - ANOTHER ANGLE (LATER)

Hansen is just finishing, and is putting away his tools.

HANSEN

There, I think we're all done. (holds up mirror) How's it look from the inside?

ARNIE

Excellent, Doc. Real nice.

They both rise and head out to the Reception area. Hansen has his arm fatherly around Arnie's shoulder.

HANSEN

So, you're gonna be gone how long?

ARNIE

Three or four weeks, they tell me.

HANSEN

Well, when you get back, make an appointment with Harriett and we'll make sure that it took okay.

ARNIE

Sure thing, Doc. Hey, thanks for seeing me so quick. I owe you one.

HANSEN

Not at all. (confiding) I don't think Mrs. Griffin even noticed.

Hansen deposits Arnie at the front desk to pay the bill. The Doc goes to a secluded inner office, with a small window to the Reception area. While he dials the phone, he WATCHES Arnie.

HANSEN

(all business) Yeah, it's me. He's just leaving...Yeah, it worked fine...Nah, he doesn't remember a thing...Right. I'll let you know.

As Hansen hangs up, he tosses the two atomizers from his pocket into a waste bin labeled 'Biohazard.'

INT - ARNIE'S HOME - NIGHT (10:30 PM)

The swirl of previous images BLENDS INTO a swirl of water going down the bathroom sink. Arnie stares at himself in the mirror, then out the door at his wife across the hall on the computer. She finishes and closes her files with a yawn.

JANE

I'm done.

Jane heads for the bedroom, while Arnie takes her place. He launches his email program and notes the time, 10:30. When he accesses his mail, it asks for his password. He stares dumfounded at the screen.

ARNIE

Honey? It's the silliest thing, but I can't remember my email password. Do you remember it? (pause) Honey?

Jane's already in bed, asleep. Back with Arnie, he looks puzzled, then notes the time again: 1:14 AM. He's lost almost three hours! He shakes his head, then shuts the machine down. We watch his retreating form in the powered-down monitor.

INT - ARNIE'S HOME - DAY (SUNDAY 7:15 AM)

Arnie's on the phone, rushing to finish packing. Through the open front door, Dufuss wrestles with the Sunday paper. Some of Arnie's bags are visible in the doorway, by the evergreens.

ARNIE

Yes, I got the tickets you sent. Yes, I've got all my stuff packed (still closing a case).

TINA (V.O.)

Mr. Sparrow was very impressed with your abilities.

ARNIE

Ah, it was nothing, really.

Through the open door, we SEE a black limo drive up. Dufuss starts barking, and continues to the end of the Scene.

ARNIE

Oh, the limo's here. Gotta go, Tina. I'll call you when I get to K.C.

Arnie drags his last two bags out as the DRIVER approaches.

DRIVER

Mr. Kenn? I'll get those, sir.

ARNIE

All set. Gonna say goodbye to my wife.

Arnie heads back in, bounds up the stairs as the still-barking Dufuss follows. Sticks his head into the computer room.

ARNIE

Well, I'm going. I'll see you when you fly out for your birthday in two weeks.

He's waiting, and Jane finally realizes why. She gets up, goes

to kiss him on the cheek, but he grabs her up in a big embrace.

JANE

Goodness! You act as if you're not coming back.

ARNIE

I'm gonna miss you, Juliette.

JANE

Me too, Romeo. Do what you have to do, and come back safe.

Arnie heads downstairs, while Jane goes back to the Mac with seemingly more enthusiasm than she had for her husband.

We SEE the Driver place the last two bags into the trunk, then close it and open the door for Arnie, who slides in. The Driver gets in and pulls the Limo away from the curb, as we SEE Dufuss bark at the door, locked out of the house.

INT - LIMOUSINE - DAY (CONTINUATION)

In the back seat, Arnie notices the Driver on the phone beyond the glass partition. Arnie digs out the sports section, begins to read. The CAMERA switches to the Driver's POV, and we SEE him regarding Arnie through the rear-view mirror.

DRIVER

Yes, close shaved. Two cases, no carry-on...Blue jeans, white sneakers, that blue striped shirt, and the black Bianchi...About 7:55...Right.

The Driver hangs up and rolls down the partition.

DRIVER

Sir, we'll be arriving at the airport in twenty minutes.

ARNIE

Good. Thanks.

EXT/INT - O'HARE AIRPORT - DAY (7:55 AM)

We watch the Limo bypass the terminals, and arrive at a spe-

cial area reserved for private jets. It comes to a halt in front of an expensive, 20-passenger Learjet. The Driver pops the trunk, exits the limo and opens Arnie's door.

ARNIE

Are you sure this is the right place?

DRIVER

Yes, sir. Very sure.

The Driver brings the two bags from the trunk to the luggage compartment of the Learjet. Arnie approaches the STEWARDESS.

ARNIE

Excuse me miss, but is this my plane?

STEWARDESS

May I see some ID, sir? (checks his driver's license) Yes, Mr. Kenn, welcome aboard. Please, sit anywhere.

Arnie steps inside and realizes 'anywhere' means just that. None of the seats are occupied. He chooses a window seat.

STEWARDESS

Now, sir, can I get you anything?

ARNIE

No, I'm fine. (joking) When do the other passengers get here?

STEWARDESS

In about ten minutes. Did he tell you?

ARNIE

Who? Tell me what?

STEWARDESS

Oh, uh, nothing. Can I get you something to drink?

ARNIE

All right. How about orange juice?

STEWARDESS

Fresh squeezed okay? Be right back.

Arnie LOOKS through the window as she goes down to the tarmac and talks with the Driver, gestures up at the plane, then returns. Soon, another limo arrives. An OTHER MAN gets out and climbs the stairs. The Stewardess directs him to a front seat, then brings Arnie his juice.

STEWARDESS

We'll be taking off shortly now, so fasten your seat belt. Do I need to go over the emergency procedures?

ARNIE

Not for my sake.

STEWARDESS

Great. Thanks.

EXT/INT - THE LEARJET TAKING OFF/CHURCH - DAY (SEQUENCE)

We SEE the Learjet jump off the runway, then CUT to a shot of the plane disappearing into the clouds. The CAMERA then pulls way back, and we SEE the glass ceiling of a great modern church, "The Church of the End Times," all glass and steel. Hundreds of worshippers pack a huge, atrium-like open space, voicing their support of REVEREND PARLOS, 60-ish, graying, who's preaching a powerful, vitriolic sermon.

REVEREND PARLOS

I tell you, my people, there is an Evil collusion at work, between this MIS-guided government of ours, and the Satanic forces in our VER-y midst! Those forces of which I speak are at work NOW, trying to take over OUR world - and not in any Christian way, I can tell you! They arrive in vehicles of De-MON-ic design, in the very SKY above our heads!

Just then, a cell phone RINGS close behind him. An elderly woman, SARAH'S MOM, moves away as she pulls a phone from her purse. She plugs one ear but keeps an eye on the Reverend.

SARAH'S MOM

Hello?...Oh, hello Sarah dear. Oh...

(MORE)

SARAH'S MOM (CON'T.)

...You caught me in the middle of Sunday service...That's right, it is two hours earlier there. Did you get in okay?...Really?....Well, let's hope you'll have more time to talk to your poor mother later in the week...

The Reverend continues, even more heatedly than before, but watches her out of the corner of his eye.

REVEREND PARLOS

But James the Apostle HAS warned us, "In the end of times, they shall come among you, disguised as Angels." Do not mistake these Alien forces as Children of God, for they are not! (composes himself) Good children, let us pray.

The entire CONGREGATION, as one, kneel and bow their heads. The PRAYER MASTER, to the Reverend's right, begins a prayer:

PRAYER MASTER

Your will, Lord, is our command, Your bidding, our desire. You bring the world to its end, Your judgement to the misguided, Your hand to the wicked.

During the prayer, the Reverend moves next to Sarah's Mom.

SARAH'S MOM

Sarah says they lost one of the computer team, but another one's -

REVEREND PARLOS

On his way there, even as we speak?

She slowly meets his gaze, as if he were telepathic. He looks skyward, into the clouds, as does she, and the prayer FADES.

INT - THE LEARJET - DAY (SEQUENCE)

A) Arnie gets up to talk to the Other Man.

B) He's amazed to discover he's dressed exactly like Arnie! Same shirt, jeans, shoes, even his black Bianchi belt.

C) Dazed, Arnie retakes his seat and stares out the window.

D) The scene FADES OUT, then FADES IN as time has passed aboard the Plane. The Stewardess reappears.

STEWARDESS

Mr. Kenn, you're not getting off here.

ARNIE

Why not? This is Kansas City?

STEWARDESS

Yes it is. But for the sake of security, this isn't where the real trial is taking place.

ARNIE

Then why are we landing?

She eyes the Other Man in the front of the plane.

STEWARDESS

Our other passenger has a few appointments to keep.

EXT - KANSAS CITY AIRPORT - DAY (SEQUENCE)

From the runway we SEE the jet cruise in, touch down, then taxi to a secluded section of the airport. The Other Man gets up, has a few quiet words with the Stewardess and departs down the exit stairs. Arnie watches the Man step around to the side of the plane, greet a SECOND LIMO DRIVER, then open the plane's luggage door. He reaches in and pulls out Arnie's two cases, then closes the door.

ARNIE

Hey! Hey, that's my luggage! He's stealing my luggage!

STEWARDESS

He's not stealing it, he's borrowing it. The contents will be fully inventoried and returned once the trial is over.

ARNIE

But what'll I do for clothes?

STEWARDESS

Anything you need will be provided
for at the Court's expense. Clothes,
shoes, toothbrush, whatever you need.

ARNIE

Well then, I guess it's okay.

STEWARDESS

Now, just sit back and relax. We've
got another long flight ahead of us.

Arnie stares out the window, while the Other Man tosses the
luggage into the trunk. He fishes out a pair of sunglasses
from one of Arnie's bags, poses beside the limo door and puts
them on. He hops inside the limo, and it quickly pulls away.
Arnie touches his pocket, his mood decidedly crestfallen.

ARNIE

Dammit! I loved those sunglasses!

EXT - SEATAC AIRPORT - DAY (SUNDAY, 1:45 PM) (SEQUENCE)

FADE IN as the Learjet slowly floats down over an airport
sign that reads "SeaTac International Airport." The plane
rolls to a halt, in front of a Jeep and a large no-nonsense
man, DENNIS FALCONETTI, standing beside the open passenger
door. The plane's door opens, the steps fold down, and Arnie
walks out into the bright Seattle afternoon.

ARNIE

Wow! A sunny day in Seattle! You
thought of everything!

FALCONETTI

Mr. Kenn! Welcome to Seattle!

ARNIE

Do we have time to see Mt. St. Helens?

FALCONETTI

Oh, I'm afraid not. (motions to door)
Shall we?

ARNIE

(sigh) Yeah, I guess.

Arnie swings himself into the Jeep, and Falconetti drives out a nearby gate. They head past a sign that reads, "I-5 South."

EXT/INT - THE JEEP ON THE HIGHWAY - DAY (SUNDAY, 2 PM)

Falconetti, a tall, rugged, but friendly middle-aged man, talks easily while he drives. He casts a judging glance Arnie's way every now and then, looking him up and down. Arnie LOOKS out as the pine-covered hills of the Olympic Peninsula fly by.

FALCONETTI

Lemme introduce myself. I'm Dennis Falconetti. Glad ta meet ya. I work directly for the Court.

ARNIE

What do you do, besides the odd chauffeuring assignment?

FALCONETTI

(smiles) Oh, I handle any security problems that pop up.

ARNIE

Security problems?

FALCONETTI

Yeah, you know, secrecy, handling gate crashers. Consider me the real muscle while the trial's in progress. And if you need anything, anything at all, just gimme a yell.

ARNIE

You mean, phone you? Your beeper?

FALCONETTI

No, no - I mean give me a yell.

Falconetti appears to be serious. Arnie doesn't get it.

ARNIE

Ok...When can I get a good look at the real equipment? And who do I report to tomorrow? And what about -

FALCONETTI

On second thought, maybe you should hold onto your questions 'til we get to the Lodge.

ARNIE

The Lodge?

FALCONETTI

Yeah, Lake Quinault Lodge. That's where you'll be spending the next few weeks, until the trial ends. Splendid place, right in the middle of Olympic National Park. Real scenic.

ARNIE

There's a courtroom at this Lodge?

FALCONETTI

Yep. Built for just such an occasion. The place'll be buttoned up tight, no one in but the trial participants.

ARNIE

Falconetti, huh? Say, you wouldn't know a couple of guys in Chicago named Mr. Sparrow and Mr. Hawk?

FALCONETTI

Sparrow and Hawk? Can't say that I do.

EXT - LAKE QUINAULT AREA - DAY (SUNDAY, 3:15 PM) (SEQUENCE)

The Jeep turns off Highway 101 onto a narrow asphalt road, past a sign that reads "Lake Quinault Lodge, 2 miles," with a smaller "Closed for Private Party" sign hanging beneath. They roll past "Merle's Premium Service," a run-down gas station. MERLE sits out front, a lean, bearded man, feet propped up on a railing. He waves, Falconetti returns the greeting. The CAMERA swings around Merle's left, through the wall into a closed inner room where four BLACK-UNIFORMED GUARDS watch the Jeep's progress on a large bank of monitors.

EXT/INT - LAKE QUINAULT LODGE, MAIN LOBBY - DAY (SEQUENCE)

The Jeep rolls to a stop in front of the Lodge, a massive

wood-and-boulder complex from the 20s. Beneath the old carriage overhang, Falconetti gets out and motions Arnie to enter the front doors.

Inside, they approach the front desk, passing an oversized chessboard with huge pieces near a great stone fireplace. At the desk, an attendant with the name tag WALTER, late-30s, tall and thin, smiles and greets them.

WALTER

Welcome back, Mr. Falconetti. How was your trip overseas?

FALCONETTI

Fine, just fine, if you consider thirty below swell weather. Has everyone else arrived?

WALTER

They're all here. Mr. Claren asked to speak with you when you had a moment. (to Arnie) And you must be Mr. Kenn?

ARNIE

Hey, I work for a living. Call me Arnie.

WALTER

(aloof) Certainly, Mr. Kenn. You'll probably want to visit our Gift shop. Any items you need, show the attendant your badge-key and you won't be charged.

Peter hands a credit-card sized green badge to Arnie. He reads the text on the front, which we see in CLOSE UP:

ID BADGE (INSERT)

Kenn, Arnold
C-00215
Hasselblad Operator

Arnie, puzzled, looks to Falconetti for an explanation.

FALCONETTI

That's Claren's nickname for our computer equipment. The man has a strange sense of humor. Time for some new duds?

ARNIE

Actually, I'd rather take a look at the equipment I'll be using.

FALCONETTI

I think we can arrange that.

INT - THE YUKON BAR AND ITS WASHROOM - MOVING

They head to the right, down a hall and a short stairway to the "Yukon Bar." Inside the medium-sized empty room, a beefy bartender, FRANK, unnecessarily wipes the dry bar with a rag.

FRANK

Ah, Mr. Falconetti, good to see you.
The usual?

FALCONETTI

Nah, Frankie, not right now. Arnie?
This way.

Falconetti heads for one of two washrooms, the one that has an "Out of Order" sign on it. He steps in and holds the door. After a moment's hesitation, Arnie joins him. Frank presses a button under the bar.

Inside, Falconetti raises his arms and motions for Arnie to do likewise. When Arnie does, a narrow green light beam drops from ceiling to floor, then back up. A loud 'click' sounds, and Falconetti moves to one of the two sinks and washes his hands. Arnie does likewise.

ARNIE

Is this part of the security procedure?

FALCONETTI

This? (chuckles) No, Arnie. This is just good hygiene.

Falconetti dries his hands and moves to the floor-to-ceiling pivots, exposing a dark hallway. He gestures, Arnie goes first.

INT - THE HALLWAY TO THE COURTROOM (CONTINUATION)

Inside, with minimal lighting, they descend a long staircase with two landings. At the bottom is a large room with six

serious-looking GRAY-UNIFORMED GUARDS. Falconetti hands one his green ID badge, then indicates Arnie should do the same. Falconetti steps forward and places his hands palm-down down on a hi-tech reader, and his face flat against another panel. Deep red light beams center on his eyes, blue light on his palms, while two small tweezers pull off hairs from each forearm. He speaks into a microphone built into the face-reading panel.

FALCONETTI

Falconetti, Dennis, Clearance A-01188.

The lights shut off, he accepts his card back and steps away. Arnie steps forward, but jokes with the Guard on his left.

ARNIE

Do I have to bring the same face every time?

FALCONETTI

Arnie, don't make them laugh - they'll have to kill you. (smiles, indicates the machine) Next?

Arnie steps cautiously forward. The systems run as before.

ARNIE

Kenn, Arnold, uhhh...C-00215.

FALCONETTI

Still breathing? Good!

He leads Arnie through a pair of now-unlocked half-glass doors. Inside is a darkened room with the outlines of a double set of tall chairs along one wall, each with its own small monitor. A light shines in one corner, around which three men huddle. Arnie ignores them, busy counting the chairs.

ARNIE

Twelve...thirteen? Wait a minute. Aren't there supposed to be only twelve people on a Jury?

Two of the men approach. One is the distinguished-looking, 60ish, charismatic Senator JEFFERSON CLAREN. Behind him follows a shorter, younger man, the dapper, intense JAMES VRASS.

CLAREN

In a normal trial, yes. But this is a Special Grand Jury. (smiles) Jeff Claren, at your service.

ARNIE

Jefferson Dean Claren? Retired Senator?

CLAREN

Guilty as charged. I'll be arguing Against the Proposition, as it were. And may I introduce my opponent in this arena, James Vrass. He'll be arguing For the Proposition.

VRASS

You must be Arnie Kenn. Glad to have you aboard. (shakes)

ARNIE

What exactly is 'the Proposition?'

VRASS

(quoting) "That the evidence collected by the U.S. Government for more than fifty years on UFOs and alien technology...should be made public in its entirety, and that the American people have the right to vote on any future contact - with 'Them.' "

ARNIE

Wow, that's a helluva decision you'll have to make.

CLAREN

You misunderstand, Arnie. It's not our decision to make. It's for these thirteen good men and women. It'll be our mission to lay all the evidence in front of them, and let them decide how to keep this tremendous burden of knowledge a well-kept secret for another fifty years.

VRASS

(irritated) Or not. (lighter) You're gonna have an important part to play, Arnie. The more seamlessly you display the evidence, the easier it'll be for the Jurors to reach their own decision - whatever that may be.

CLAREN

Has, ah, anyone shared with you the importance of this trial?

ARNIE

Not exactly. Mr. Hawk and Mr. Sparrow just said it would be very significant.

VRASS

Hawk and Sparrow, eh? (smiles) Are those the names they're using now?

CLAREN

Well, they didn't lie to you. This could be the most important trial our country has ever held.

INT - COURTROOM - DAY (MONDAY 11:15 AM)

The room is now well-lit. Two large tables are set up for Claren and Vrass, while Arnie sits down at the main computer console, puts on his headset and starts up the equipment. The Jurors file stiffly towards their seats, each wearing stern expressions and a numbered badge. In order, the Jurors are:

ONE, a 40-ish A/F, teacher, the Forewoman, logical, but fair;
TWO, 50-ish B/M, ex-Congressman, confidant, skeptical;
THREE, mid 30s W/M, NSA rep, combative, a confirmed skeptic;
FOUR, early 20s W/M, comic, a real smart-aleck;
FIVE, late 40s H/F, photographer, persistent;
SIX, early 40s H/M, professor, fair-minded;
SEVEN, mid 30s B/F, ex-basketball star, once an abductee;
EIGHT, late 40s W/F, former AF pilot, well connected;
NINE, early 50s B/M, Black Ops Major, but with a sense of humor;
TEN, early 30s A/M, aerospace engineer, wants answers;
ELEVEN, late 50s W/F, astronomer, carrying on husband's work;
TWELVE, early 40s NA/M, knows of Navajo base, fatherly;
THIRTEEN, late 20s W/F, Sarah from the Endtimes Ministry.

Waiting patiently until everyone is seated, Claren smiles:

CLAREN

Well, I trust we all had a nice, enjoyable week off. Now that we've, ah, corrected our little staffing problem - oh, where are my manners? Let me introduce all of you to Arnold Kenn. Arnie, say hello to our little family.

JUROR SIX

Welcome to the most boring Tobacco lawsuit this side of North Carolina.

JUROR FOUR

We've got a pool going. Stay awake until lunch, and I win twenty bucks.

CLAREN

All right. Let's get down to business. Glasses, please?

Like automatons, they all remove heavy dark glasses from various pockets and purses and put them on.

VRASS

Arnie, please run File 107-A1.

The screens display a collage of bright colored lights that resemble UFOs. They slow like a Wheel of Chance, clacking, and halt at an ad that reads, "If Aliens came to take you away, which brand would you choose for your last cigarette?" The image is a smoker pulled by his feet into the air by a beam from a triangular craft. The image swirls into a mix of graphics: UFOs, cartoon aliens, Area 54, hangers, bodies, blacked-out files, and lights, lots of lights. They swirl into a black pool - then the room lights slowly come up. The Jurors remove their glasses, and the change in their demeanor is striking. Gone are the robot-stiff poses, replaced by a variety of positions, some casual, others determined.

JUROR THREE

Awright, Claren, let's get back to that crap you were trying to feed us last week about a buncha Reptiles taking over Dulce in '84.

Arnie looks perplexed while Claren and Juror Three argue in BACKGROUND. Vrass comes up close behind Arnie and whispers:

VRASS

The memory sequence unlocks a hidden persona that they access only through the technology of the glasses. When they're in this state, it's like they're different people.

ARNIE

You're telling me!

The argument between Claren and Juror Three gets louder.

JUROR THREE

The possibility that some... 'tribe' of aliens... is in possession of one of our major underground installations - well, it's preposterous! I don't see how it's possible!

CLAREN

You don't have to understand how it happened. You just have to know that it did.

Claren smiles, but something in his manner is deadly serious.

JUROR NINE

So we're to be, what, impressed that these 'sauropods' were able to gain control of a sensitive installation?

VRASS

You should feel a little bit threatened.

JUROR ELEVEN

Because they could take over one base?

VRASS

No, because they were able to keep it!

CLAREN

People, I suggest that after our time off, we may need a refresher course.

Groans from the Jurors, like school kids given a pop quiz.

CLAREN

A history lesson. A little reminder.
Arnie? Call up 27-41108 through 426.

Arnie accesses the files, and the screens come alive with Medieval paintings and 19th-century newspaper reports.

VRASS

You'll recall the numerous European records of unusual atmospheric craft: Gervase of Tilbury in 1211...the Black Globes of Milan...Basel in 1566...the famous painting of the Madonna and Child...and then, the infamous wave of '96 - Eighteen-Ninety Six, that is. The first modern record of an alien presence on this continent.

JUROR TWO

White males with beards, flying what appeared to be rigid airships with gears and steam engines? Hardly alien.

VRASS

Except there were no heavier-than-air craft until some twenty years later.

JUROR TEN

What were they doing impersonating inventors and touring the country?

CLAREN

We think they were doing the same thing they're doing now - monitoring and observing.

JUROR ONE

So you call thousands of abductions and invasive surgeries merely observation?

CLAREN

I don't, but they might.

The Jurors seem dissatisfied with the answer.

VRASS

If I could continue? Those first visits lasted eighteen months, then a similar set of craft arrived in Australia in 1909, followed closely by New Zealand, Great Britain and extended areas of the U.S.

JUROR SIX

You said, 'a set of craft.' Don't you mean, a wave of sightings?

VRASS

No, I don't. (beat) Things quieted down until the 40s, when events took a different turn. 1942 saw the famous 'Battle of Los Angeles,' moving ariel lights so real that anti-aircraft gunners expended over a thousand rounds trying to shoot them down.

The images onscreen switch from stills to WWII movie shots.

VRASS

Then, as British and American bombers overflowed France and Germany in '44 and '45, mysterious balls of light, nicknamed 'foo fighters,' appeared and paced the formations. There were even reports of silvery disks flying through the bomber groups. Of course, none of those reports got past the censors until after the War.

JUROR EIGHT

What about the reports that the Germans were working on flying disks?

CLAREN

Sure, they were working on them. Just like they were working on the atomic bomb. And they didn't figure that one out, either. All they managed were a few mock-ups for wind tunnel tests, no propulsion units, nothing approaching full-size.

Official Air Force footage appears on the monitors, snapshots of Top Secret documents mixed with B&W 8mm footage.

VRASS

In '47, Air Force General Nathan Twining, at that time the head of the Air Material Command, wrote in an official report that "the phenomena is real, not visionary or fictitious." Of course, that was after Roswell.

CLAREN

If we hadn't worked fast to cover that one up, your presence here, ladies and gentlemen, would be unnecessary.

VRASS

But our quick work, and a healthy dose of intimidation, kept the lid on things.

JUROR FIVE

What about that tape that was televised a couple-three years ago, that 'Alien Autopsy' thing?

CLAREN

You mean the phony autopsy? One of our most successful projects. Well worth the money. Muddied the waters perfectly.

JUROR SEVEN

'Phony' autopsy? You mean, there was a real one?

CLAREN

Of course! Arnie, file C5-470721, please.

CLOSE UP of Arnie's hands, slightly shaking, as he locates the file. His hands hover over the keyboard as he and the Jurors WATCH the grainy, gruesome, 50-year-old B&W film.

CLAREN

We won't have to worry about this one being shown on network TV. Now cable, that's a different story.

The shaky footage shows a real dissection underway, amidst heavy security. Selected CLOSE UPS of a slitted mouth, almond-shaped eyes and webbed fingers, each with four small pads, INTERCUT with the Jurors barely able to keep their lunch in.

JUROR EIGHT

But what are they?

CLAREN

Best we can figure, they're clones.

JUROR FIVE

What's that nurse doing?

CUTAWAY of a NURSE bending over in the background, heaving.

CLAREN

Why, madam, she's throwing up.

VRASS

The Roswell incident also...was the first...deliberate use of civilian lethality in order to maintain essential overall project security.

JUROR TWO

Can you translate that into English?

CLAREN

(brittle) We had to shut some people up, permanently.

JUROR TEN

How many, exactly?

CLAREN

Well, let's just say, less than the number who died during the first half-hour at Normandy, but more than your average bus crash. Now, by 1952 -

JUROR ONE

Arnie, I'd like to see some hard numbers. Can you...?

Under a hostile glare from Claren, Arnie 'mind-searches'

through the online files. Clippings of newspaper stories, unusual accidents and crashes, appear one after the other.

ARNIE

Uhhh...eight nurses in '47 who witnessed the Roswell bodies, around ninety pilots total, two hundred other military personnel, a hundred forty investigators through '95 that I can find, almost seventy civilians who were in the wrong place at the - a member of the President's Cabinet!

JUROR NINE

You mean Admiral Forrestal? (to Claren) You bastards murdered him!

CLAREN

Did you really think a carrier commander at sea throughout World War II could just fall out of an eighth story hospital window? We needed his silence, and he didn't want to give it. Plus, he was about to release his diary.

JUROR FIVE

Cut to the chase, Senator. How many have you 'silenced?'

CLAREN

Roughly? (pause) Three or four thousand. Give or take.

JUROR ELEVEN

To think we murdered that many!

JUROR SEVEN

I thought our government was supposed to protect us?

CLAREN

(angrily) You people had better wake up! There's a war going on, with battles just as bloody as Guadalcanal, just as close-run as the Midway.

JUROR TWO

But we didn't kill our own troops!

CLAREN

Oh, we didn't? Who do you think pulled the triggers at Gettysburg? In every country's history, the most bloody affair has always been a civil war.

JUROR SIX

Are you saying this is a civil war?

CLAREN

One which we cannot afford to lose.

The room is quiet, with CLOSE UPS of Jurors INTERPOSED with images onscreen of bodies and reports of crashed helicopters.

CLAREN

Now, if we are in agreement as to the seriousness and delicacy of our current predicament, may we proceed?

He SEES the Jurors' hardended faces, and Arnie's cautious look.

CLAREN

I hope I don't come off as uncaring?

MANY JURORS (SIMULTANEOUS)

No, no, of course not, not at all...

JUROR FOUR

(whispered to Five) Just inhuman.

SCENE - INTERIOR - ROOSEVELT DINING ROOM, NIGHT (7:30 PM)

The dimly lit room is elegantly appointed, with professional servers. The Jurors are dressed in evening attire, trying to relax in their seemingly normal but overly stiff poses. Arnie leaves the cutting board and is spotted by Claren and Vrass.

VRASS

Arnie! Arnie! C'mon over here, m'boy!

ARNIE

Oh no, I don't want to intrude.

VRASS

You're not intruding. Sit. Sit!

CLAREN

So, how did you enjoy your first day in court?

ARNIE

Well, it was, um...eye opening.

A muscular server, MICHAEL, obviously another Guard in semi-disguise, approaches the table.

MICHAEL

Sorry, sir. You have a call. From Montauk Base.

CLAREN

Really? This late? (he spots an alcove with glass doors) I'll take it in there, Michael. (to Arnie) Excuse me.

Claren leaves, as Vrass dissects his steak with controlled intensity. Throughout the following, he eats and talks.

VRASS

You've seen a lot already, an' it's only your first day. (knife poised) How do you think the trial will go?

ARNIE

That's kind of hard to say, at this point. I expect it'll be intense, might even get bitter at times.

VRASS

What's your impression of Claren?

Through the glass door, past Michael, we SEE Claren arguing on the phone, pointing animatedly with his finger. He seems very intense, and the door barely muffles his angry words.

ARNIE

Claren? Well, he's a, uh, fair man. Strong. Dedicated. I think he'll see this through.

VRASS

Interesting...Do you trust him, Arnie?

ARNIE

Trust him? How do you mean?

VRASS

With your life?

ARNIE

I...I don't know what to say.

VRASS

I think you know what I mean.

Vrass chews deliberately, as Claren returns to the table.

CLAREN

Sorry about that. Sometimes they just don't get the word.

Claren surveys the charged atmosphere at the table. Rather than becoming angry, he smiles and offers Vrass his plate.

CLAREN

My dinner seems to have gone cold. James, would you...?

VRASS

Certainly - Jeff.

Surprised at the informality, Vrass goes to the sideboard. Claren regards him at a distance as he sips his wine.

CLAREN

(to the air) We found James Vrass serving out the remains of his military term under a cloud. Seems he'd been given a certain information-gathering assignment for the Company. You could say our little adventure has resurrected him, career-wise.

ARNIE

The Company? You mean -

CLAREN

He fulfilled his mission with a little too much enthusiasm. (smiles) I thought he'd be perfect for us.

ARNIE

Us?

CLAREN

The Oblivion Project. It's a heavy responsibility we have here. Keeping the greatest secrets, hiding the biggest story the world has never heard.

ARNIE

(aware) You don't want the secrets revealed, do you?

CLAREN

I want what's best for this country.

ARNIE

Which is what?

CLAREN

I want us to remain in control of our own future. And with the help of reverse-engineered alien technology, judiciously doled out, we should be 'top of the heap' for some time.

ARNIE

And Vrass? What does he want?

CLAREN

He wants things to change, abruptly. He thinks everything should be revealed, no matter how many others are harmed.

Vrass returns with a fresh plate of food

VRASS

Here you go. So, what did Montauk Base want? (he SEES Claren's reluctance to talk) Oh - sorry.

CLAREN

So, Arnie, I understand your wife's having a birthday soon?

ARNIE

Yes, a week from Saturday.

CLAREN

Well, we'll have to bring her out here for a visit. Just for the week-end, of course. At our expense.

VRASS

Do you have any questions so far? About the trial?

ARNIE

The glasses, the memory-erasing technique. Are they from the aliens?

VRASS

The glasses, and the impulses embedded in the images, bend the viewer's mind into a more receptive posture.

ARNIE

So why aren't I wearing the glasses?

CLAREN

Your mind doesn't need to be manipulated. We just have to erase it of its short-term memory. You can see all you want of UFOs and aliens and what not...as long as you don't retain any of the hard evidence.

Claren folds his roast beef before slicing carefully through.

VRASS

The Jurors have to be able to hold onto their memories from session to session. (pondering) The process appears to create a separate reality for them, amplifying their persona during the sessions.

CLAREN

It's a sophisticated form of brain-washing. It locks some memories away, while allowing others to surface.

ARNIE

Are there any other side-effects? For the Jurors...for me?

The dessert cart passes, pushed by a very muscular man.

CLAREN

I'm surprised you didn't ask Falcon and Sparrow that. (reassuring) No, nothing major, nothing...long-term.

ARNIE

Well, I need to get back. I promised my wife I'd call her.

CLAREN

We'll have a meeting tonight in my room at nine sharp. We'll go over the files needed for tomorrow. Bring the headset and transfer disks.

He grabs Arnie's wrist, smiles up but is dead serious.

CLAREN

I don't think I need to remind you not to lose the headset, or allow anyone else to access those disks. If you do, I'm afraid we'll have to terminate your employment, ha ha ha!

ARNIE

(cautious) Yes, ha ha.

Arnie stands and leaves. Vrass and Claren watch him depart.

CLAREN

You told him too much.

VRASS

He has a right to know.

CLAREN

My dear Mr. Vrass! Who'd have thought
you would wind up being soft-hearted!

Wordless, Vrass rises and leaves. Claren sips his wine as
Michael the Server returns to scoop up the plates.

CLAREN

Keep an eye on our young Mr.Kenn. I
want to know who he sees, where he
goes - (serious) what he dreams.

MICHAEL

And Mr. Vrass?

CLAREN

Standard surveillance. For now.

EXT - OUTSIDE THE DINING ROOM, NIGHT (9:30 PM)

Arnie wanders just outside the Roosevelt Room, its large win-
dows aglow from within. As he passes down the steps, we SEE
Sarah, watching him from the shadows, chewing on the end of
her Juror's glasses. She reaches some inner decision, as she
walks across the patio and in through an exterior door to the
Lobby. Watching them from an even deeper set of shadows,
Falconetti nods knowingly, summing up to himself.

INT - ARNIE'S ROOM - NIGHT (10:00 PM)

Arnie drops the bag of disks and the headset as he enters,
then looks out across the Lake. He SEES a note reminding
himself to call Jane. He reaches for the phone, then freezes.
The touchpad appears blank - his eyes see no buttons! He
drops the receiver down hard, and stares disconcertedly out
the window. He rubs his eyes, then his whole face.

INT - COURTROOM - DAY (TUESDAY 11:15 AM)

The scene picks up in what must be the middle of a heated
debate. Emotions are high, the tension in the room palpable.

VRASS

We need to make this all public! We
need to tell the truth! Besides, the
American public already knows the truth.

CLAREN

Do they? Do they? I submit that is not the case, and I shall prove it. Mr. Kenn, please call up file S-4168.

On the displays, seven separate paragraphs APPEAR, sequentially entitled 'One' through 'Seven.'

CLAREN

I'm going to list seven subjects of which there is currently much debate among UFO circles. Some of these, despite being muddied by disinformation, are substantially truthful. The rest, though they contain some grains of truth, are either misidentifications or out-and-out hoaxes.

At a nod from Claren, Arnie calls up the subject's description and photos, all CLOSE UP INSERTS, each of them in turn.

CLAREN

Number one: our Government has allowed off-world forces to inhabit underground military bases. One of these, at Dulce, was the sight of a battle between our military and the aliens known as the Grays, causing numerous fatalities. (pause) Number two: a majority of the UFOs viewed in the last 20 years, especially the massive black triangle craft, are manned and operated by elements of our own military, and have been kept secret for national security reasons.

A number of the Jurors look skeptical. Vrass seems pleased.

CLAREN

Number three: an illuminated disk landed at what is now Edwards Air Base, flashed a series of lights and was photographed and discussed by over forty Air Force personnel, including one officer who later became...

(MORE)

CLAREN (CON'T.)

...an Apollo astronaut. This event served as the inspiration for the film "Close Encounters of the Third Kind." Number four: our government has made use of 'remote viewing' to discover that the origination of some UFOs is the subsurface of the planet Mars.

The stunning images don't help them reach a decision. The Jurors stare at each other, realizing that half of these must be true, but which ones? Claren enjoys their confusion.

CLAREN

Number five: a secret group designated Majestic Twelve, or MJ-12, composed of elite professionals and military personnel, currently advise the President directly about contacting alien races, and control the release of all information resulting from such contacts. Number six: average human beings from all over the world are routinely abducted by aliens, operated on and tagged for later study, with the willing acceptance of our own government.

Juror Seven looks down at her clenched hands. Juror Eight looks over at her, then up at Claren.

CLAREN

(dramatically) Number seven: many different types of aliens races have visited this planet for thousands of years, have helped us in the past, and much of what we are now as a civilization and as a species, can be attributed to their direct intervention and timely assistance.

The room is quiet. The Jurors study the seven different sections, while Claren studies them, and Arnie studies Claren.

JUROR SIX

(impatiently) Well?

CLAREN

(mocking) Well, what?

JUROR SIX

Aren't you going to tell us which of these are real and which are fakes?

CLAREN

(still mocking) No, I'm not.

JUROR SIX

But we have a right to know!

CLAREN

(loud) No! You do not have a right to know! (quiet) You have a right to judge. There's a difference.

A pause follows, then all the Jurors begin arguing as one.

JUROR THREE

How can we decide the truth, if we don't have all the evidence?

JUROR ELEVEN

Sometimes we have to make an educated guess, based on the best evidence.

JUROR TEN

I can get better evidence from the Weekly World Report!

JUROR TWELVE

He's obviously got more information that he's not sharing. I'd like to know what it is.

JUROR FIVE

Why don't we just agree on which ones are true, and which ones are false?

JUROR NINE

Well, we know abductions are phony.

JUROR SEVEN

(strongly) Do we?

JUROR ONE

Yes, do we?

JUROR FOUR

I always thought that MJ-12 business was a lot of hooey, dreamed up by some out-of-work Hollywood screenwriter.

JUROR EIGHT

What about that disc landing at Edwards? I'm sure I would have known about it, if it had actually happened.

JUROR NINE

What, you've got a direct pipeline through to Mission Control? Maybe you're on JPL's mailing list?

CLOSE UP of Juror Twelve, who quietly mumbles to himself.

JUROR TWELVE

It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter.

JUROR EIGHT

(to Nine) Listen here, 'Major,' when the Joint Chiefs of Staff call you up for your personal input -

JUROR NINE

I get more calls from the Pentagon than you get from salesmen.

JUROR EIGHT

Oh really? Well, let me tell you -

JUROR TWELVE

(shouting) It doesn't matter! (surprised, then calmer) Don't you see? It doesn't matter. Each of these theories are forever tainted by media distortion and government disinformation. No matter what we decide, or how much more information is released about these incidents, the American public will always remember them as half-truths and half-lies.

CLAREN

Correct! Bingo! On target! You win the prize! Have...a cigar!

Claren proffers his laser pointer, as if it were a cigar.

JUROR TWELVE

(dry) No thanks. Not my brand.

CLAREN

My point is eloquently stated by Juror Twelve. Why is it so crucial to reveal information on a subject to which the vast majority of Americans have already made up their minds? No matter how vehemently we expose the falsehoods, there will always be those who swear by them. The same with the real events. We can show picture after picture, but the skeptics in the crowd will always be skeptical. (pause) If the water is so muddied that the public will never see through it, who are we to try and clear it?

ARNIE

Because the truth shall set you free?

Claren approaches Arnie with the zeal of an evangelist.

CLAREN

But what is the truth, Mr. Kenn? What is true to you may be a matter of your own perception. Shouldn't we allow you to keep your perceptions, not disrupt your world? If you are sleepwalking on a window ledge fifteen stories above the ground, is it better to wake you to your danger, or let you continue back in through the safety of the window?

Another pause ensues, while the Jurors reflect.

JUROR ONE

That's what we're here to decide.

CLAREN

Yes, I believe it is.

INT - COURTROOM - DAY (2:30 PM)

The Jurors sit enthralled as they watch a taped interview with a 40-ish NATO SERGEANT, whose face is hidden in shadow, his voice disguised. The discomfort in his voice and manner are not concealed, however.

UNSEEN INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

Tell us in your own words, Sergeant, what it was like serving in NATO in the early 60s.

NATO SERGEANT (CONCEALED)

The only words I could use to describe the situation was damn hairy. The Soviets were in Berlin, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Poland, Hungary, all around us. We expected them to come charging over the hill at any moment.

UNSEEN INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

And how did UFO incidents make your job more difficult?

NATO SERGEANT (CONCEALED)

Difficult? Almost ended our job for us.

INSERT of many Radar screens, conversation continues as V.O.:

NATO SERGEANT (CONCEALED)

On multiple occasions, our radar would pick up formations of UFOs - and I'm not talking three or four, I mean dozens, fifty, a hundred - heading out of Russian airspace, screaming straight for our border. It was difficult not to think they were a precursor to an invasion. The only thing that seemed odd was their speed; they all did Mach 4 or better, which we knew the Russians weren't capable of.

SEQUENCE: Lights, radar images, scrambling in the control

room, the safety flipped off, arguing, more lights, faster images, more arguing.

NATO SERGEANT (CONCEALED)

Most times, the images would veer off to the North and disappear over the North Sea -

INTERVIEWER (V.O.)

Pardon the interruption, but you say your radar lost them?

CLOSE UP of the Sergeant, his voice just controlled barely:

NATO SERGEANT (CONCEALED)

No. I'm saying they disappeared. They either dropped straight into the ocean, or...or they evaporated like phantoms. After the third or fourth time that we nearly launched missiles over these events, NATO Command requested input from Washington and London. 'What are these things,' we asked. 'What are they doing? Do we fire? Do we ignore our radar?' You know what their response was? 'Don't worry about it. It's not important. Take no action against them - oh, and destroy all your radar tapes.'

SEQUENCE of a number of STAFF OFFICERS being ordered to destroy evidence. They look half perplexed and half outraged.

NATO SERGEANT (CONCEALED)

Well, to say we disagreed was putting it mildly. These things were damn frightening, and any time we come that close to nuclear launch, that is something to worry about. So in '63, NATO funded its own report, using European agencies that had no direct contact with Washington or London. Only twelve copies of the report were produced, and I was in charge of monitoring access to those documents, kept in a safe at NATO Headquarters in Brussels.

Another SEQUENCE, in a special NATO briefing room, the Command Sergeant and a 4-star GENERAL reading the report.

NATO SERGEANT (CONCEALED)

Only 4-stars and board Admirals were allowed to read it. The Report came up with these conclusions:

The SEQUENCE continues with shots of specific pages, the General looking up, more disturbed each time.

NATO SERGEANT (CONCEALED)

First: That in 1963, there were at least 4 identifiable species of Aliens investigating us, each unique in appearance and mission, as far as we could tell. One group was described as being so close to humans in appearance that they could walk undetected through NATO Headquarters itself - or The White House, or anywhere else, for that matter. One updated Report, completed in '92, puts the total of separate, identifiable species...at over a hundred.

SEQUENCE: CLOSE UPS of the Jury, all looking concerned.

NATO SERGEANT (CONCEALED)

Second: Their interest is not overtly hostile, since they don't engage our military. But they seem very concerned with our nuclear weapons.

JUROR TEN

(softly) Like they're trying to warn us.

JUROR ELEVEN

Or wake us up.

NATO SERGEANT (CONCEALED)

Third: That it's a damn good thing they're not hostile, because nothing we had then or now can come close to matching their craft in speed or maneuverability.

The V.O. and it's underlying video ends.

JUROR FOUR

So what are they doing here? Why Earth? Are we their idea of Disneyland? Load up the kids in the saucer, spend a weekend buzzing military bases?

CLAREN

Afraid it's more serious than that. Their interest increased when we began doing two things that could jeopardize any life off-world: experimenting with rockets, and developing nuclear weapons. Now, nuclear weapons are extremely dangerous, but as long as they're on this planet, the worst we could do is destroy all human life.

JUROR SEVEN

And life all over the world.

CLAREN

Which brings us back to your question: why? Why are they here? It might be difficult to believe this, but they are not here to save us. Warn us, perhaps, and we have begun to take their warnings about nukes quite seriously. But aside from warning us, they appear to be doing nothing to help us - possibly because they are quite disturbed by some of our common human traits.

The relations between the Jurors appear to deteriorate noticeably from this point on, almost turning into fighting.

JUROR TWO

What, they don't like our music?

JUROR EIGHT

They're probably tired of your jokes.

JUROR FIVE

Is it because we still have our aggressive primate side?

CLAREN

No. Apparently, there are other interstellar races that are still aggressive, though humans rank right up there in savagery. No, the thing that scares many of them is the fact that we learn so damnably quick.

JUROR THREE

Humans? (scoffs) Fast learners?

A SEQUENCE of B&W 16mm film clips of the Roswell crash site, strewn with strange materials and amazed troops and officers.

CLAREN

In 1947, when the Roswell craft went down, we discovered three items that we had never seen before: plastic wire, at a time when the best we could do was bullet-proof glass and Bakelite telephones; ceramic-metal airframes; and possibly the most important, miniaturized silicon chips with micro-sized pathways of conducting electrical systems - all precursors to our modern-day fiber-optic cable, stealth technology, and computer chips.

JUROR TEN

You mean they're all gifts from aliens?

VRASS

More like stolen goods. At first, the loss of that one craft didn't seem to them to be any big deal. But we learn fast. They aren't scared by our puny rockets or our feeble attempts at fission, but the speed at which we evolve frightens the hell out of them.

JUROR TWELVE

Frightens some of us, too.

CLAREN

Well, I think that's enough testimony for today. Mr. Vrass...

VRASS

Glasses, ladies and gentlemen. Arnie,
would you do the honors?

As the monitors DISPLAY the same images as before, we SEE the Jurors slide back into their meek, non-Courtroom personalities. The Camera MOVES down the line of Jurors and comes to rest in CLOSE UP on Juror Thirteen, smiling, seemingly unaffected.

INT - ARNIE'S ROOM - NIGHT (11:30 PM)

Arnie slips on his robe, goes to the window and stares out at the distant, dark lake. He slides open the door and goes out on the balcony. As he leans on the railing, he's startled:

SARAH

Hi! Having trouble sleeping?

ARNIE

Oh! You scared the hell out of me!
Excuse me - I'm Arnie.

SARAH

Yes, I know. I'm Juror Thirteen,
Sarah to my friends.

ARNIE

Hi. Glad to meet you.

He leans across the narrow gap between the balconies to shake her hand, but she doesn't let go right away.

SARAH

Hey, would you like to come over,
share a glass of wine?

ARNIE

No, no, I don't think so. Not
tonight. Maybe next time.

SARAH

All right. (lets go slowly) I'll hold
you to that.

ARNIE

Well...good night. See you in court!

SARAH

'See you in court.' (chuckles) You missed your calling!

She smiles as Arnie goes back inside, but once he's gone, her smile fades into something less joyful, more serious.

INT - COURTROOM - DAY (WEDNESDAY, 2:00 PM)

We SEE the Jurors in the middle of another series of arguments with Claren and Vrass, one that's apparently been brewing for awhile. Tensions are high.

JUROR NINE

You said that they, whoever they are, are not here to save us. What then?

VRASS

We represent part of their history, in a sense. We're them, millions of years in the past. There's good in us, and beauty, but also danger, and depravity. We're their crazy Uncle Edgar.

JUROR SEVEN

I don't like them flying around, watching us. Gives me the creeps.

Graphics ONSCREEN show specific locations across the world: Brazil, Chile, the North Sea, 4 places in the Pacific, 2 in Antarctica, 2 in Russia, and 4 in North America.

VRASS

The creeps, eh? Consider this: They're here, on this planet. We've identified no less than fifteen locations where continual UFO activity for over four decades strongly indicates some form of permanent bases.

JUROR ONE

Well, why haven't we done something?

A sequence detailing the next speech appears ONSCREEN. A U.S. nuclear submarine cruises out of the Panama Canal, floating on the surface, with a few CREW MEMBERS on the bridge.

CLAREN

There have been occasions where our military has come into direct contact with their craft. On October 2nd, 1974, the Nuclear Attack Submarine Bilouxi was steaming on the surface having just exited the Panama Canal. The captain stood watch on the flying bridge, with his exec and a handful of others. They spotted a single red light to port, on the far horizon.

The light grows, and affects the ship in an unusual way.

CLAREN

Suddenly, all their ship's systems failed - navigation, weapons control, the power in the reactor, everything went dead. Then this red light grew into a huge craft, circled their drifting ship once, then continued off to the north. Suddenly, all their systems came back online as if nothing had happened. How can we fight that kind of power? (pause) Arnie, play them the tape of the Cuban Migs.

SEQUENCE: Audio V.O. in background, Cuban, growing in volume and intensity. The Jurors become amazed and shaken.

CLAREN

These are the actual voices of a Cuban pilot and his flight of four Mig-23s, as picked up by one of our Key West listening posts. The lead pilot is telling his Ground Control officer that a bright light is closing with their aircraft, simultaneously visible to radar on the ground. The C.O. at the base orders him to open fire. The next voice you hear is the wingman - his Captain's plane has just been blown apart by the bright light, though they saw no missile.

Three of the Jurors have their hands covering their mouths.

JUROR EIGHT

But you've already said one of their discs was shot down?

VRASS

Yes, although that was more accidental than planned. We were testing a new high-powered radar transmitter, which apparently interfered with their guidance systems. Since then, the aliens that visit us have been prepared for our technology. We have received a few vehicles that -

JUROR TWO

Excuse me, Mr. Vrass. 'Received'?

VRASS

Yes, well, we, ah...traded for them.

JUROR ELEVEN

What have we learned from the craft?

IMAGES of impressive alien craft, designed for small pilots.

VRASS

Their propulsion systems are centuries ahead of ours. Microwave-induced paralysis beams. Electro-gravitational, possibly hyper-spatial engines. Invisibility-inducing shields. The problem is, they've made sure that very little is understandable at our level of science.

JUROR FOUR

You give an aborigine a wooden cart, he might figure out the wheel. You give him a Formula One race car, he'll turn it into a planter.

JUROR FIVE

And what did we give in return?

CLAREN

Pilots. Volunteers.

CLAREN

We didn't know at the time that they weren't coming back. And they always left us some of theirs as sort of... hostages. Ours have never returned, all of theirs have died in captivity.

JUROR THIRTEEN

You've given them people? Humans? To experiment on?

New GRAPHICS appear, screeching abducted cattle, then grisly up-close mutilations. Some Jurors look aghast. Others seem sick.

CLAREN

Only those races that wanted to trade. There are others who merely take what they want, when they want. Many of you are familiar with the cattle mutilations that increased during the late 70s. Cattle are surprisingly similar to humans in DNA makeup. Some races decided since we were going to butcher and eat these poor animals anyway, they wouldn't be missed.

JUROR THREE

But they still take humans?

CLAREN

Un-willingly? Certainly. As some of you here are personally aware, there have been tests done on selected humans. They study us, they tag us, they follow our lives, and sometimes, they take us for breeding material.

JUROR SIX

Why would they want our inferior DNA?

CLAREN

That's one question we've yet to answer. The current theories vary between saving part of us, if we really foul up our world, and saving them.

VRASS

It's possible that our DNA represents a sort of infusion of vitality. Their brains, our balls. Something like that.

JUROR SIX

Current theories? You mean, you don't communicate with them directly?

VRASS

Are you serious? When was the last time a zookeeper asked a tiger if it liked the decor of its cage?

JUROR ELEVEN

That's what we are to them? Animals?

CLAREN

Dangerous, unpredictable, and wildly entertaining. But don't take my word for it. We'll have a couple of guest speakers, as it were, on Monday. I'm sure you'll find them most interesting. So, enjoy your weekend. Forget your troubles - for awhile...

INT - YUKON BAR - NIGHT (10:30 PM)

Arnie sits at the end of the bar, twirling a tall glass of OJ and ice in his hands. Sarah saunters down the stairs.

SARAH

Well, here you are! (closer) Missed you at dinner.

ARNIE

Wasn't hungry.

Frank approaches, tossing a towel over his shoulder.

FRANK

What can I get you, miss?

SARAH

It depends. (to Arnie) How sloshed do you want me to get?

Arnie appears to not even hear her. She smiles and shrugs.

SARAH

Guess I'll just have an iced tea. (to Arnie) When I first noticed your detached attitude in court, I thought it was the equipment doing it to you. But now I see you really are preoccupied. So, are you like this at home, too?

ARNIE

Not really. I work days, my wife works nights. We don't see as much of each other as we used to.

SARAH

Well, there's your problem. You just need some attention.

She snuggles up to him, but he doesn't respond. She backs off.

SARAH

I didn't know you'd become a monk since you arrived.

ARNIE

(into space) This whole trial, Sarah, it's causing me a lot of trouble. Tried to call home a couple days ago. Couldn't even see the buttons on the phone! Before I left, I had a hard time remembering my email password. It's that damn computer system, the memory-erasing part, I just know it!

SARAH

It could be a number of things: too much stress, vitamin imbalance -

ARNIE

I know they're having trouble with their memory-erasing technique. (quieter) And I can prove it.

SARAH

How?

ARNIE

(looks around, then close to Sarah)
'In 1963, there were at least 4 identifiable species of Aliens investigating us, each unique in appearance and mission, as far as we could tell. One group was described as being so close to humans in appearance...'
(pause, studies Sarah)...that they could walk undetected through NATO Headquarters itself.'

SARAH

Good Lord! You still remember!

ARNIE

It's like I can't let go of them. It's as though they push my normal thoughts out of the way. (pause) Are you gonna to turn me in to Claren?

SARAH

Why should I? (sips, then regards Arnie) 'On October 2nd, 1974, the Nuclear Attack Submarine Bilouxi was steaming on the surface having just exited the Panama Canal.' See? You're not the only one with secrets.

ARNIE

(stunned) Are...are you having the same problem sleeping?

SARAH

If I am, it has nothing to do with the trial!

She leans closer, smiles, then shows him her Juror's glasses.

SARAH

See these? They're fake. They don't block my memory at all.

ARNIE

How do you get away with wearing those?

SARAH

I have friends in high places, Arnie.
Very high places.

ARNIE

(looks around) This isn't a good
place to talk. Let's get outta here.

SARAH

I've been waiting to hear that!

EXT - THE FRONT OF THE LODGE - NIGHT (11:00 PM)

They cross the narrow country lane, skirting the single street light. Behind and above, we SEE Falconetti on a high balcony watching them, talking into a small headset and mouthpiece.

FALCONETTI

Dove One and Number 13 are exiting the property...crossing the street, heading for the Trading Post...nah, let 'em go...Yeah, but don't tell his wife!

EXT - DOWN THE STREET - CONTINUING SHOT

We HEAR their conversation as they slowly walk into view.

SARAH

Are you at all curious about the visitors we're going to have on Monday?

ARNIE

Hell, I've seen enough aliens and UFOs in the files to last me for years. I don't need to see any up close.

SARAH

What do you think they'll look like?

ARNIE

Oh, probably those beautiful six-and-a-half foot tall Nordic types. Metallic jumpsuits. Real knockouts.

SARAH

(smiles) Do you think I'm a knockout?

ARNIE

Sarah, I'm married.

SARAH

Most men say 'happily' married.

ARNIE

(pause) I am happy.

SARAH

You sound as convincing as Vrass.

ARNIE

So, who do you think is in front now?
Vrass and those that want the info
released, or Claren and the forces
that want it all sealed up again?

SARAH

I don't believe the truth will ever
get out. Not unless some extraordi-
nary events happen first.

ARNIE

Oh, I don't know. I think it all has
to all come out, some day.

They look at objects displayed in the window of the store.
Antiques, crafts, souvenir sweaters, with hand-written signs.

ARNIE

Besides, what makes you so certain
the truth won't get out?

SARAH

Open your eyes. Our government is so
involved with Big Business, oil com-
panies, the 'military-industrial com-
plex,' they'd never let anything out
that could upset their precious apple
cart. Free energy for the masses?
Unlimited building materials from sand
and gravel? They'll have none of it.

ARNIE

You left out the 12-hour work week.

SARAH

Our government would do anything to keep these secrets. The question is, what would you do to release them?

ARNIE

I have an assignment here, Sarah. I intend to fulfill it.

SARAH

It's getting late, Arnie. Every person needs to -

ARNIE

Late? What time is it? Omigod, Jane's gonna be arriving from the airport any minute! Sorry, Sarah I gotta go!

EXT - IN FRONT OF THE TRADING POST - NIGHT (ANOTHER VIEW)

Arnie turns and hurries back to the Lodge, visible in the distance, as it begins to rain. Sarah smiles sadly and turns away. She rounds the corner and spots a low outbuilding with a pay phone on the wall. She pauses to collect her thoughts, then begins dialing. Finally, there's a dial tone.

SARAH'S MOM (V.O. FROM RECEIVER)

Hello?

SARAH

Hello, ma? It's your Sarah Jane.

SARAH'S MOM (V.O. FROM RECEIVER)

Oh, hello, dear! Why, I haven't heard from you in ages! How is everything? Are you married yet?

SARAH

No, Ma, I'm not married yet. Look, I just called and see how you were doing.

INT - MERLE'S SERVICE STATION, REAR - NIGHT (CONTINUATION)

Overheard by one of the Black Uniformed Guards, are both sides of Sarah's conversation, as a transcript scrolls down one of a bank of monitors in front of him.

SARAH'S MOM (V.O. FROM BUG)

Oh, I'm doing just fine, Sarah honey.
Doctor says I'll be back on my feet
soon as the hip mends. How's your cold?

SARAH (V.O. FROM BUG)

Oh, I got over that weeks ago. Took
all that vitamin C and those awful
zinc tablets, just like you said.
Cold disappeared in two days. Still
not getting enough sleep, though.

The Guard looks up for an OK at Merle, who nods in agreement.

EXT - IN FRONT OF THE TRADING POST - NIGHT (CONTINUATION)

As Sarah talks, she fiddles with the cord nervously.

SARAH

So, Ma, I met this cute guy
here...where am I? Oh, I'm on assign-
ment for the Church. Anyway, he's
kinda cute, in a nerdy sort of
way...Married? Yeah, he's married...

SARAH'S MOM (V.O. FROM RECEIVER)

Now, you're not going to -

SARAH

No, Ma, I won't, not again. I promise.
...Look, I just wanted to say hi, see
how you were doing. Um, take care of
that hip, OK? Listen to what the doc-
tor tells you.

INT - DARKENED COMPUTER ROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUATION)

We SEE a live transcription of the conversation between
Sarah and her Mom on a computer screen, similar to Merle's.
Only this time, we HEAR Sarah's 'Mom,' live in the same room.

SARAH'S MOM

I will, honey. And stay away from that
married man. Remember, there's always a
good single man just around the corner.
Keep an eye out for him. Be well. Bye!

The screen contains a second column with a different set of text: a translation. This column contains the following:

DECODED CONVERSATION (INSERT)

Arnold Kenn not responding to overtures. Alien influence appears more demonic than anticipated. No appearance that the trial will open files. Suggest switching to Option Two.

Behind 'Mom,' Reverend Parlos reads the deciphered code.

REVEREND PARLOS

Time to play our next card.

INT - JERRY NAPLES' BEDROOM - NIGHT (FRIDAY, MIDNITE)

In a darkened bedroom, the phone rings. On the night stand by the phone we SEE in CLOSE UP a folded copy of the LA Times, with a story whose byline reads Jerry Naples. Sleepily, Jerry Naples, a tired but still-physical 43, rolls over and grabs the phone.

JERRY

Yeah, yeah, hello...Yeah, this is Naples. Who the hell's this?...What? Who is this?...Wh - a secret trial? ...Wait, lemme get a pen. (writes)... Yeah...Yeah, Lake Quinault Lodge ...Yeah, but...Hey, wait, wait!

He hangs up, grumbles and rolls over to sleep. Three seconds later, he throws off the sheets and swings his feet out of bed.

JERRY

Damn! Why can't I have a normal life like everyone else?!

INT - ARNIE'S ROOM - NIGHT (FRIDAY, 12:15 AM)

Inside the room, we SEE the door burst open and two bags fly into the room, accompanied by a man and woman's laughter. We hear more laughter, then some gasps and shouts from the woman.

JANE

No! No, Arnie, stop it! Please!

Arnie carries Jane "across the threshold," like newlyweds.

JANE

(laughing) You don't have to do this!

ARNIE

Oh, but I have to. I never did this before. (stumbling a little) Remember our honeymoon?

JANE

That weekend you had to work late? I drank the champagne in the bridal suite alone? Great start for our marriage.

He puts her down and stretches his back.

ARNIE

Things looking up. You're here, right?

From out in the hall, we SEE them embrace. He kicks the door closed, and their combined laughter FADES.

INT - ROOSEVELT ROOM - DAY (SATURDAY, 10:30 AM)

Arnie and Jane stroll in as the changeover is being made from breakfast to lunch. Michael the Waiter is working.

ARNIE

Morning! Are we too late for breakfast?

MICHAEL

Sorry, sir, but we change over at ten. We'll be seating in half an hour...?

They wander away, still arm in arm but somewhat distracted.

JANE

What'll we do for thirty minutes?

ARNIE

(sly) I have an idea....

JANE

Give me a little time before we do that again. My wrists are still sore!

INT - MAIN LOBBY - DAY (SATURDAY, CONTINUATION)

As they wander out into the Lobby, they spot the oversized chess set by the fireplace, with a cozy arrangement of chairs nearby.

ARNIE

I've got an idea. How 'bout a quick game of chess?

JANE

No, Arnie, you beat me every time.

ARNIE

I'll take it easy on you. I'll play with one hand tied behind my back?

Claren's voice resonates from behind them:

CLAREN

You need someone more your equal.

ARNIE

I didn't know you played, Senator.

CLAREN

(setting the pieces up) You'd almost say, it was a prerequisite where I came from. (to Jane) Jefferson Dean Claren, at your service.

JANE

Jane Kenn. Say, how do you know you're Arnie's equal?

Without discussion, they quickly choose sides (hidden pawn), then begin a complex offense-defense game, Claren with the White pieces, positioning early, slowed by Arnie's aggressive defense. They continue to play during the ensuing dialogue.

CLAREN

I know quite a bit about your husband, madam. He's prone to making sudden moves that are designed to catch others off-guard, then he mops up by exploiting their indecision.

JANE

You are talking chess, aren't you?

CLAREN

Of course! (takes a pawn, confident)
But sometimes, the wiser course is to
plan for the long-term, and wait for
your advantages to come to you slowly.
(slaps a bishop into place) The
strength is in the planning.

ARNIE

I don't have the patience of a saint,
Senator. I've found that if you want
something done, you usually have to
do it yourself. (pins Claren's knight)

JANE

Arnie tells me you're a whiz in Court.

CLAREN

(caught off guard) Does he?

JANE

Says the Tobacco lawyers don't stand
a chance against you.

CLAREN

(at ease again) Ah, yes, to be sure.
(exchanges his knight for Arnie's
bishop) I've...had a lot of practice.

Jane drifts away. The game, and the conversation, intensifies.

ARNIE

Tell me, Senator, why are you on the
side you're on?

CLAREN

I find the white pieces provide a dis-
tinct advantage. (pause) You mean, in
court? I decided long ago, there were
things our people weren't meant to
know. I felt it was better to protect
them from the dangers of those things
they couldn't possibly understand.

ARNIE

So you'd sell our freedom right down
the river?

CLAREN

My boy, we have more freedom in this
country than we can handle. Look at
the misuses of all the freedoms we do
have: handguns, alcohol, the Internet,
our schools. Why, we'd drown if we
had any more freedom.

ARNIE

But is that for one man to decide?

CLAREN

Why not? In our illustrious history,
there have been many crucial times
when men of insight and strong moral
fiber stepped up and led this country
by strength of will. From Washington
and Lincoln through Franklin Delano,
those men set a course for this nation,
and the public outcry be damned!
(takes Arnie's rook with his Queen)

ARNIE

So you place yourself in the same
caliber as Washington and Lincoln?

CLAREN

I believe they would do the same, in
my place.

ARNIE

Who was it that said (as he picks up
his knight), you can fool all the
people some of the time, and some of
the people all the time? (and then
forks Claren's King and Queen)

CLAREN

(irritated) I don't know. Paul
Reubens?

Jane returns and finds them staring, no words, just thinking.

JANE

I think the restaurant is open for
lunch...honey? Dear?

Jane shrugs as the Camera CLOSES IN on the chess board, and
the scene CONTINUES right into the next scene.

INT - MAIN LOBBY - DAY (SATURDAY, 2:00 PM) (CONTINUATION)

As the Camera PULLS BACK, we SEE that Arnie and Claren don't
appear to have moved, but there are plates of food all
around, and many fewer pieces. Jane's sandwich is the only
one more than barely touched. They're down to two Kings, a
bishop and a knight. Both are engrossed.

ARNIE

Ready to give in?

CLAREN

To you? Hardly!

JANE

Isn't this about where you offer each
other a draw?

CLAREN

Madam, I am not in the habit of
offering 'draws.'

ARNIE

Besides, I have him right where I
want him.

JANE

Whose turn is it, anyway?

CLAREN

His.

ARNIE

It is not, it's yours!

JANE

All right, this game is officially
over. Excuse me, Mr. Claren, but I'm
taking my husband for a walk.

ARNIE

But it's raining!

JANE

That's because (she offers him his coat) we're in a rain forest!

They don their coats, as Arnie and Claren share a glance of mutual esteem. As Jane leaves, Arnie leans over and whispers:

ARNIE

I had you beat!

CLAREN

(studying board) Dream on, dear boy!

EXT - THE RAIN FOREST ACROSS FROM THE LODGE - DAY (3:00 PM)

They walk together through the lush forest. The path winds through giant sawn-through trees, beside the trail. They talk quietly, looking about them, not at each other.

JANE

So, how's the trial going? Is the computer equipment working okay?

ARNIE

A little trouble with the - uhhh...

JANE

With the what?

ARNIE

Oh, the, ah...built-in sound system.

JANE

Can't they replace the speakers?

ARNIE

Uh, no. Special proprietary equipment. We'll just have to grin and bear it until the trial's over.

JANE

Tell me those Tobacco bastards are gonna lose.

ARNIE

I sure hope the bad guys lose.

Arnie sneezes violently. They stop. Jane fishes for a kleenex.

JANE

Honey, how long have you had this cold?

ARNIE

(blows) Just started. Oh, I hope I'm not catching something.

JANE

Wanna head back?

ARNIE

No, we can stay out for a little while longer. (sniffs)

EXT - THE RAIN FOREST ACROSS FROM THE LODGE - DAY (NEW VIEW)

They wander through a clearing overgrown with ferns and moss.

JANE

Are you okay, out here on your own?

ARNIE

Not bad. The trial's interesting. I get to play an important role in the whole thing.

JANE

That was where you were supposed to say, 'I miss you.'

ARNIE

Oh, I do miss you, I do! (hugs her)

JANE

All right, apology accepted. So, have you met any interesting people here? Besides Claren?

ARNIE

Oh, not really. Don't get a chance to socialize much. Rules of the trial.

JANE

(unconvinced) Uh-huh...

They meet Falconetti, leaning on a wooden railing by a waterfall. The rain continues, plopping on the undergrowth.

ARNIE

Here's someone I have met! Jane, this is Dennis Falconetti. He helps out on the trial. He's in charge of -

FALCONETTI

Pleasure to meet you, Mrs. Kenn.

JANE

The pleasure's all mine. So, what do you do on the trial, Mr. Falconetti?

FALCONETTI

(looks ahead) I, uh, solve problems.

JANE

Like a math professor?

FALCONETTI

(chuckles) Something like that. Happy birthday, by the way.

JANE

(surprised) Thank you!

Jane wanders closer to the waterfall, leaving the two men.

FALCONETTI

Must be nice to have your wife with you. I have to stay away from mine for weeks at a time. Sure is a great temptation when you're apart. Thankfully, I've never knuckled under.

ARNIE

You must have very high morals.

FALCONETTI

Higher than some, I suppose. Well, see you around.

Arnie ponders his words as Falconetti strolls back up the trail. Jane returns and takes Arnie's hand. They head the other way.

INT - THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE ARNIE'S ROOM - NIGHT (SEQUENCE)

The scene FADES IN to the unmistakable sound of Arnie and Jane making love in his room. As they finish, we HEAR Arnie sneeze, then a muffled conversation. We barely HEAR Arnie offer to get a soda, then a short while later, his door opens. Arnie, in his bathrobe and slippers, walks down the hall, to the right and approaches the soda machine. He inserts a dollar bill, but it won't take. He tries a couple more times, then HEARS:

SARAH

Let me slip it in.

Arnie spins around, and finds Sarah in a revealing night-gown. Slowly, she slides her hand around his, takes the dollar bill and guides it into the slot, all the while licking her lips. She presses her body closer, moving in for a seductive kiss. She backs him up against the machine, they're almost intertwined, her body close against his, her hand moving down to his barely-tied belt, Arnie resisting futilely, until with a WHRRR and a loud KLUNG KER-KLUNK, the soda drops. The noise snaps Arnie back to reality, and they separate.

ARNIE

Thanks, uh..thanks!

He picks up his soda. Still staring at her, he hurries around the corner, bumping into the hanging fire extinguisher with an audible "OOF!" Sarah spies coins in the change slot.

SARAH

Arnie, you forgot your change!

ARNIE (O.C.)

'S okay! Keep it!

She bends down, gets the coins, tosses them lightly in her hand, shakes her head, then drops the coins into the slot.

EXT/INT - NEAR MERLE'S SERVICE STATION - NIGHT (SEQUENCE)

Jerry Naples drives by, an unfolded map and a partially-eaten sandwich on the front seat. He SEES Merle and smiles.

Merle smiles and nods in reply. The camera ZOOMS IN and we SEE his California plates, which also APPEAR on a monitor, displaying his name, address, profession. We then SEE trailing a short distance behind Jerry is a vintage black Cadillac, with three black-suited, pale-skinned occupants. One of the Black-Uniformed Guards communicates via headset to Merle.

GUARD (V.O.)

Shouldn't we send someone after him?

MERLE

Nah. Let the Boys have him.

Inside the back room, we HEAR Merle's evil laughter through the Guard's headset. The Guard appears worried, and redials.

EXT - THE FRONT OF THE LODGE - NIGHT (CONTINUATION)

Falconetti is on his balcony, watching the road thru binocs.

GUARD (V.O.)

Sir? This is Post One. We have a visitor, a reporter from L.A. He's, ah, being followed by three 'Silencers.'

FALCONETTI

(lowers binocs) Understood. Out.

GUARD (V.O.)

But sir, shouldn't we -

FALCONETTI

I said I understood! Now get off this line! (shakes his head) Poor bastard.

EXT/INT - THE ROAD TO THE LODGE - NIGHT (11:00 PM)

Jerry Naples drives down the winding, dark road, occasionally glancing at the map. He SEES a pair of bright lights in his rear-view mirror, which become extremely bright, and seem to get so close, so bright, that he shields his eyes...

EXT - THE FRONT OF THE LODGE - NIGHT (CONTINUATION)

Falconetti is staring at the ground, when he HEARS a car approaching. He focuses his binocs, but SEES only the black

Cadillac. Two frightening 'Silencers' ride in the front, while the one in the back stares out the window at Falconetti. No other car passes. Falconetti shudders visibly, then straightens.

INT - ARNIE'S ROOM - DAY (SUNDAY, 11 AM)

After a long, dark moment, we FADE IN on a cheerful sunny morning. The SOUND of Arnie working on a portable Mac. His bag with the headset and transfer disks is by his feet. A KNOCK sounds at his half-open door. Sarah pokes her head in:

SARAH

Knock knock? Anyone home?

ARNIE

Dad bedder be roob service.

SARAH

It's your soda machine savior.

ARNIE

I'b locking by head clozed! Clig!
There, id's locked!

She looks around and notices all traces of Jane are gone.

SARAH

Looks like you're back on your own.

ARNIE

(through closed eyes) Loog, Sarah,
you're a dice girl, but I'm barried -
habbily barried, embasis on 'habbily.'

SARAH

That's okay, Arnie, I really wanted
to just come by and talk. (looks at
the screen) What're you working on?

ARNIE

Jusd someding I'b worging on id by
spare tibe. Buldi-bedia bresentation.
I'b kind of a fan of Bink Floyd.

She stares at his pack with the headset and transfer disks. She leans closer, as Arnie leans an equal distance away.

ARNIE

We're nod supposed to be poolig aroud
lige dis. (sneezes) Dat'll ged us
both gicked oud.

SARAH

They won't kick me off the trial.

She SEES the disks in his pack a red one half way down.

ARNIE

Well, my bosition isn't so cerdain.
(blows his nose, closes his eyes)
Look, would you blease just go?

JANE

All right, all right if that's what
you really want.

Sarah leans down just before she gets up, then crosses th
room and leaves. He opens his eyes when he hears the door
CLOSE. Arnie seems satisfied that she's gone.

ARNIE

Thank God she left before I god into
real drouble.

Arnie pulls his head back in, and soon we HEAR him working
as before, and Arnie humming contentedly again. But within
his pack, the stack is missing the single red disk.

INT - COURTROOM - DAY (MONDAY, 9:45 AM)

Four Guards are visible beyond the two glass-topped main
doors. The Jurors are expectant. Arnie has a box of Kleenex
in front of him, and pulls three out to deal with his now-
raging cold. Claren and Vrass exchange a look. Even Falconetti
is in Court for this event, signifying its importance.

FALCONETTI

Hey, Arnie, how's the cold?

ARNIE

Doh, dot doo bad. (blows) Dould be
worse. Dould be rainig.

FALCONETTI

Surprised you didn't stay in bed. They could have gotten along without you.

ARNIE

Are you didding? I want to dee dem.

FALCONETTI

Yeah. (looks towards door) A lot of people want to see them.

Suddenly, there is an unseen commotion beyond the double doors. The Guards react in surprise, facing the stairs. More commotion, then the Guard nearest the door leans in.

GUARD SIX

Excuse me, sir. They don't want to take the I.D. tests.

FALCONETTI

Well then, don't make them! (sarcastically) I'm sure we can trust them.

Guard Six backs up, one door held wide. From beyond we HEAR:

MAT-SEE-ESS

Would you please open them both?

Guard Five joins Six as they hold both doors wide. Through the middle strides an amazingly beautiful, six-and-a-half foot tall Nordic 'god,' the only word to describe him. Sarah looks impressed, and shoots a glance to Arnie, who shrugs in reply.

MAT-SEE-ESS

My thanks to you, strong one.

Behind him follows an achingly beautiful female, equal in height to her male companion. They walk slowly, regally, and their long shimmery clothing hides their legs so that they appear to levitate into the room. As they pass by Arnie's desk, his kleenex and his notes seem to flutter in an unseen breeze. He holds down the papers with his kleenex-filled hands as they pass by.

JUROR TWO

(to One) Do you smell cinnamon?

JUROR FIVE

Hey Four, why don't you ask them what cologne they use?

JUROR FOUR

Not me. I don't want my brain zapped.

The doors finally close behind them, with the Guards, all six of them, staring through the windows in wonder. Falconetti looks sternly at them, and they resume their hard, impersonal manner and retake their positions. The Two speak slowly, rolling each word over as they sound them, as if English were both a labor and an unusual joy for them.

MAT-SEE-ESS

I extend our greetings to all of you for your kind invitation to speak this day. It gives me pleasure to see you again, Claren called Jefferson, and also you, Vrass called James. (clipped, to Falconetti) Hallo, Dennees.

KELL-EN-OH

We have come to speak with you, to bring you the insights of what is happening to you, and your world.

CLAREN

You're welcome - from all of us. I know how, ah, inconvenient it is for you to meet with us in person.

MAT-SEE-ESS

No more inconvenient than bringing all of you to us, though I expect, less troubling for you. (smiles) I am the one called Mat-see-ess. My companion here is Kell-en-oh.

JUROR EIGHT

Can you tell us where you're from?

MAT-SEE-ESS

We could be from anywhere, but next week, we'll be in Greece. (pause, smiles) If that's any help.

JUROR TEN

Forgive me for saying this, but...

KELL-EN-OH

Speak the words in your head.

JUROR TEN

Well...you look so...human. Are you?

VRASS

Now, that's not very po -

KELL-EN-OH

(head at an angle) You are afraid,
yet we appear to you as one of your
own. How strange. I would have thought
one who has seen us so many times,
would be accustomed to us by now.

The others look suspiciously at Ten, and he squirms a little.

MATT-SEE-ESS

We have been called here, to your
world, but not by you. We have visit-
ed here since before your ancestors
walked on four legs. I must say, it
was a better place then.

JUROR THREE

If we didn't call you, then who did?

MATT-SEE-ESS

There is within your world a spirit,
an energy, that called out to us long
ago. We, and other lifeforms like us,
have searched many galaxies for
worlds like this, gardens of life and
possibility. This world has been in
much pain, especially in the last
fifty of your years. (grim) You have
done much to trouble its spirit.

Arnie is staring at Kell-en-oh. Through his P.O.V., we SEE that they appear different to him, somehow larger, wider, and darker, but vague and indistinct. He shakes his head, then blows his nose. As he looks up slowly from his kleenex, his

mouth drops open. From his P.O.V., Arnie finally gets a clear view: they are not human at all, but look like some form of hideously large honey bee. They have stubby wings, which must be the cause of the gentle breeze. Kell-en-oh feels his gaze on her back, and she glides closer. In a daze, he says:

ARNIE

Pherebones. You're using pherebones to
bake us see what you want us to see.

KELL-EN-OH

WWhat did you say?

ARNIE

Oh, ub, dothing. Dorry.

KELL-EN-OH

(tilts her head) Why do you not speak
the words that are in your head? You
conceal what you think, what you do
not want others to know. Many of you
also speak one thing, yet do another.

From her P.O.V., she singles out Claren, Falconetti, then Sarah, who looks uncomfortable and shifts in her seat.

ARNIE

You have dome forb of ESB?

KELL-EN-OH

You are Kenn, the one they call Ahr-
nee. You are quite perceptive. (tilts
her head) I see an important role that
you will play, in the opening of the
ways between our worlds. A role none
but you can play.

JUROR SIX

Maybe they could read my palm next.

MAT-SEE-ESS

(to Six) Yes, we could foretell your
future, if you could handle it. It's
not that difficult. All you have to
do is travel into the future, then
return. Simple.

JUROR NINE

You make it sound like you're bopping down to the local 7-11.

MAT-SEE-ESS

In your future, you too will come to see time-travel as possible, even easy. If you learn how to survive.

JUROR NINE

But isn't that why you're here? To help us survive these next few years?

MAT-SEE-ESS

You fail to understand. You are not the reason we are here.

JUROR ELEVEN

Then why are you here?

The two 'gods' glide about the room, speaking closely to each Juror in turn. The Jurors are intimidated.

MAT-SEE-ESS

The spirits of your world have called out to us. We are here for them, the lifeforms that populate your world.

JUROR THREE

I get it. You're environmentalists.

KELL-EN-OH

Humans have the strangest ability to deride what they do not understand, to laugh at what they do not appreciate. (unbearably close to Three) How many worlds do you think can harbor life?

JUROR THREE

(uncomfortable) Well,, uh -

KELL-EN-OH

Where the element you call water neither freezes nor boils? How many worlds are there that are not struck repeatedly by planetary debris?

JUROR THREE

(uncomfortable) Well, surely there are millions...billions.

KELL-EN-OH

And how many can you get to?

Juror Three realizes his chastisement, and looks ashamed.

KELL-EN-OH

You see, you humans are approaching a window in your history. Never before have there been so many of you on your world, doing so much damage and destruction. How much of it can be stopped, or reversed in time, is up to you and you alone.

Kell-en-oh waves a hand, and the monitors come alive. Scenes of pristine wilderness contrast with devastated areas: the destroyed rain forest, strip mines, polluted rivers.

MAT-SEE-ESS

Out of the many millions of planets we have visited, this one you call Earth is truly a rare and wondrous place. But you who inhabit it, you do not appreciate its bounty. You shoot its creatures for sport, you dig giant holes to recover a handful of tiny clear stones, you drain vast reservoirs of oil to power your toys. You pollute your oceans and destroy the protection of your atmosphere. Your leaders (she looks directly at Claren) know the risks you take, yet would rather have profits now, at any cost.

CLAREN

I think we're digressing a little from our -

MAT-SEE-ESS

You will sit and you will listen!

Claren sits down hard, almost like he was commanded.

MAT-SEE-ESS

Yes, there is a quarantine of your world. You think we would allow you to leave your world, only to go to some other planet and foul it as you have fouled this one? You have such potential, both for good acts and bad.

JUROR SIX

But it is true that you, or others like you, have been here before, and have helped us evolve?

KELL-EN-OH

We tried to instill in you a deeper appreciation for what you call civilization: peace, prosperity, community, harmony. But even with all the benefits you have received, you still do not appreciate the greatest resource you have: your birth-world, the planet where you first walked.

MAT-SEE-ESS

There have been many lifeforms like you before, who have dominated all they came across as if it were their right, without a thought for the consequence. They stripped their worlds of its resources, then spread like a plague throughout the nearest stars, stripping them in turn, until they burned out like a fire from within. Nothing was left of them but barren worlds and empty dreams.

KELL-EN-OH

We, and others like us, have made it our mission to keep you from destroying more than the one world you have been given. If you cannot take care of this one, the world of your birth, how can you be entrusted with any others?

JUROR TWO

What gives you the right to judge us?

He waves his hand again, and now the screens show horrible injustices one after another, from the Inquisition and Hitler to the terrors of Stalin and Pol Pot.

MAT-SEE-ESS

Someone has to judge you, just as you judged the Cathars unworthy to survive, or the Blackfeet, or the Kurds. You see, what you do to yourselves is allowable for us to do to you. You complain about abductions? Horrific experiments? Imprisonment without permission? Which of these things have you not done to yourselves?

JUROR TEN

I have to agree with him there. About the only thing we haven't done to ourselves, is forgive and forget.

KELL-EN-OH

And the time left for your race is drawing short. Even as your ancestors the Mayans foretold, great changes will take place before the year you call 2012. If you have not awakened by then, you may not have another chance.

VRASS

But you need to give us just a little more time! Look at how much we've accomplished in the last few years!

Mat-see-ess turns the screens off with a despondent motion.

MAT-SEE-ESS

Oh, you have wrought such changes. Why, in the last twenty of your years, you have managed to in-crease the temperature of your planet two degrees, you have reduced the Arctic ice cap by forty per cent, you have eliminated a third of the Amazon rain forest, you have made three percent of all species extinct - shall I continue? (dry) Oh yes, you have accomplished so much!

KELL-EN-OH

Mat-see-ess, you must be forgiving -

MAT-SEE-ESS

(to Kell-en-oh) Are they forgiving as they hunt the whales to extinction, or the elephants, or the great cats? If it were up to me, I would implement the Removal Plan immediately, without a moment's hesitation or regret.

ARNIE

Excuse be - the reboval blan?

Kell-en-oh approaches closer, waves her hand like a magician in front of Arnie's cringing face - and his cold is gone!

KELL-EN-OH

It has been done to save other worlds before yours. If the removal of one race can be of benefit to the rest of the planet, and proof can be established that the world may die without intervention, then that race is removed.

ARNIE

(sniffs, then inhales deeply) My cold! It's gone!

KELL-EN-OH

It should correct your eyesight as well. (to the others) It is a shame that all your problems cannot be cured so easily. But you must learn these things for yourselves. Only then can you grow, and truly evolve.

MAT-SEE-ESS

There are those of us who believe that no further benefit can come of human evolution, and that you should be stopped immediately. You are only capable of building upon hate, ignorance, greed and fear. I only wish there was something in your history to prove me wrong.

A raspy sound is HEARD over the speaker system, as the monitors come alive with images. All eyes go to the screens to WATCH the ensuing show, except the Aliens' and Claren's, who notice Arnie's hand retreating from the transfer disk he's just inserted. The sound is a SCRATCHY RECORD, Woodie Guthrie singing "This Land Is Your Land," accompanying images of good things humans have done in the recent past: saving beached dolphins, cleaning up parks, archeological digs in Egypt, food distribution in Africa, the Berlin Wall coming down, other stirring 'success stories.'

The music BLENDS into other songs: Mark Knopfler singing the "We are fools to make war" section from "Brothers In Arms," accompanying images of non-contact sports like the Eco Challenge and mountain climbing; "Americans On Parade," with Edward R. Murrow and Lindbergh; the song "There Goes My Hero," with underlying scenes of Jimmy Stewart and John Wayne standing up to Liberty Valance, and Red Cross workers aiding hurricane survivors.

The last song is Pink Floyd, a selection from "Echoes," paired up with home movies of a family enjoying picnics, raking leaves, birthdays, children going to school, babies learning to walk. The words resonate throughout the room:

"ECHOES" LYRICS (V.O.)

*Cloudless everyday you fall upon my
waking eyes,
Inviting and inciting me to rise.
And through the window in the wall
Come streaming in on sunlight wings
A million bright ambassadors
of morning.
And no one sings me lullabies,
And no one makes me close my eyes,
And so I throw the windows wide
And call to you across the sky...*

The music FADES OUT on dramatic symphonic melodies, while the last image is of the same family, now gathered around a flickering campfire, arms around each other, looking up at the vast, star-filled sky overhead.

KELL-EN-OH

(to Mat-See-Ess) As I said, they have such potential.

MAT-SEE-ESS

(grudgingly) I see your point.

ARNIE

I hated when they said that in school.

KELL-EN-OH

Potential places a burden on you, yes, but it also inspires those who desire inspiration. (to Mat-see-ess) You think they should be allowed to continue?

MAT-SEE-ESS

(dry) For a few more weeks?

KELL-EN-OH

For another generation, at least!

MAT-SEE-ESS

Oh. (considers) I am unsure.

KELL-EN-OH

They have earned that much, surely?

MAT-SEE-ESS

They have not earned a thing! And do not call me Shirley! (smiles) But I do have a soft spot for their humor. (softly to Claren, as he drifts by) You have until 2012 - but that's it!

The two drift out of the room, to the staring appraisals of Jurors and Guards alike. Claren regains his composure, crosses to Arnie, and while studying their retreating forms, whispers:

CLAREN

You had that ready on a transfer disk, didn't you?

ARNIE

(privately) Something I cooked up in my spare time.

CLAREN

(to Arnie) How much else have you kept secret, Mr. Kenn?

ARNIE

No more than you, Mr. Claren.

The look of respect from the chess game passes between them.

EXT - IN FRONT OF THE TRADING POST - DAY (MONDAY, 4:00 PM)

The same low outbuilding with the pay phone where Sarah made her previous call. Low clouds scud across the sky. She's on the phone, trying to avoid looking at a pair of tourists who are window shopping.

SARAH

Yes, mom...but I don't see...of course, I'll listen to you. You're my mother...but - but I like him. It doesn't matter that he's married, he's... Yes... Yes, I know you're only looking out for my best interests.

INT - DARKENED COMPUTER ROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUATION)

We SEE Reverend Parlos, as Jane's 'Mother' carries on the conversation from this end.

SARAH'S MOM

You'd be perfect for Mrs. Jenkins' son, Carl. He's got everything a girl needs: good job, nice house, and you know he's had a crush on you ever since junior high. So, when you come back from this retreat you're on, you'll go out with him?...Good. I'll tell Mrs. Jenkins. She'll be so pleased.

Parlos looks over the screen, and READS this translation:

COMPUTER MONITOR (INSERT)

No sign of Naples. Will implement Final Option this week.

Parlos nods and smiles.

EXT - IN FRONT OF THE TRADING POST - DAY (CONTINUATION)

Sarah sounds resigned as she ends her call.

SARAH

All right, Mom. You know I'd never
refuse you anything...I'll call you
before I leave...OK. Love you. 'Bye.

She hangs up the phone and heads to the Lodge, hanging her head.

EXT - RURAL HIGHWAY SOMEWHERE IN WASHINGTON - DAY (TUESDAY)

All is silent, until we HEAR the BUZZ of a near-by fly. Next, we HEAR Claren's voice FADE IN as a V.O., commenting on the previous day's visitors. We then SEE the interior of a modern car in CLOSE UP: a half-eaten sandwich on the seat, a plastic UFO keychain in the ignition, modern sunglasses on the floor beside an occupied shoe and an unfolded map. By now we know this is Naples' car, so when the camera slowly crawls up his pants leg, to his chest, his outstretched grasping hands, to his purple neck and blotchy face, his eyes bugged-out and unmoving, we can guess what's happened.

CLAREN (V.O.)

I want to apologize for the rudeness
our guests displayed during their visit
here yesterday. I assure you I had no
idea they were going to treat you all
this way. I assure you they did not re-
present the opinion, nor the attitude,
of the Government's side of this case.

Another SOUND is evident, that of a police car two way RADIO in the background. Two STATE POLICEMEN appear, visible through the windows, inspecting the car. They look closer at the body.

FIRST STATE TROOPER

I'd say he died before his car left
the road.

SECOND STATE TROOPER

I'm no coroner, but it sure looks
like a heart attack to me.

INT - COURTROOM - DAY (CONTINUATION)

Four GUARDS walk slowly through the main double doors. The middle two carry a heavy metal case between them, locked to Guard 3's wrist.

CLAREN

Yesterday you all had a wonderful little meeting with some actual off-worlders. Today, you'll get a chance to see one of their 'toys.'

Guard 3 unlocks the case but waits for permission to open it. Vrass steps forward to take over.

VRASS

Inside this box is an artifact that crashed outside the tiny town of Liberty, Ohio, north of Dayton, in December, 1988. We learned of the landing site courtesy of Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and within four hours, the object was picked up, the sight sanitized and all our personnel out of the area. But a local police officer filed a report, and eight years later, an intrepid UFO investigator heard about the incident and began an investigation.

Vrass circles the case, covered in yellow tags, as he talks.

VRASS

However, this incident now becomes special. In 1996, the investigator called Ohio information for the Liberty City police phone number. Instead, he was given the number for the Liberty Township Police.

JUROR EIGHT

Different location?

VRASS

The opposite side of the state! The investigator called up the Liberty Township Police and took down their information, but it wasn't until weeks later that he realized he'd uncovered a completely separate incident.

At a nod from Vrass, Arnie calls up AUDIO tapes from the

second incident, harried Dispatchers and amazed Policemen, talking about a fire-and-light UFO, all in BACKGROUND V.O.

VRASS

But this new event was so well documented - 911 tapes, witnesses that included dozens of police officers, FAA controllers, even Air Force base personnel - that he totally forgot about the first incident and concentrated on the second.

JUROR TEN

You sound almost proud.

CLAREN

Merely in awe of their subtlety.

JUROR TWO

'They?' You mean, aliens redirected this investigation?

VRASS

We can't say for sure, except we know we didn't do it. Interestingly, when we tracked down the directory assistance operator, we discovered she'd been an abductee.

Seven rubs a scoop mark above her right ankle. The V.O. ends.

JUROR ONE

So, what were they covering up? What fell out of the sky that night, that they didn't want anyone to know about?

At Vrass' nod, the four Guards unlock the case. Inside, through a mist of CO2, Vrass reaches in and retrieves a small, round object. He holds it up and motions to Arnie.

VRASS

(slowly) There's another aspect concerning this Artifact, that we have not yet touched upon. Arnie, please call up file S8-491/225.

A VIDEO, apparently shot from a spacecraft, SHOWS the curvature of the Earth in the lower left, with stars upper right.

VRASS

In September '91, Space Shuttle mission STS-48 was performing a series of routine tests. The Discovery had its camera focused on the horizon of the Earth, when - well, watch...

Two small white globes appear in the middle right side of the screen, move across to the center, then reverse direction 120 degrees and increase speed, as we SEE a flash, followed by some sort of beam coming up from the lower left, as if the globes were shot at by someone on Earth..

JUROR SIX

Holy - did we just fire at that craft?

CLAREN

That weapon system is outside the scope of this Jury's focus. But yes, we did indeed fire at them.

JUROR TEN

Particle beams! I heard they were coming on-line, but '91! Sheesh!

CLAREN

(irritated) As I said, that's not your concern. The important thing is, when these two craft departed, they were tracked to a point in space a few thousand kilometers away, at which the two craft simply...disappeared.

JUROR THREE

We lost track of them?

VRASS

No. They actually disappeared. Vanished. Left this dimension.

JUROR ELEVEN

I always assumed they had some sort of, I dunno, Romulan cloaking device.

JUROR TWO

So, they have hyper-dimensional drives. How does the Artifact tie in?

VRASS

The connection is, we were able to track the trajectory of the Artifact and extrapolate back to its source.

Arnie displays a GRAPHIC that demonstrates the Artifact came to Earth from a spot identical to where the two craft left, about a thousand kilometers out of Earth orbit.

VRASS

Its source is the same location in space where the two craft viewed from STS-80 disappeared.

JUROR TWELVE

Could it be just a coincidence?

VRASS

Doesn't appear that way. We've determined that their trajectories are within one one-thousandth of a meter. Too close for coincidence.

JUROR ONE

So what does this mean? Did they send this thing down as a retaliation? Is this some sort of probe, or - or a bomb?

VRASS

We've checked the Artifact out thoroughly, and it has but one mission.

Vrass hefts the object in one hand, then tosses it into the air. Instead of it hitting the ground, it comes to a stop, hovering about three feet from the floor. The pulsing vibration now fills the room, AUDIBLE, alive and pulsating.

VRASS

It appears the Artifact has the ability to send a person - or persons - into the future, then return them back to their initial time and place.

JUROR FOUR

But if they come right back, how do you know they've gone anywhere?

VRASS

When the travellers return, their watches all show an extended period of time has elapsed, unaccountable for on our side. (slow) I was hoping we'd get some volunteers from the Jury to experience this for yourselves.

The Jurors look left, right and down, but no one volunteers.

CLAREN

How 'bout you, Major?

JUROR TEN

I learned back in Boot Camp, you don't volunteer for an assignment where the officers aren't going.

CLAREN

Well, then, maybe the Colonel would like to try it?

JUROR NINE

I never fly without a parachute. Sir.

ARNIE

If it's okay, I'd like to go.

VRASS

Attaboy, Arnie. I had a feeling you'd accept the challenge. But we still need someone from the Jury.

No one on the Jury moves. Then, slowly, Sarah steps forward.

SARAH

If Mr. Kenn is willing to risk his life, well, who are we to let him go alone?

VRASS

Excellent, Thirteen. If you'll just step down here...?

He guides her around to the opposite side of the Artifact from Arnie, who unplugs and takes his headset with him.

VRASS

I should warn you, whatever you see on the other side is what the Artifact chooses to show you. You may both go to the same place, or you may wind up separated. Either way, whenever you want to return, just think it and place your hand on the Artifact.

ARNIE

And how do we begin?

VRASS

The same way, by touching it - wait!

Vrass grabs Arnie's wrist and looks at his watch. It shows 10:42 in INSERT, about the same time as the clock on the wall.

VRASS

Just checking. Good luck.

Arnie and Sarah share a look, then slowly, their fingers come down on top of the triangle. There is an increase in vibration, almost like an earthquake, threatening to shake them loose. The room around them, Vrass, Claren and the Jurors, fades away to swirling gray smoke. The NOISE is deafening.

ARNIE

Hold on!

SARAH

I can't! It's gonna shake me off!

Arnie stretches his free hand around, straining to reach her.

ARNIE

Hold on!

SARAH

It's too much! Arnie! Oh, Arnie!

In CLOSE UP, we SEE the vibration threatens to shake her hand free. Arnie fights to reach her.

ARNIE

Stay with me!

SARAH

Arnie, help me!

Arnie's stretching hand is INTERCUT with Sarah's hand on the Artifact, almost broken free, only two fingers left in contact. Arnie strains further, his fingers grasping the air to reach her, closer to her flailing free hand, closer, closer, almost - then, they touch! Instantly, there is total silence!

In CLOSE UP we SEE their two free hands touching, caressing, bathed in a warm, golden light. They look at each other, their faces glowing from the same light source. The air is gently moving, all trace of the vibration and noise gone. They linger there in each other's thoughts until Sarah notices their surroundings. She breaks their gaze and looks around. Arnie takes a little longer to end the moment.

SARAH

Oh, Arnie, look!

All around them, they're surrounded by empty desert. A soft breeze stirs up sand and dust. In the distance, the gold light illuminates large craggy mountains, stretching left and right. In front of the mountains lies a deep shallow valley that might once have been a lake. Behind them, we SEE giant boulders, long and tubular, that resemble petrified tree trunks. On all sides nearer to them are the ancient ruins of a large building poking up, a girder here, a wall section there.

ARNIE

Where are we? When are we?

As he utters the question, a SOUND like distant breaking glass is HEARD, followed immediately by an eerie whispering wind, and then, haunting, musical English, echoing in their heads:

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT

We have not moved you from the place you stood in before, except that you are now above ground.

SARAH

And the time...?

The same triad of breaking glass, eerie wind and musical words:

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT
We show you your planet's future.

ARNIE
How far into the future?

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT
Three hundred revolutions about your
sun.

ARNIE
Three hundred years? It - it can't be!

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT
We assure you, this is your future. The
changes your people have wrought upon
your world have made this come about.

SARAH
But they said these changes wouldn't
happen for thousands of years!

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT
Your leaders have lied to you. They
have deceived you. But you humans
allowed them their deception. You
knew your world was being affected,
yet you did nothing to stop them.

Arnie leaves Sarah and wanders a short distance away. He drops to his knees and feels around in the soft sandy soil. His hands come up with a broken shard of the Roosevelt room china. He looks across the evaporated lake in despair. Slowly, he rises and returns to Sarah's side.

SARAH
What is the rest of the world like?
Is it any better?

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT
The entire planet is like this or worse.

ARNIE
How can anyone live on this world?

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT

There are almost none of your kind still alive here, and those that survive wish they didn't. But there are other inhabitants here, ones that feel quite at home.

A slightly more pronounced swirling rises up from cracks in the earth, groups of 'dust devils,' three over here, a couple over there and there. They slow down long enough to take form. We SEE Sarah's surprise:

SARAH

Good Lord!

The dust devils take form, solidify, and become tall, angular, thin creatures, ruddy in complexion, with elongated heads and four fingers on each hand. They hold up their arms and try to communicate, but their speech is like complex fingernails scraping a blackboard. From their groupings, they seem to be families, larger adults with smaller children.

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT

They say, they tried to warn you, millennia ago, that this would be the result of your foolishness, just as we tried to warn you, too. But your leaders would not let us speak, and our beliefs would not allow us to interfere with your evolution, even if it led to your destruction.

SARAH

Who are these creatures?

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT

They came from the fourth planet of your system

ARNIE

Mars? They're from Mars!

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT

Yes, from the Red Planet. You name your nearest celestial neighbor after a deity of war...how utterly human.

The Martians, if that is what they are, seem puzzled by the humans. The smaller ones flutter around like butterflies.

ARNIE

These creatures, they can survive here?

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT

To them, this planet is a garden, compared to the world they came from. And they have much to do here, much to clean up. The remnants of your power plants, those that split atoms, they will be cleaning the debris from them for many years.

SARAH

I can't believe we did this to our beautiful world.

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT

You and all your kind. There were warnings, but you would not heed them. Now, this is all that's left.

As Arnie wanders, he kicks up debris. He turns it over with his foot, and notices the remains of a large chess piece: a shattered white King. He fights away the tears.

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT

Your time here is done. There will be new inhabitants on this planet. In time, others like us will come and share with them the fruits of our energies, and help them rebuild this shattered world. They will grow and evolve into a bright shining race, and they will spin tales of the Land before they arrived, a Land where giants lived, giants who lived, and fought, and eventually, died.

SARAH

Oh, no...But, but what about Jesus? He was supposed to come again and usher in the Age of Peace?

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT

This is the Age of Peace: a planet without the fear of war, without the threat of annihilation. This Land will thrive again, given time, but without the benefit of man.

SARAH

I've seen enough. Send me back!

ARNIE

Wait! (he peers closely at the Martians) You say they will evolve even in this wasteland. Does that mean, they could've inhabited a world like ours used to be?

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT

There was nothing to prevent that. They would have been happy in your Gobi or your Sahara, and would have made of it a rich, viable place. But your people could not even share it with other humans. To harbor off-worlders would have been even less likely.

ARNIE

But if we had allowed them to come, they would have stayed?

The Martians flit about, one second far away, one second right in Arnie's and Sarah's face. The Martians in the background share information, and their voices sound as alien as the Artifact, but with a strange longing quality.

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT

They would have stayed, and thrived. Eventually, they would have shared their technology with you, technology that would have helped clean up your world, and would have aided you in your journey to other stars.

SARAH

They would have interbred with us? They'd have made us more like them?

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT

Yes. Is that so bad? Your people bred with those you call Neanderthals, and incorporated their being-ness with yours. You were better for it. But as you grew, you allowed your differences to blind you to the truth.

ARNIE

What truth is that?

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT

(dramatically) That all life is One.

The Martians swirl back into their dust devil forms and re-enter the cracks in the earth. Arnie and Sarah are left alone.

ARNIE

I've seen enough.

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT

Have you no more questions?

ARNIE

(looks about) Just one - can this future be avoided?

THE VOICE OF THE ARTIFACT

You know the answer to that.

ARNIE

(smiles grimly) Yeah, I guess I do.

He and Sarah place their hands back upon the Artifact. From beside the broken chess piece, we WATCH them swirl into a grey fog, then disappear, leaving only the gently blowing dust.

INT - ARNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (2:00 AM)

Arnie tosses and turns, moaning in his sleep:

ARNIE

Where...where are we...no...not this!

There is a noise at the door, a key turning in the lock. The door opens slowly. Arnie's face shows real torture:

ARNIE

Tell me it won't be...It can't be
like this...no...we can't...can't...

We SEE the door close, then HEAR soft footsteps cross the
room, moving to Arnie's bed. He awakens with a start:

ARNIE

No, no - what - who - ?!

SARAH

Shhh, Arnie. It's me.

Arnie rolls over to face the balcony, as Sarah slips into
bed beside him. They spoon fearfully, and we SEE their two
faces, both still distraught from the day's experiences.

INT - THE LODGE'S BREAKFAST NOOK - DAY (8:00 AM)

With the rare morning sun streaming through the windows, Arnie
holds his coffee mug, not drinking, merely lost in thought.
Sarah walks in, forcing a smile. She slides down beside him.

SARAH

And how did you sleep last night? Oh,
silly me. I know.

ARNIE

Look, Sarah, I really can't be seen
fraternizing with you after hours. I
could get in big trouble -

SARAH

With whom? Claren, or your wife?

ARNIE

(stiffly) I have nothing to apologize
to my wife about.

She leans over to kiss him, but he doesn't respond.

SARAH

Sorry, Arnie. I guess I was acting
more on my hopes than on reality.
Didn't that event with the Artifact
do anything for you?

ARNIE

Gave me nightmares all night long.

SARAH

You know what I mean. (looks around)
Doesn't that change anything for you?

ARNIE

It doesn't change a thing! We can't
force the hand of the US Government.
Sarah, what is it you want from me?

Sarah slides closer. The conversation, though quiet, heats up.

SARAH

We need you to release the files!
Releasing them means warning people
of the danger these aliens pose.

ARNIE

Danger to who?

SARAH

To our religion. To our way of life!

As Arnie gazes out the window, Sarah's hand hovers above his
backpack with the disks. Her hand holds the stolen red disk.

ARNIE

Just because your religion tells you
to fear their coming, doesn't make it
so. Frankly, I'd prefer them being in
charge of our planet for awhile. Maybe
a little less freedom to rape and pil-
lage the Earth is just what we need.

She appears ready to drop the red disk in, but at the last
moment, takes it back. On her face is a look of respect.

SARAH

I was hoping we could count on you to
stand with us. (sighs) You're a man
of strong convictions, Arnie. Stay
true to them. I guess our group will
just have to figure out another way to
accomplish our goals.

ARNIE

I'm glad to hear that. Ready for court? They'll be starting soon.

SARAH

(smiles) Sure. I just have to stop back in my room. I'll catch up.

Sarah's smile fades to bittersweet as Arnie gathers his bag and gets up to leave.

INT - SARAH'S ROOM

Sarah unlocks the door to her room and walks in, tapping the disk in her hand. She wonders what to do with it. She drops it on the floor and picks up her foot to smash it - when a voice behind her interrupts. She jumps back in surprise.

FALCONETTI

Didn't lock your door. Not very safe. Dangerous people could barge in.

SARAH

Yeah. Uh, sorry.

FALCONETTI

(sees disk) You weren't going to destroy that disk, were you? Such a shame, after all the work your group put into it.

SARAH

Well, I - I don't need it any more.

FALCONETTI

(laughing) Well, I do!

A struggle ensues. Sarah tries to step on it, but Falconetti knocks her out of the way. More struggling. Sarah manages to get the disk, flings open the balcony door to throw it outside. But something she sees out there freezes her in her tracks.

Right below her balcony, between the Lodge and the lake, is a black Caddy. Two 'Silencers' wait beside the open back door. The one in the back leans his head out the open door and smiles evilly. Falconetti calmly takes the disk from her immobile hand, and slips it into his coat pocket.

FALCONETTI

I'll take that. (looks down) I think
you're ride is here, Miss Cooper.

INT - COURTROOM - DAY (TUESDAY, 10:15 AM)

The CAMERA slowly PANS across the intent faces of all the
Jurors, coming to rest on the empty chair of Juror Thirteen.

CLAREN

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I've said
all I can to sway you to my point of
view. Mr. Vrass has given you his opin-
ion of the future, a world made bet-
ter for more open contact with Them.

At his signal, a prearranged SERIES of images flows across the
screens, supporting his side of the future. As they play,
Falconetti slides into the room, his hand in his coat pocket.

CLAREN

I, on the other hand, perceive a
world where inventors no longer
invent, since every invention has
been handed to us, where no one cre-
ates, because all creation has been
delivered to our doorstep, and no one
ever dies, because we have perfect
medicine and unlimited food. All
humans do is eat, sleep and breed.

JUROR ONE

Is that such a bad thing, Senator?
That the people of the world begin to
really live, rather than just survive?

CLAREN

Not at all, as long as you don't mind
a planet with 20 or 30 billion people.
It's going to get a bit crowded after
the second ten billion, however.

JUROR EIGHT

But surely, with all this new tech-
nology, we'll begin exploring space?
We'll go on to colonize other worlds?

CLAREN

You forget that even with all the new medicines, we'll still retain that one holdover from millennia of evolutionary change - our primal, warring nature. With it, we'll never be allowed out of our own tiny solar system.

JUROR FIVE

So? We can always terraform Mars.

CLAREN

Except that the current inhabitants of Mars may not allow it. We will be left only with our Moon, a few satellites around Jupiter and Neptune, and whichever passing meteors and comets come close enough to catch.

VRASS

That's a pretty bleak outlook, Claren. I believe we'll have a better chance working with the off-worlders, than working against them.

CLAREN

Really? With which ones? The Grays? The Sauropods? The Nordics? There are so many wildly different types of aliens, we may never find a compatible group that would truly understand and cooperate with us.

Falconetti casually makes his way across to Arnie's desk, and surreptitiously slips the red disk into the pile of others.

JUROR ELEVEN

But isn't that why we crossed vast oceans, centuries ago? To make contact with new peoples?

CLAREN

No. We went in search of raw materials, and primitives we could conquer and convert to our own religions.

JUROR TWELVE

And how many of those 'primitives,' as you call them, ever survived their first contact with rifles, chickenpox and other western diseases? Ninety percent of all Native Americans died within two generations of their initial sighting of the white man.

Arnie searches through the pile of disks, chooses one, looks for a file, can't seem to find what he's looking for.

JUROR NINE

Mr. Vrass, can you tell us what is the likely outcome if we fraternize with a race that contains some disease with which we are unprepared?

VRASS

(pause) We would suffer horribly.

JUROR TWO

And what would be the outcome if one of these races decided we needed to give up some of our outmoded beliefs, say, Christianity, for example?

VRASS

We'd have no choice but to comply.

JUROR SIX

Just as the Aztecs were forced to worship Catholicism, as they watched all their books being burned.

Arnie tries another disk, right next to the planted red disk. Falconetti checks his watch, makes his way to the double doors and passes by the preoccupied Guards.

VRASS

But we must look forward! Right now, our world is a better place for the technology we've gained from them. Why, computers alone have spawned dozens of new ventures - take the Internet, for example.

JUROR THREE

That's not really a good example. We can't police the Web as it is now, and it's given wider access to pornography and hate groups than ever before.

JUROR FOUR

There were problems with the printing press, too, but that seems like a good idea in hindsight.

As the Guards listen intently to the overhead speakers, Falconetti turns at the end of the hall and waits.

JUROR NINE

Maybe we're better off being patient, and find out what they're really after.

JUROR SEVEN

While all the Gates' and Rockefellers make another hundred billion off of inventions they have no right to patent?

JUROR EIGHT

And we raise the global temperature another four degrees because we have to drive bigger, heavier, faster cars?

JUROR TEN

What happens when South America and Africa want to catch up with the rest of us? Do we deny them video games, strip malls and highways because there isn't enough oil to go around? And when we begin running out of food, do we close our borders permanently?

CLAREN

I'd say we have at least a hundred years of natural resources left. Plenty of time to make an informed decision.

VRASS

Plenty of time for those that control the technology and the information to tighten their grip even more.

JUROR ONE

Perhaps the time has come...for us to take a vote.

Arnie looks up, as he removes the disk right next to the red one, and inserts it into a drive. The Jurors grow solemn.

Silence crosses the room, as everyone realizes the moment of decision is at hand. Claren takes a moment to collect his thoughts. Even the Guards outside the room become more attentive and pass the word around that a vote is underway. Nearby, Falconetti frowns and looks down at his shoes.

CLAREN

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, the vote you are about to take may be the most crucial decision of your entire lives. So in making your decision, let us know what is in your hearts, what guided you to make your choice. (beat) Juror One, do you vote for the release of the evidence and for open contact? Or do you vote for caution and another fifty years of continued secrecy?

As each one answers, we SEE the other Jurors reactions. Some smile and nod in agreement, others frown in disappointment.

JUROR ONE

I believe the truth needs to come out, but in an orderly, logical manner. It's time to end all the secrecy, the cover-ups, and the murders. I vote for release and open contact.

CLAREN

Juror Two, how do you vote?

JUROR TWO

My experience working with the voting public has taught me one thing: the American public cannot be trusted with raw, unadulterated truth. I vote for keeping the lid on things.

The Jurors realize instantly that there'll be no common ground

in their decisions. Claren and Vrass hang on every answer.

CLAREN

Juror Three, how do you vote?

JUROR THREE

My father was on the Robertson panel. He felt the information needed to remain in the hands of a select few - and so do I. I vote for continued secrecy.

CLAREN

Juror Four, how do you vote?

JUROR FOUR

I can't believe you'd take a chance on the future of the entire human race! We don't have the right. I vote for freedom, and the release of every bit of information we can get our hands on.

CLAREN

Juror Five, how do you vote?

JUROR FIVE

After what Arnie and Juror Thirteen experienced with that Artifact, I think we need a change. We need to trust them. I vote for openness.

The vote is 3-2 in Vrass's favor and he smiles carefully.

CLAREN

Juror Six, how do you vote?

JUROR SIX

Frankly, I just don't trust these non-humans - hell, it's hard enough to trust humans! I vote for another fifty years of quiet study.

Claren smiles back at Vrass, now that the vote is tied again.

CLAREN

Juror Seven, how do you vote?

JUROR SEVEN

I had a good shot at makin' the WNBA. But when I was abducted, that shattered my confidence forever. I can't even look at a stadium full of people, let alone play ball in one. I think we need to bring all this into the open, deal with these visitors, not hide behind paranoia and propaganda. I vote for open contact, as painful as that may be.

CLAREN

Juror Eight, how do you vote?

JUROR EIGHT

The sooner we admit that we're being quarantined by off-world, superior races, the better we'll be. They wouldn't do that unless they knew we had problems. I'm for open contact.

CLAREN

Juror Nine, how do you vote?

JUROR NINE

Look at the Artifact! Their technology is so far above ours! I don't think we as a planet can handle it yet. Come back and ask me again in fifty years.

CLAREN

Juror Ten, how do you vote?

JUROR TEN

Some of my friends at the Skunk-works died from exposure to top-secret alien compounds. But now, I doubt even with all the openness, that we'd ever get the real criminals behind their deaths. And even more damage could be done if their technology was released pell-mell across the globe. Lets keep things quiet, for a little while longer.

CLAREN

Juror Eleven, how do you vote?

JUROR ELEVEN

I can't believe those of you who are voting to keep this quiet! That's the same as a vote for death, the death of our planet, of all of us! Didn't you here those, those creatures? We don't have another fifty years! We need to make this public, and let the people decide how to deal with it.

CLAREN

Juror Twelve, how do you vote?

He looks across at the others who have already voted no, and shares a grim look of conspiracy. They look back assuredly.

JUROR TWELVE

Back in the Navajo nation, there's a mountain where the Thunderbirds were said to nest. In the last few years, more and more outsiders have come to see these lights, expecting a ride to the heavens, or an insight into the stock market. The white man can never understand the truth about the Golden Ones. I say, keep such knowledge out of their hands.

During the following silence, they all count up the votes.

JUROR ONE

That's six votes for, six against.
We're deadlocked

JUROR EIGHT

What about Juror Thirteen?

CLAREN

Since Juror Thirteen has so conveniently forfeited her right to vote on this august panel, it appears that this panel is hopelessly dealocked. Therefore -

JUROR FOUR

Wait a minute! You can't!

CLAREN

Terribly sorry, but I have to.

VRASS

There was an agreement we made, when our country first made contact with them, back in '47. We - we promised -

CLAREN

We promised that we would put the decision up for a vote to a delegation in fifty years. If they voted in favor of release, we'd open up. If not, we'd keep it quiet for another fifty years.

JUROR FOUR

No way! That's not possible!

VRASS

I'm afraid there's nothing we can do about it.

Through all this, Arnie's hands move about the pile of disks, coming closer to the red one. Falconetti watches through the windows, waiting for the moment he accesses the fateful disk.

JUROR EIGHT

You wouldn't be saying that because you're on his side, would you?

VRASS

(bitter) Senator Claren and I are most definitely on opposite sides of this.

CLAREN

That's what I like about you, James. Honest to a fault.

JUROR TWO

Arnie, can that computer system locate Juror Thirteen?

ARNIE

It can only show me files that are accessible through the network. I could try to hack my way out of it -

CLAREN

Which would take you years, my good man. Ladies and gentlemen of the Jury, you all have spent far too much of your valuable lives empaneled here in this dark, isolated room. I believe it's time we thank you for your sacrifice, and let you get on with your lives.

Searching for something, Arnie finally touches the red disk. Without a second thought, he pops it into a drive.

JUROR ONE

You can't allow all this work to go for naught!

CLAREN

(sternly) May I remind you, Juror One, as Forewoman of this Jury, it was you who called for a vote. Therefore, I hereby declare that these proceedings -

Just then, an alarm SOUNDS, a blaring claxon. Gates swing closed, with the shocked Guards on the outside. Falconetti doesn't seem surprised. An overlay flashes on the monitors:

DISPLAY ON MONITORS (INSERT)

Emergency - Automatic Shutdown Sequence
Initiated - Security Breach Level Five

JUROR FOUR

Great. Someone pulled the fire alarm.

CLAREN

(shaken) Oh, dear. Oh, good God!

JUROR SIX

Level Five? What the hell is that?

VRASS

Jesus! The files! Someone's got access to the files! Arnie!

ARNIE

It's not me! The system's going haywire, like there's a virus, or, or -

Juror Three rushes to Arnie's station, ejects the red disk, swears and tosses it to the table, until Arnie pulls it away.

ARNIE

No! Don't damage it! That's the only source of the virus! That's the only way to figure out how to stop it!

CLAREN

What's happening, Arnie? Tell me quick!

Two of the Guards outside try to force the doors, while the others order them to stop. The claxon continues to shriek.

ARNIE

The system's looking for something.

VRASS

Looking for what?

ARNIE

It's trying to access...a modem! It's trying to find an outside line!

CLAREN

(energetic) Arnie, you've got to stop it! If it locates an outside line, it'll begin downloading files. As soon as that happens, we're finished!

JUROR TWO

Finished? You mean, we'll be erased?

VRASS

Like we never even existed.

JUROR SEVEN

But you said we were in no danger!

CLAREN

You were, as long as our security wasn't compromised. If you had voted to keep Oblivion a secret, we'd have let you return to your lives with your phony memories, and all records of this...

(MORE)

CLAREN (CON'T.)

...Jury would have been sealed for another fifty years. If you had voted to begin releasing information, then it wouldn't have mattered.

JUROR SIX

But you said no one knew we were here!

JUROR NINE

Somebody made a damn good guess.

CLAREN

(concerned) Arnie, can you stop it?

ARNIE

(reading the red disk) I can't stop it - but I can delay it.

JUROR ONE

Delay?

SEQUENCE: Arnie duplicates multiple files, naming them, hiding them, while he watches the virus' progress on one of the monitors. He works so fast, they barely follow his movements.

ARNIE

Yeah. If I can make enough files in enough places, and bury them deep enough, it'll take the virus long enough to read them that we'll have time to come up with a real answer.

Just then, a VIDEO message comes up on the displays. It's of poor quality, but the face of Sarah is clearly visible. Over the claxon, her voice sounds faint and somewhat disconnected.

SARAH

Hello, Arnie. Sorry we...I had to do this. I know that when the computer begins downloading these files, you all will be in serious trouble. But the Reverend has promised you'll be remembered, in every new church we build. (leans in) I'll say a special prayer for you every Saturday. G'bye, Arnie.

The video FADES, and the claxon finally shuts off on its own.

JUROR

What's she talking about, Senator?

CLAREN

Our agreement with the Powers That Be was, that if any leak occurred, we would shut the Jury down completely, and permanently remove any record of its ever having been convened.

JUROR ONE

You're going to kill us, is that it?

CLAREN

You don't understand. I'll die right along with you. You see, this room, like most sophisticated computer rooms, is equipped with a Halon gas fire-fighting system. Completely snuffs out the fire without harming the equipment, except for one tiny problem.

JUROR THREE

It's toxic to humans.

JUROR FOUR

I get the impression most technology is toxic to humans.

The onscreen virus PAUSES, checking for something.

JUROR SEVEN

Why isn't it downloading?

VRASS

It needs the encryption code! Without it, the files are totally useless. It's probably testing one to see if it'll work, before it starts downloading.

JUROR SIX

Arnie, can you whip up a new encryption code, one that'll stall it?

ARNIE

Sure I could. Only take me about six months, maybe five if I work weekends.

JUROR TEN

Then what the hell can we do?

CLAREN

There's only one thing we can do: Arnie you'll have to delete all the files. There's a special code that you can use, that will instantly -

JUROR FIVE

Delete them? Are you crazy? The future of our entire world is in there!

JUROR NINE

Are you willing to trade your life for theirs? Because that's what'll happen. This room's gonna fill with Halon gas, and all they'll find of us are our cold bodies and our good intentions.

Close up of Arnie's face, as he reaches an inner decision. He begins working even faster than before.

ARNIE

(softly) There may be another way.

MULTIPLE JURORS AS ONE

What? What's that? Tell us!

ARNIE

I can connect with a local number here in the building so the virus thinks it's dialing out.

VRASS

But if any files are transferred outside this room -

ARNIE

They won't. I'm going to use the security phone over there.

JUROR TEN

But is that phone even connected to
the main system?

Juror Five rushes over and picks up the phone. He holds it
to his ear, but we HEAR nothing.

JUROR FIVE

No, it's not. Damn!

Arnie types more furiously and clicking with the mouse.

ARNIE

Then we'll just have to make like
Alexander Graham Bell and create our
own brand-new interchange.

The computer screen comes alive in a blur of private phone
lines, secure phone switching software and a geographical
DISPLAY of buildings overlaid with pre-assigned numbers. While
he works, the virus jumps forward, then halts again. Some of
the Jurors crowd around the screens, hoping, praying.

VRASS

Looks like you're experienced with
phone networks, Arnie

ARNIE

Yeah, well, don't tell anybody, but I
used to do a little phone cracking
when I was in high school. Never
thought I'd need it to save my life.

For one brief instant, Arnie looks worried, like he's been
caught. Then a calm demeanor drops over his intensity.

ARNIE

If the virus wants an outside line,
then I'll create one right here in
this room. It's a fake number, of
course, and the downloaded files won't
actually go anywhere. Hopefully, that
won't trigger the security system.

CLAREN

And what if it does trigger it?

ARNIE

Then, Senator, I'll refund my fee.

More furious typing, a few quiet swears from Arnie, then:

VRASS

Arnie, it's getting closer!

Vrass points to a display, which SHOWS a chart of the discarded encryption languages the virus has tried. The display shows only a bare few left. Suddenly the virus 'hiccups' by jumping forward, then stopping, then shooting all the way to the end. Jurors clutch each other, Claren bows his head, all is quiet.

Suddenly, the security phone RINGS. The room erupts in cheers. Juror Five picks up the receiver, gets a MODEM sound.

JUROR FIVE

(laughing) Arnie? It's for you!

More cheering as the virus downloads to the phony number.

INT - COURTROOM - DAY (TUESDAY, 12:00 PM)

Congratulations continue all round. Coats are tossed over chairs, ties loosened, someone's even produced a bottle and passed it around, with paper cups. Vrass is on the phone by the door.

VRASS

The security gates'll be open in another hour. They wanna know if we'll be okay 'till then.

JUROR ELEVEN

Ask them if they can send up my bottle of heart pills!

Claren leaves the doors, where he'd been on the Guard's phone with Falconetti. He crosses to Arnie, who is getting a few last congratulations from some of the grateful Jurors.

CLAREN

Not surprisingly, Juror Thirteen is nowhere to be found. Her room is empty, and the End Times Ministry claims she was working strictly on her own.

ARNIE

She'll probably wind up in a lab tank in Dulce. What did Falconetti have to say for himself?

Through the door windows, Falconetti appears briefly. Claren stares him down. Falconetti forces a smile, then disappears.

CLAREN

He said he was pleased we came out in one piece.

ARNIE

Do you believe him?

CLAREN

Would you? At least the trial has been delayed for the time being. That's what his group really wanted, anyway. We'll have to start back up with another panel, maybe in another year or two. Say, you wouldn't be interested -

ARNIE

No, thanks. I've had enough of court-rooms for the time being.

CLAREN

Perhaps I should look into a new line of work myself, maybe pro bono work. (pats his arm) Take care of yourself.

ARNIE

Sure. Keep an eye out for your knights. You know, you push them too far.

CLAREN

And you expose your Queen too - well, never mind. Keep looking up.

ARNIE

Always do.

INT - ARNIE'S HOME - DAY

To a loud CLUMP from his dropped bags, Arnie sighs, then

closes the door. Dufuss runs up, but is sidetracked and starts chewing on one bag. Arnie heads for the computer room. He leans against the door jamb, exhausted, but smiling in triumph.

JANE

(over her shoulder) Hi, honey! How was the trial?

ARNIE

Oh, boring. Can I...can I get on there? Just for a minute.

JANE

Almost finished, Arnie. Can it wait -

ARNIE

I need to get on now! (softer) I just need to check my email, then it's yours for the rest of the night.

With a sigh, Jane stands, grabs her empty coffee cup and gives up the seat. She hugs Arnie passionately, then leaves.

Arnie glances behind him, before he clicks on a special program in his 'Utilities' folder. We SEE his computer screen as he accesses a program called 'Phone Guru 6.1.' We HEAR his modem dialing and connecting, while the screen SHOWS a connection bouncing cross-country. It ends in Washington State, and the address 'Lake Quinault Lodge, House Phone, New Account' appears underneath. We SEE Arnie type in an account name and a password. Finally, he smiles and sighs deeply. In another SHOT, closer, the screen displays:

COMPUTER SCREEN (INSERT)

Welcome to Secure-Email. You have
861,947 new messages. Would you like
to Read Them or Download?

He clicks on 'Download.' It begins to count down as he hides it in background, and leaves the computer running. Jane enters with a full cup of coffee, as Arnie rises and stretches.

ARNIE

It's gonna take a while to download.
You can get back on, finish your work.
Just let it run. I'm goin' to bed.

She kisses him on the forehead, he smiles and holds her close. She waits until he leaves. When he's gone, she sits, clicks opens a special file, enters a long password and begins transcribing the hieroglyphic short-hand we saw Sparrow's secretary working on. But soon she gets a warning message onscreen:

COMPUTER SCREEN (INSERT)
Warning! A copy of this file already
exists. Do you want to Overwrite?

She cancels out of the warning, and clicks on the desktop. She instantly recognizes the files Arnie's downloading as files from the Oblivion trial - the very same ones she's been working on in secret! She gets scared very fast.

JANE
Arnie...Arnie? Arnie?!

As she watches helplessly as the files download, while DRAMATIC MUSIC builds, the scene FADES and the ending CREDITS roll.

FADE OUT

ENDING CREDITS