

NEANDERTHAL

An original screenplay

by

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Homo homini lupus

Man is a wolf to man

— Roman proverb

FADE IN:

EXT. ROCKY GORGE, CAPPADOCIA, TURKEY, 30,000 BC, DUSK

SUPERIMPOSE: "Central Turkey - 30,000 Years Ago"

A pale limestone cone points into the purple and red sky.

Dozens of rock cones stretch across the valley, jarringly lunar, each topped by a dark, precariously-balanced capstone.

A LIZARD stirs on a rock, FLICKS its tongue. One of its eyes rotates to the side tracking a colorful BULBOUS INSECT.

An EAGLE, low and silent, alters course to swoop closer.

The Insect strays into range. The Lizard freezes, aims.

The Eagle dives and pounces on the Lizard; feathers flurry.

The Lizard flails its sharp tail, injuring the Eagle's wing.

The Eagle grips the Lizard in its talons and pecks its head sharply then takes off, wobbling into the air.

The EAGLE'S CRY echoes off the rocks as TWO STOOPED FIGURES emerge from the distant horizon. They walk at a tired pace, distorted by heat haze, cloaked in the purpling sky. They are *NEANDERTHAL*: young and naked, covered in dense hair, light-skinned with heavy brow ridges and elongated skulls.

The MALE, stout, with thick muscles and a heavy blonde beard and mane, shades his sloped forehead and peers ahead to spot their path. He bears a HANDPRINT TATTOO on his left pectoral.

He looks gently down at the other, a short FEMALE. He grunts softly, touches her tenderly. Brown hair and light fur cover her squat body. Pert, hairy breasts suggest her youth.

Her hairless face looks tired but her eyes scan alertly. She sways as she walks; her belly is fat with child.

They hold hands as they slowly walk closer. Their large noses work constantly; heads swivelling, they SMELL, listen, search.

He leads the way between boulders. She follows him closely. Her eyes flit fearfully. The Male pulls ahead onto a rocky overhang as they climb adroitly up between two large rocks.

Dark eyes watch them from the shadows.

The Female Neanderthal SNIFFS. Her head jerks, eyes dart.

Dark hands grab her ankle. She YELPS and tumbles backward.

The Male Neanderthal spins and races the few steps back to the ledge. He looks down with fury and BELLOWS his rage.

Below, a wild YOUNG MAN, a *Homo Sapiens* with nimble footing and quick eyes, drags the SCREAMING, struggling Female Neanderthal.

An OLD MAN, *Homo Sapiens*, crouches nearby, rock in hand. His beard is heavy and gray; he moves slowly on a lame foot. Animal skins and light black hair cover their dark skin.

The Male Neanderthal on the overhang above puffs out his chest and shakes his fists. He SHRIEKS at them, GNASHES his teeth.

The Old Man takes careful aim and throws his rock.

It hits the Male Neanderthal's ear. He SCREAMS and reels back. Blood seeps from the wound and he cowers with fear.

The Female Neanderthal SHRIEKS and shoves the Young Man.

The Young Man powerfully throws another rock.

Fury shrivels the Male Neanderthal's face. He lunges forward – but steps back stunned when the rock CRASHES soundly into his forehead. He slumps down onto the ground, dazed and bloody.

Below, the two *Homo sapiens* erupt in unintelligible CAT CALLS. The Young Man BRAYS laughter; he JEERS and points.

The Female Neanderthal cringes in their grip, her face contorted in a grimace. Her SCREAMS soften into SOBS.

The Young Man sidles closer and appraises her. He makes soothing sounds as he caresses her hairy buttocks.

The Old Man hurls another rock at the Male Neanderthal.

The missile SHATTERS into sharp shrapnel near the Male Neanderthal's head. He rubs a hand over his scalp and looks at the red smears on his fingers. He SCREAMS and squirms into the shelter of the nearest crag, bleeding and WHIMPERING.

Below, the Old Man releases his hold on the Female Neanderthal to pick up another rock. She SHRIEKS and struggles frantically, and shakes loose of the Young Man.

She gains two steps of freedom before the Old Man drops her with a rock to the skull. The Young Man BARKS his objection.

The Old Man GRUNTS rebuke and gestures commandingly toward the Male Neanderthal cowering in a deep crag above.

The Young Man picks up two rocks and hurls them at the Male Neanderthal. He re-arms himself and looks to his elder.

The Male Neanderthal covers his head with his hairy arms as two bursts of sharp rock shrapnel shower him.

The Old Man crouches, assessing, then picks up a large rock with both hands and limps to the MOANING Female Neanderthal.

A large rock, blurry and indistinct, held in two black hands, crashes down, and the light fades out in a blood red mist.

An Eagle sails across the sky, streaked by a globular red sun.

Hiding in the rock crevice above, the Male Neanderthal watches and winces as the rock CRACKS the skull of his mate and her MOANS abruptly cease. Tears well as his intelligent eyes stare out, reddening.

The two *Homo sapiens* squat beside the dead Female Neanderthal. The Old Man leers and reaches toward her bloody skull.

The Male Neanderthal watches from the shadows. His face twists with rage. Tears cascade and mix with blood from his wounds.

Cupped, dirty fingers dip roughly into the bloody skull and emerge dripping red.

The Young Man crowds in and reaches as the elder WOLFS down a bloody handful and LICKS his fingers.

A HEARTBEAT pumps powerfully as the Male Neanderthal colors with fury. His yellow teeth GNASH as he SNARLS in anger.

His eyes burn red in the purple shadows, then still and cool.

A shaft of light illuminates the HANDPRINT TATTOO on his left pectoral, his bloody clenched fist, his staring, dead eyes. The HEARTBEAT fades as his hairy, brutish features smooth and relax to reveal a clean-shaven young *Homo sapiens* face.

INT. BEDROOM, SAN FRANCISCO, NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

JOE turns his head and groans with pleasure. His smooth face emerges from the darkness framed in the glow of a candle on the bed table. Blonde medium-length hair crowns Joe's wide forehead. He is 20, wiry, with Boy Scout good looks.

His muscled chest heaves as he lies on the bed, rippling a carpet of sweaty tussled hairs around a HANDPRINT TATTOO.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING, TELEGRAPH HILL, SAN FRANCISCO, NIGHT

The full moon and Transamerica Pyramid dominate the sky outside a three-story Victorian building. THUNDER echoes faraway.

A candle flickers in a top floor window as the screeches of

a CAT FIGHT fade away.

MARY (O.S.)

Oh, baby! You really bring out the animal in me!

INT. BEDROOM

The jagged, flickering flame of a candle peers into the dark room illuminating unframed canvases on the walls. One is a portrait of Joe, most are incomplete.

Moonlight from the rain-spattered window allows glimpses of a stylish, feminine bedroom. A big brass Buddha snuggles with colorful stuffed animals in the far corner. Ballet slippers dangle from a map of the Paris Metro on the wall near the bed.

On the bed's twisted sheets, Joe smiles contentedly. Beads of sweat shine in the shadowy curves of his athletic body.

MARY flops down next to Joe. Both are naked, sweaty. Mary is early 20s, cute, curvaceous, with long brown hair. In the faint angled light, her spine resembles a string of pearls.

Mary rests stomach down, on her elbows, face to face with Joe. Her throat and chest glow, rosy with exertion.

She touches him, nose to cheek. Joe nuzzles her neck and his nostrils flare; he breathes deep, smiles, and his eyes flutter closed. She giggles. Their flesh blends in the pale light.

Joe reaches for the nearby table, seeming to see the flame with closed eyes, and picks up the candle holder.

He looks saintly in the glow as he brings it close and blows it out. His nostrils flare as he puts the candle down.

JOE

Love the smell of candle smoke.

Mary's eyes light up as she plays with Joe's hair. Her pert mouth machine gun-chuckles as she combs her fingers repeatedly through Joe's thick mane, staring in wonderment.

MARY

Vroom!

Joe laughs.

Her face relaxes as she lies down beside him.

MARY (CONT.)

So, are you so smart because you were home-schooled?

Joe smiles and glances up, considering.

JOE

Maybe. My mom was a great teacher.

MARY

She seems to have taught you a lot about ancient history – you impressed me in class last week.

JOE

Yeah, I like ancient cultures.

Mary settles in closer and looks at him earnestly.

MARY

You told me your father died ...

Joe's face shrinks a little.

JOE

When I was young. He was a soldier, a Major in the army.

MARY

How did he die?

Mary takes his hand compassionately.

JOE

In a commando raid.

MARY

Where?

JOE

Never would tell us. Top Secret.

Joe shrugs, his expression vacant.

Mary's face softens.

JOE (CONT.)

He's always been ... an emptiness in my life.

Emotion twists Mary's face. She looks down, blinking, then pulls on a brave face.

Joe's eyes moisten. He turns away to hide his tears.

JOE (CONT.)

Spoon with me.

They tenderly embrace to form two nested 'S' curves. She nuzzles the back of his neck, pressing her whole body against him.

MARY

Think I'll take a quick shower.
Wanna come with me?

JOE

No, I'm okay.

Mary's brow creases with concern as she shifts to look at him.

MARY

Last night you woke up screaming.
Weird barking sounds ...

Joe seems surprised.

JOE

Sorry, babe.

MARY

I hope you'd confide in me, if
something was wrong.

She locks her eyes to his with a compassionate gaze.

Joe smiles and returns her look, eyes steady.

They kiss affectionately. She caresses the hair on his leg and tickles his toes as she slips out of bed.

JOE

Wait!

Joe leaps up, smiling, and encircles his arms around her.

JOE (CONT.)

Let me smell you before you shower.

She SQUEALS playfully and Joe buries his nose in her neck. He holds her, smiling, SNIFFING. He GROWLS deep in his throat.

Joe takes her right hand and fits it to the tattoo on his left pectoral, covering her hand with his.

She kisses him and holds his face with her left hand.

Her loving smile yields to compressed lips.

MARY

Maybe take a minute to meditate?

She works her eyebrows at him then heads off to the bathroom.

He watches her go then glances at the candle on the bed table.

Slowly, Joe sits back down on the edge of the bed, feet on the floor, hands on his knees, contemplative.

In the dim light, he reaches for a glass of water on the table and drinks shakily, spilling a few drops.

Mary (O.S.) TURNS ON the bathroom light, revealing a dark look of concentration on Joe's face. His face and the bedroom plunge into darkness when she closes the DOOR.

A SPUTTERING match scratches the darkness as Joe lights the candle. Agitation in his face calms as he stares at the flame.

The flame burns brightly as he caresses it, cups it, reflects its light, and weaves his fingers in its glow. In the silent bright light and brilliant color of the flame, he sees ...

FLASHBACK: INT. OFFICE LOBBY, DAY - FIVE MONTHS AGO

The walls are textured with panels colored in gradations of moss. Green marble and polished granite add glow and sophistication to the room. Colored lights reflect through musical TRICKLING WATER in a dramatic wall display.

At a desk labeled 'SECURITY', Joe, clean cut and eager, steps through a metal detector flanked by TWO ARMED GUARDS.

GUARD 1, face etched with a permanent bored expression, glances without interest at a tray of Joe's keys, watch, cell phone...

The doorway flashes a green light and TRILLS pleasantly.

Joe steps forward and pockets his keys from the tray.

Guard 1 perks up, eyes probing Joe.

The Two Armed Guards look at each other alertly.

As Joe puts on his watch, Guard 1 steps up, shifts his belt.

GUARD 1

Son, where's your *Hak Ba*?

Joe seems to shrink as he sighs and his face reddens.

INT. OFFICE, DAY

Polished stone, colored glass, and muted lights accent the windowless, ultra-modern office.

A RECRUITER sits at his desk reading a COMPUTER screen. Short, 30s, with linebacker shoulders, a brainy forehead pokes

through a thicket of dark hair. Above the tie, he has no neck. Whiskers carpet his face surrounding a wide nose. Deep set eyes flicker beneath strong brows as a CLICK reveals ...

INSERT: The Recruiter's computer screen shows a high school graduation photo of Joe.

Outside the door, a blurred shape darkens the frosted glass window and KNOCKS twice, below lettering that spells 'OUTPLACEMENT' backwards. The Recruiter keeps reading.

RECRUITER

Come in.

OFFICE HUM rises and falls as the door opens and closes. Joe enters the office, glancing backwards, agitated.

The Recruiter stands and beckons, gleaming a salesman's smile.

RECRUITER (CONT.)

Hello, Joe. Glad to finally meet you. Please have a seat.

They shake hands, grabbing at the wrist. Joe smiles and sits down. He glances back out the door.

JOE

My cell phone!

RECRUITER

You'll get it back. Especially here, security is a priority.

The Recruiter smirks at Joe and quotes a rhyme.

RECRUITER (CONT.)

Lazy tongue, kill your young.

The Recruiter's expression shifts back to business.

RECRUITER (CONT.)

In fact, we don't even use names here at HQ. Just call me 'Recruiter'.

Joe smiles nervously.

The Recruiter sits down and refers to the computer screen.

RECRUITER (CONT.)

You won the spelunking marathon!
And your math scores ... Wow. You are one of our stars, Joe.

He looks up, smiles, and tilts back in his chair.

RECRUITER (CONT.)

Now that you've graduated, this is your opportunity to do your duty.

Joe smiles proudly and thumps his left pectoral with his palm.

RECRUITER (CONT.)

You'll like Cal Berkeley. That's where I went to school. You're lucky. I've placed some of your classmates in top spots - the White House, the FBI - but this project they would die for.

Joe smiles with modesty.

JOE

The Earth helps in all ways.

RECRUITER

Berkeley will really expand your horizons! Are you excited?

The Recruiter smiles and gestures effusively with hairy eyebrows. He leans forward and carefully watches Joe.

Joe nods and smiles and begins to relax.

The Recruiter CLICKS on-screen, looks up and studies Joe's face.

RECRUITER (CONT.)

It's obvious you can pass. The new meds are a miracle, huh! In the field, you'll get a new formulation - even makes you smell like them. I should warn you, it's pretty awful the first day or two.

The Recruiter makes a sour face then turns serious.

RECRUITER (CONT.)

So why did you volunteer, Joe?

Joe's eyes search the room for an answer.

JOE

I guess I want to follow in my father's footsteps.

The Recruiter nods, satisfied with his answer.

RECRUITER

Do you have a girlfriend, Joe?

Joe grins and looks down, embarrassed.

JOE

No, not really.

Recruiter pauses to key in a note, then eyes Joe.

RECRUITER

Do you have any anxiety about
leaving our community?

Joe returns his stare levelly.

JOE

No, sir!

The Recruiter laughs.

RECRUITER

Some operatives get disoriented
out there. I'm sure you'll do fine.
Just stay focused on your mission.

The Recruiter pauses to observe Joe's reaction and pecks a note.

Joe beams enthusiastically.

JOE

Yes, sir. May I ask what the
mission is?

RECRUITER

The mission is Top Secret, son.
You'll find out more when you need
to know. I can tell you this:
We've arranged a special one-year
crash course for you at Cal
Berkeley. Chemistry, Math, Physics.

Joe leans in, eager to hear.

RECRUITER (CONT.)

Toward the end, you'll work on a
mathematical model for us ... to
optimize a new weapons system.

The Recruiter leans forward conspiratorially.

RECRUITER (CONT.)

This project will make a key
contribution to the war effort!

Joe brightens.

RECRUITER (CONT.)
Regarding chain of command, your
blood-pair, uh, ...

The Recruiter refers to the computer screen.

RECRUITER (CONT.)
Adam, has been appointed team leader.

Joe frowns and groans with disappointment.

JOE
That's not right! He's rash and
has a temper.

The Recruiter CLICKS through the file on-screen.

RECRUITER
He's a year older than you, and
his father spoke convincingly to
the Council. Your father ...

The Recruiter scans the screen.

JOE
- is dead!

Joe's eyes blink rapidly.

The Recruiter looks up at Joe, then reads the screen.

RECRUITER
"Killed In Action." I see.

JOE
The Council wouldn't even let my
mother speak.

The Recruiter looks at him with compassion.

RECRUITER
I'm sorry. Tradition ...

He shrugs, then his face firms and his eyes narrow at Joe.

RECRUITER (CONT.)
You will follow Adam's orders. Is
that understood?

Frustrated, Joe hesitates then nods.

The Recruiter smiles and softens.

RECRUITER (CONT.)

Before you go into the field, you need to surrender your *Hak Ba*. Security tells me you aren't carrying it. Where is it?

Joe reddens.

JOE

I ... don't have ... a *Hak Ba*.

The Recruiter looks surprised.

RECRUITER

What? No knife?!

Joe looks down.

JOE

My father ...

The Recruiter glances at the computer screen.

RECRUITER

Oh, I see. Your father died before you were blood-paired.

The Recruiter CLICKS on the computer screen, looks up.

RECRUITER (CONT.)

I'm sorry. That must be rough. 'All give thanks for your sacrifice.'

The Recruiter nods, then leans back reflectively and smiles.

RECRUITER (CONT.)

Any questions?

Joe looks sheepish.

JOE

Can I call my mom sometimes?

RECRUITER

Son, you'll be in deep cover. No calls, no visits until your mission is complete. This is war, Joe. We all have to make sacrifices ...

JOE

Yessir!

Joe jumps up and slaps his palm to his chest.

The Recruiter stands up and smiles.

RECRUITER (CONT.)
 Good luck on your first field
 assignment, Joe. Let's shake hands
 the way they do.

The Recruiter extends his right hand.

Joe tentatively extends his right hand and they shake.

Joe smiles.

RECRUITER AND JOE
 (in unison)
 May the sun and moon light your path.

The Recruiter frowns as he watches Joe leave the office.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE, DAY

FLUORESCENT LIGHTS give Joe a green pallor as he opens the door of his dented, dust-caked, black pickup truck.

Joe reaches into the truck bed to test ropes securing a neat row of boxes and suitcases. He climbs into the driver's seat.

The chassis sheds a rain of dust as the door RATTLES closed.

Grim-faced, Joe starts the IGNITION. He pauses, looks contemplative, then pulls forward.

The ENGINE STRAINS as he drives up a steep ramp.

AUTOMATIC DOORS open and he bursts into the bright light of day.

EXT. FARM ROAD, OUTSKIRTS OF YREKA, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA, DAY

A "Closed" sign tilts in the broken window of a dilapidated gas station. A broken-down gas pump rusts beside the driveway near a windmill whose barren spars CREAK in the wind.

JOE (V.O.)
 How did we survive the Homo
 sapiens invasion?

Joe's pickup truck bursts out the doorway of a dilapidated barn, revealing no trace of the modern facility hidden inside.

An EAGLE, disturbed by the action, takes flight.

A streak of dust follows Joe's black truck as it drives along the dirt road past silos, orchards, barren fields, and aging farm buildings toward "I5" freeway signs in the hazy distance.

INT./EXT. JOE'S CAR, DAY

Joe smiles excitedly as he drives, staring ahead.

JOE (V.O., CONT.)

We hide.

Joe puts on his SUNGLASSES and his lips press thin.

INT. OFFICE, DAY

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

The title bar reads COMPOSE MESSAGE. In a text box:

Berkeley research team activated.
Psych profiles follow.

CLICK and a message blinks on-screen:

Encrypting ...

EXT. COIT TOWER, SAN FRANCISCO, DAY

The angled symmetry of the tower looms high in the deep blue sky. Puffy clouds sail by in the breeze.

Happy tourist faces gaze out from the top floor; hands point.

INT. LOBBY, COIT TOWER, DAY

Joe and ADAM shuffle forward in line to the elevator. Adam is 21, built like a tank. Dark eyes glint amidst a masculine, olive-complected face, framed by short black hair, darkened by a mustache, sideburns, and sharply cut goatee. He wears a "Power Lift Champ" T-shirt under a metal-studded black jacket.

Joe gawks at the colorful 1930s WPA murals that decorate the hallway. He wears a red plaid shirt and blue jeans.

They advance lock step with a dozen smiling Japanese girls, embedded in the crowd. Red velvet ropes direct their march.

Joe looks ahead with alarm, frowning.

JOE

No stairs? I don't like elevators.

Adam nods.

ADAM

You'll get used to it.

INT. ELEVATOR, COIT TOWER, DAY

All heads in the packed elevator face the door except Joe's. He scrutinizes the speckled blue carpet on the back wall.

Joe fidgets. He visits his pockets, smooths his hair, crosses his arms, tucks his hands into his armpits.

He notices everyone else and turns to watch the floor indicator.

The elevator RUMBLES and shudders. Joe frowns and his nostrils flare. His eyebrows jump and his eyes bulge in fear, darting side-to-side. He closes his eyes and breathes deeply.

INT. ELEVATOR LOBBY

PING. Joe dabs off sweat and squeezes out the doors as they slowly open. Joe sucks air as his panic subsides.

INT. VIEW DECK, ATOP COIT TOWER, DAY

The view of San Francisco stretches out below, far into the distance: A maze of roofs, sculpted trees, rooftop pools, and complex architecture – pierced by the Transamerica Pyramid.

JOE (V.O.)

We're soldiers, still fighting the
first war, begun 30,000 years ago.

Adam and Joe stand close together and look out over the city, peering out a large window framed in a concrete arch.

Adam looks sagely at Joe.

ADAM

I thought this would be a good place
for you to start to get your bearings.

The Golden Gate Bridge glows rusty red in the distance.

Joe excitedly soaks up the view.

JOE

Everything's so big. And so built
up ... you can't see the land!

The sky darkens. A light rain drips.

ADAM

All this will be ours soon. And every
building will still be standing.
That's the beauty of the dirty rain.

Adam's face hardens. The distant sky THUNDERS.

Joe's face darkens and he smiles coldly.

Fearfully, they shrink from a sudden gust of rain.

INT. CORRIDOR, STUDENT STORE, UC BERKELEY CAMPUS, DAY

Morning light shoots glowing rays through a high window to brighten a NOISY crowded hallway festooned with a banner:

"REGISTRATION TODAY: 211 Sproul Hall, 8:00 am to 6:00 pm"

Clean cut, wide-eyed, Joe and Adam stroll the NOISY hallway. They look trim and youthful. Joe wears a red plaid shirt and denim overalls and a backpack over his shoulder. Biceps ripple as Adam puts his arm around Joe's shoulder.

They rove down the hall ogling girls.

Adam slings his black leather jacket over his shoulder, hooked on his thumb, as he smiles and walks confidently, eyes roving side-to-side, scanning the women they pass.

An attractive woman walks by and Joe glances at her shyly. He leans toward her and takes a deep breath, SNIFFING.

Adam's nostrils flare as he eyes a female student in passing.

Joe lets Adam lead the way through an archway signed:

University of California at Berkeley
ASUC Bookstore

INT. BOOKSTORE, UC BERKELEY CAMPUS, DAY

The brightly lit aisles are a maze of books sectioned into shelves, bins, and tables labeled 'Econ', 'C.S.', 'Genetics', 'Astronomy', 'Accounting', 'History', 'Psych', ...

A sign reads 'Anthro' above Mary as she examines 'Used' copies of a textbook. She's heavier, hair longer, dressed smartly in sexy jeans and T-shirt proclaiming 'Question Authority'.

A gold ring shines on her manicured toe as Adam and Joe arrive in background. Her tanned foot steps out of its open-toed shoe.

Mary steps onto the first shelf and reaches up to a stack of books with 'New' stickers on the top shelf, labeled 'Anthro 15'.

As Joe and Adam walk into the store, Adam refers to a list.

ADAM
Okay, we need Anthro 15.

Joe spots Mary stretching up to reach a book on the top shelf.

Mary's figure shows off pleasingly as she extends herself.

Adam's eyes move down her body.

Suddenly, in her struggle to reach a book, Mary dislodges the stack. Three books cascade off the shelf.

Joe, in a blur of speed, steps in to catch two of the books, one in each hand. With the toe of his foot, he catches the third book and balances it upright.

Mary climbs down from the shelf to look at Joe with eyes of gratitude, then astonishment.

Joe JUGGLES the books with panache, using both hands and both feet, smiling at Mary.

Mary smiles and watches appraisingly.

Joe finishes with a flourish and gallantly offers a book to her. He takes a good look at her.

Mary accepts the book and gives Joe a flirtatious smile.

MARY

My hero!

TWO STUDENTS watch with interest from down the aisle.

Adam's eyes notice them and glance at Joe, annoyed.

Mary looks down and moves close to Joe to step into her shoe.

Their faces close, Mary smiles cutely up at Joe.

Joe's nostrils flare as he SNIFFS her. His eyes sparkle.

SLOW MOTION: INT. BOOKSTORE

Joe's entire face smiles, entranced. Lights swirl.

Their eyes lock. A LOCKER-SLAM SLURS, A VOICE STRETCHES.

Mary's face glows, her lips and mouth smile, her eyes transmit.

BACK TO NORMAL TIME

AMBIENT SOUNDS roar back as Joe wobbles and smiles weakly.

Mary gives Joe a different smile – mature, humorous, sexy – then glances down demurely, looks at the book, then at Joe.

MARY

Thanks!

Before Joe can speak, Mary turns and walks away.

Joe's eyes follow her. Adam looks on, smirking.

ADAM

Next time, at least get her name.

Joe smiles at Adam and hands him one of the books.

JOE

She's in our class.

Adam frowns and looks at the book cover.

The book is entitled: "THE JOURNEY OF MAN"

ADAM

Let's try to keep a low profile
from now on, hmmm?

INT. CORRIDOR

Joe and Adam walk down the hallway. SHOUTS echo, VOICES hum.

Joe carries 3 books under his arm: *The Journey of Man*,
Nuclear Fission, and *Reactor Design*.

Adam walks like a gorilla, arms hanging out from his sides.

They pause in a dark corner. Joe puts his arm around Adam's
shoulders and looks around secretively.

JOE

Wow, Adam, these 'sape' chicks are
somethin'! Sleek and graceful!

They smile at each other, poking and laughing.

ADAM

Lot hotter than the girls back home!

They chuckle and both crane to watch two svelte women with long
straight hair walk by – who return their stares and giggle.

Adam turns serious for a moment and looks sideways at Joe.

ADAM (CONT.)

But remember, Joe, we're here to
learn, not to screw 'sapes'.

Adam laughs sarcastically and lowers his voice.

ADAM (CONT.)

But a little fun's okay. We're a
long way from home now. The rules
... (chuckles) forget the rules.

ADAM (CONT.)

Just don't get caught – the Elders
would not understand.

Joe scowls innocently.

Adam pulls a white BOTTLE out of his pack and tosses it to Joe.

ADAM (CONT.)

Here. These are for you.

Joe scrutinizes the white plastic bottle, labeled "VITAMINS".

ADAM (CONT.)

They help with the hormones the
females give off – which you just
experienced. What a charge, huh!

Joe hoots and pounds his chest.

ADAM (CONT.)

I wanted you to experience that
once, like Ulysses lashing himself
to the mast to hear the song of
the Sirens. Remember that old book
we found in the library?

MEMORY: INT. LIBRARY, DAY

A boy's hands turn the pages of a large, dusty leather-bound
volume. The fingers open the gilt pages to an illustration.

INSERT: ULYSSES HEARS THE SIRENS, B&W ANTIQUE PRINT

Chained to the mast, bare-chested Ulysses' eyes glow insanely
as he watches three naked maidens sing seductively from jagged
rocks. His crew heroically rows away through a pelting tempest.
Wax blocks their ears. All have Neanderthal brow ridges.

JOE (O.S.)

The crew's ears plugged with wax!
He was a hero!

INT. AUDITORIUM, UC BERKELEY CAMPUS, DAY

The large, modern lecture hall is brightly lit, full of
muted colors and TV screens. Rows of seats surround the stage.

Students with books and backpacks funnel slowly in the door,
up the stairs, and into the aisles of graduated seating.
Seats SQUEAK and a HUBBUB rises as people fill the room.

Joe and Adam stride into the half-full lecture hall. Joe
scans the crowd, leading as they climb the central stairs.

Joe smiles as he spots Mary in the crowded third row.

Beside Mary is an empty seat, the only one in the row.

With Adam in tow, Joe makes a bee line for the empty seat, heading into the row, past several seated students.

Adam ogles and smiles at each woman as they pass.

As Joe approaches, Mary looks up modestly.

Joe smiles at Mary and plops down in the seat next to her.

Adam makes a face as he sees no place to sit. He smirks at Joe then laughs. He waves toward the back.

ADAM

Thanks buddy! I'll just stake out
the high ground.

Adam heads out the row, nostrils SNIFFING at each woman he passes, then up the stairs to take an upper row seat.

Joe shifts forward in his seat and turns around to stare full face at Mary.

Mary looks at him and smiles, raising her eyebrows.

Joe smiles at her and winks.

On stage, the INSTRUCTOR sets his briefcase and books on a table. He's a bit shaggy, wearing a faded and worn suit.

INSTRUCTOR

Welcome to 'Pre-History for Poets'.

Joe settles back into his seat. All eyes are on the Instructor, except Joe and Mary who beam at each other.

Joe breaks out a notepad and begins quickly sketching.

Joe glances up at Mary. She smiles and pretends to sneak a peek.

The instructor glances over his glasses at the audience.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

Over the semester we will learn about
evolution and the roots of man ...

Joe rips out the page and presents it to Mary with a wide smile.

Mary looks at it and laughs out loud with delight.

The page shows a skilled pencil sketch of a hand holding a rose.

INSTRUCTOR (O.S., CONT.)
 and discuss the eternal question:
 What does it mean to be human?

Joe turns his head toward Mary and his nostrils flare as he takes a full breath and sighs.

INSTRUCTOR (O.S., CONT.)
 Does everyone have a syllabus?

INT. LIVING ROOM, MARY'S APARTMENT, DAY

Mary sits at a desk against the wall, working on her COMPUTER, which is decorated with cheery cartoon cutouts. Lamplight warms the soft colors of the carpet and wall hangings. Keystrokes CLACK and mingle with the patter of RAIN.

She bites into an apple and CHEWS daintily. She puts it down and gazes unfocused into the computer screen.

On the desk, three books lean against the wall:
Reproductive Health, *Applied Genetics*, and *Gene Therapy*.

On-screen glows a full color image of a human ovary.

Mary carefully rolls the mouse with her hand.

On-screen, a cartoon scalpel cuts tissue. Mary CLICKS and drags to perform 'VIRTUAL DISSECTION'.

On-screen, she magnifies an egg embedded in spongy tissue.

Mary stops working and stares morosely into the screen.

EXT. ABANDONED FORT, BATTERY WAGNER, MARIN, DAY

The gray concrete slabs of the old fort slope down toward the ocean. Fog blurs the river of cars flowing along the Golden Gate Bridge, a metal sculpture painted International Orange.

Joe takes in the ocean, the bridge, the fort, and walks past a brown National Parks sign that reads "Battery Wagner".

GRAVEL crunches underfoot as Adam leads Joe into the cluster of low-profile concrete gun emplacements built into the ridge.

Dressed warmly, Joe wears a coat over a 'Bears' shirt. Adam wears a black leather jacket, black denim jeans, black boots.

EXT. ABANDONED GUN EMPLACEMENT

Graffiti, weeds, and rust decorate the concrete structures.

Painted on a concrete wall, an economical purple line drawing

of a face looks on – a nose and EYES without outline; an enigma of two eyebrows, two circles, two lines, and two dots.

ADAM

Great place to fireweave, huh!?

Joe peers down into the rust-covered well of the corroded gun pivot, up at the Eyes and to the bridge beyond.

JOE

Dark soon. Let's gather wood. I want to feel the memories!

The Eyes on the wall seem to watch as Adam and Joe scurry off.

EXT. ABANDONED GUN EMPLACEMENT, DUSK

The setting sun paints gold-purple streaks in the sky. Shadows flicker in the orange glow of flames illuminating the Eyes on the concrete wall – they seem to blink.

Joe and Adam stand close to the flames blossoming from the rusty iron bowl in the concrete floor of the gun platform.

Joe stares into the growing fire. Shirtless, the outline of a hand tattooed on his chest flickers in the firelight.

Adam feeds wood from the other side of the fire. His bare chest also reveals a handprint tattoo on his left pectoral.

A tight smile spreads across Adam's face as the MUSIC OF THE FLAMES rises in volume – ancient and primal.

ADAM

I hear it!

Joe nods and smiles with slow satisfaction.

JOE

The music of the flames!

Adam CLAPS his hands then THUMPS his chest with his palm.

Joe drones a CHANT, staring into the leaping flames, clapping.

The flames burn bright and shoot up embers. The Eyes painted on the wall seem to look on, mesmerized.

Adam's eyes reflect the flames as they grow in color and brilliance. His face shines with sweat as he gestures, weaving his hands between the flames: fast, slow, close, far.

The fire ROARS. At the molecular level, cascading colors of hot glowing gases SURGE in spiral streams.

Adam fans the flame and cups it, feeling its heat, basking in its colors. The MUSIC OF THE FLAMES surges in volume.

Joe stares, entranced. Sweat trickles down his chest.

The flame grows outward, enlarges to enfold and caress them. They embrace the surge of flame, thrill at the lash of its flicker. Adam's voice rises into an unintelligible CHANT.

A wall of flame envelopes them and fuses into a white brilliance populated by a single huge multifaceted, many-colored flame. In the brilliant color of the silent flame, Joe sees ...

MONTAGE: THE ANCIENT PAST

FACES – Mary, Adam, then a rush of progressively more primitive male and female Neanderthal faces – cascade out of the brilliant whiteness to blend with:

- The limestone cones of Cappadocia stretch into the distance.
- Terror contorts the face of the Male Neanderthal.
- The SNARLING fangs of a lion.
- The light fades out in a blood red mist.
- Firelight flickers on the cave paintings of Lascaux.

INT. AUDITORIUM, DAY

Joe and Adam sit side-by-side staring forward amidst a sea of student faces. They slump, bored, notepads spotted with ink.

A map of Africa snaps brightly onto the overhead screen.

The Instructor refers to his notes at the podium.

INSTRUCTOR

Archeology, linguistics, and now genetics agree that our species originated in Africa.

The Instructor looks out over the top of his glasses.

A woman in front casually glances back to look Adam over.

A geographic map of North Africa and the Middle East snaps on-screen. Arrows show two migration routes.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

Fifty thousand years ago, we migrated out of Africa to populate the world. Funny thing is, there was already somebody there ...

The Instructor looks up inquisitively at the class.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

Next week we shall take up the
topic of Neandertal. See you then.

Joe and Adam share a meaningful glance.

PANDEMONIUM breaks out as chairs SQUEAK and the audience
rises en mass toward the exit.

Mary rises from her seat in the third row.

ADAM

Now's your chance. Go ask her.

Joe shoulders through the crowd to catch Mary.

JOE

Hey, Mary!

Mary turns and smiles at Joe. Joe beams at her.

JOE (CONT.)

Come with us to the pub!

The overhead screens go dark.

Mary hugs her notebook to her chest and looks down shyly,
then smiles, pleased. She nods happily.

INT. PUB, THE BEAR'S LAIR, UC BERKELEY CAMPUS, DAY

Five hands CLINK glass mugs in a rousing TOAST, spilling foam.

A packed house of 20-something students wearing 'UC
Berkeley'-emblazoned sweatshirts and 'golden bear' T-shirts
fills the cavernous fern- and wood-decorated room. Colorful
flags from around the world hang from the walls and ceiling.
Beer mugs and pitchers crowd the tables. The room is ABUZZ.

Mary, Joe and Adam sit on low stools around a small table and
chat excitedly. In the DIN, they lean close to hear each other.
Mary's pants and colorful top show off her figure nicely. Joe
and Adam wear sneakers, blue jeans and 'Bears' sweatshirts.

MARY

(shouting)

So where you guys from?

Joe and Adam look at each other quizzically.

Adam leans toward Mary and cups his hands into a megaphone.

ADAM

Up north. Ever hear of Yreka?

A young sorority-sister WAITRESS interrupts and plunks a PITCHER OF BEER AND 3 GLASSES onto the table. She CHEWS GUM noisily and wears a red apron over a white blouse.

WAITRESS

(loudly)

That'll be twelve fifty.

JOE AND ADAM

(shouting in unison)

What?

The waitress leans toward Joe.

WAITRESS

(shouting)

Twelve -

Her chewing gum dislodges and flies straight at Joe's face.

With incredible speed, Joe grabs the gum out of the air, inches from hitting his nose.

Mary freezes, her mouth drops open. She stares at the waitress.

The waitress's mouth opens into a wide 'O' then an apology.

Joe crumples the gum into a paper napkin from the table.

Adam hands the waitress a \$20 bill. She makes change, snatches up the napkin, and leaves.

Adam breaks into laughter and claps his hands. Mary laughs and squeezes Joe's arm as Adam pours the beer.

Mary raises her glass to Joe.

MARY

A toast to the fastest guy in town!

The three CLINK glasses. Mary smiles and drinks. Adam drinks.

Joe looks at Adam, SNIFFS his glass, then drinks hesitantly.

With a foam mustache, Joe looks at Mary and smiles.

JOE

Tastes funny, but I like it!

Mary's eyebrows rise in surprise.

MARY

You've never had beer before?

Adam chuckles at Joe as he eyes Mary.

Mary eyes Adam then turns back to Joe.

Mary and Joe smile at each other and CLINK glasses. They each take a drink. Mary scoots her stool slightly towards Joe.

Adam jealously watches Mary and Joe smiling together, bottoms-up his mug, then sloppily tosses it on the table.

The mug spins and almost falls over, but Mary steadies it.

Mary glances reproachfully at Adam.

Adam BURPS loudly.

Joe's stool has inched toward Mary's. Joe and Mary laugh.

ADAM

Hey, did it get warm in here?

Adam pulls his sweatshirt off over his head. His T-shirt rides up, exposing a furry stomach.

Mary does a double-take at Adam's hair.

Joe SLAMS his empty glass on the table.

JOE

I like beer!

Mary smiles at him and laughs.

Adam's face reflects in triplicate through the glass pitcher.

Joe stands and climbs onto his chair.

JOE

(slurring, to the crowd)

We honor ... our new friend!

Joe hops down and plucks Mary from her chair with ease. He drops her, sitting, onto the table.

Joe and Adam lift the table and Mary up to shoulder height.

MARY

Uhoh!

With one hand, Mary grabs Joe's shoulder to steady herself. With the other, she grabs up her mug.

They straighten their arms and easily lift the table and Mary high into the air.

Mary squeals with laughter and smiles at Joe.

MARY (CONT.)

Don't drop me!

As the crowd takes notice, a round of APPLAUSE peppered with HOOTS and WHISTLES fills the air.

INT. BATHROOM, NIGHT

A Fred Flintstone nightlight sheds orange glow on the sink.

A blonde hairy head rests in holy communion with the toilet. Slowly the mass of hair MOANS and lifts off the toilet seat.

Joe's eyes open.

The tiles on the floor waver in and out of focus.

Joe VOMITS horribly and grips the edges of the toilet seat.

His eyes close as the toilet FLUSHES.

INT. HARMON GYMNASIUM, PADDED WORKOUT ROOM, DAY

Early morning light slants in and shadows stretch along the thick blue mat padding the gym floor. Sounds vibrate through the walls: distant HOOTS, RUNNING feet, basketball DRIBBLING and occasional shuddering THUDS.

A folded red flyer covers the small window in the room's door.

Adam TOPPLES awkwardly onto the mat, splashing drops of sweat.

ADAM

(cursing)

Shob hak!

Joe looks on amused and breaks out with a hasty LAUGH.

Shirtless and shoeless, Joe and Adam wear only gym shorts. They BREATHE hard, filmed in sweat. Muscles glisten.

ADAM (CONT.)

Weightlifting has cramped my flexibility!

Joe eyes him levelly, confident.

JOE

Ha! Quit making excuses. This is one game I can always beat you at.

Adam's eyes shoot daggers at Joe.

Joe smiles, enjoying his moment.

JOE (CONT.)

Okay. I'm going up another inch.

Joe adjusts a rope tied to the wall.

ADAM

Hell, you've never caught the feather at 9 feet - ever.

Joe unties a rope that's looped up over a high roof beam, suspending a FEATHER 9 feet from the mat.

The feather moves up one inch.

JOE

If I make this, you lose.

Joe CACKLES at Adam.

Adam smirks nervously. His eyes dart at Joe.

Joe backs away along the mat, concentrating on the feather.

Then, teeth clenched, he races down the mat.

A few feet from the rope, he vaults up into the air ...

His head ducks, arms reach down to the mat, legs kick up ...

His arms push hard, up off the mat ... His feet soar up above his head ... His body arches up, stretches out ...

His right foot reaches up toward the feather ...

HIS TOES GRAB THE FEATHER and pull it from the rope.

In a slow motion ballet, Joe crashes to the mat head down. His fist hits first and his arm channels the impact across his body. He comes up in a Judo roll with practiced ease.

JOE (CONT.)

Bakka hai!

Joe HOOTS and smiles exultantly. He holds the feather high, clenched in his toes, his leg as flexible as an arm.

His chest pumps, huffing with exertion and laughing at Adam.

Adam eyes him coldly.

ADAM

Nice, very nice.

ADAM'S POV

Through a red haze, Adam watches Joe laugh at him and hears only his own roaring BREATHING.

BACK TO: GYM

Fury reddens Adam's face as he looks at Joe.

ADAM (CONT.)

Next time, let's play a different game.

INT. LIVING ROOM, DAY

A TV, Ipod music system, and a few items of arty furniture decorate the pleasantly lit room. Mary's world is soft, pastel-colored, with feminine accents. A carved wooden bowl of red-cheeked apples sits on the counter bordering the kitchen.

Mary sits on the couch sipping tea and listening to an older female voice on the phone. Mary is barefoot, wearing baby blue jogging shorts and a skimpy pink top. Behind her hangs a painting, unframed, of San Francisco underwater.

As Mary listens, her smile disappears. She sets down her mug on the table and looks down, gripped with grief.

Her face darkens and distorts, stretching in the rippling surface of the tea in her mug.

MARY (on phone)

I know ...

Mary leans forward to pick up from the table a framed photo of an older man in a much-decorated military uniform.

MARY (on phone, CONT.)

I miss Dad too.

She looks sadly at the photo, hugs it to her and reclines back onto the couch.

MARY (on phone, CONT.)

I don't want to go back to nursing, Mom. I'll get a part-time job if I have to. A genetics major here puts me on the path I want.

Listening, she reaches the mug and sips tea, then laughs.

MARY (on phone, CONT.)

No, I plan to give you grandkids
the traditional way. You'll just
have to be patient.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE APPLIANCE STORE, CHINATOWN, SF, NIGHT

Dark skyscrapers crowd out the sky. Cold WIND drives a stray sheet of newspaper whistling down an alley.

Joe's face droops as he walks down the street looking dejected. His head hangs as he watches his feet walk. Eerie shadows haunt the gaps between puddles of light.

At the corner, he peers at the street signs and looks lost. He looks left, then right. A blue flicker attracts his eye.

He walks closer. A big TV screen lights up a store window down the street. Signs advertise "TV sale" and "New/Used".

A street lamp CRACKLES, headlights glare, cars ROAR by. WIND ruffles Joe's hair. He glances around nervously, hunches, and digs his hands into his pockets for warmth.

Joe sees a large-screen TV in the storefront window. The "11:00 p.m. News" plays MUTELY in brilliant color.

On the TV screen, a newscaster speaks with authority.

Joe's eyes fix on the screen and fill with wonder.

On the TV screen, a bomb explodes and a face weeps.

Joe steps close. His breath fogs the glass. SOUNDS FADE OUT.

On the TV screen, a beautiful woman smiles.

Joe relaxes as he locks his eyes on the screen, consumed.

On the TV screen, men in suits shake hands.

Projected colors play across Joe's face as he reacts emotionally to the montage of silent images.

On the TV screen, a nuclear bomb sprouts a mushroom cloud.

As the image plays on Joe's face, loss and sorrow furrow his brow. His expression darkens to disgust, then recrimination.

EXT. FACULTY GLADE, UC BERKELEY CAMPUS, DAY

Rising above green copper roofs, the Campanile bell tower overlooks the tiny park, a green gem in the middle of campus.

Joe and Mary lounge on the sunny lawn. They sit a foot apart on a tree-encircled slope of green grass gazing at the creek.

Nearby, a couple sits on a blanket and plays with a young child.

Mary turns from watching them and looks brightly at Joe.

MARY

Yeah, I want a career in genetics
and kids, too. I want it all!

She smiles at Joe and laughs.

MARY (CONT.)

Typical dreams of a military brat,
I guess.

They share a moment's silence, looking at each other. Joe frowns and looks down.

JOE

My dad was in the military, too.
He died when I was little.

He looks at her with quivering eyes.

Mary looks back softly. Her eyes find his.

MARY

Joe, I'm so sorry to hear that ...
I know how you feel.

She studies his face with intense eyes, then touches his hand.

MARY (CONT.)

It's a pain you never get over.

Joe looks at her inquisitively.

She nods and speaks carefully.

MARY (CONT.)

We lost my father last year to
heart disease.

Her lips tremble and she looks down.

Joe edges closer and puts his arm on her shoulder.

JOE

It's tough, isn't it?

She looks at him with wet eyes. A tear wells.

JOE (CONT.)

Always an outsider looking in.

Joe leans close and presses his cheek to her brow. He closes his eyes and squeezes a tear onto her eyebrow.

Sunlight refracts through their mingled tear, sparkling as it glides down Mary's cheek. The Campanile carillon CHIMES.

FLASHBACK: INT. BEDROOM, NIGHT - FIFTEEN YEARS AGO

Orbiting colored lights project on the ceiling in the shape of stars, crescent moons, and lightening bolts. WATER GURGLES. The solar system is painted across the ceiling and two walls.

YOUNG JOE, age 6, wears superhero pajamas in bed, sheets pulled up to his chin. A stuffed tiger leans against a poster of Hercules on the wall. Joe's shiny eyes are huge with awe.

JOE'S FATHER, 40s, blonde, sits on the bed, nestled against Joe. Brow ridges swell above his masculinely handsome face. His expression is patient, loving; his posture, military.

An ornate *Hak Ba* – an exotic, hand-made FOLDING KNIFE – gleams silver and sinuous in his hands.

JOE'S FATHER

When you come of age, this will be yours, to defend the family.

Young Joe grabs the knife, jumps up in bed, and jousts with it, pretending to sword fight. His high voice rings innocent.

YOUNG JOE

I'll use it to kill all the 'sapes', Daddy!

Joe's Father's laugh is wise and generous.

END FLASHBACK

INT. FREIGHT ELEVATOR, UC BERKELEY CAMPUS, EVANS HALL, DAY

Heavy doors RUMBLE closed to meet in the center, sealing the room-sized elevator. SILENCE. A worn and scarred wood floor fills the expanse between the blanket-covered walls.

From the control panel on the side wall, Mary walks to Joe in the middle of the space. She takes his hand.

MARY

So, it's not claustrophobia is it?

JOE

No. It's ... being ... at the
mercy of the machine.

She presses her lips together and nods.

She leads him by the hand to the control panel on the wall.

She smiles warmly and her face glows.

MARY

I can help you. I read all about
it in my Child Psych class.

JOE

I want to, but I'm afraid.

MARY

We begin with a baby step, just
one floor.

Joe frowns.

Mary's smile turns coquettish and she steps closer.

MARY (CONT.)

I'll keep you distracted.

She runs her fingers through his hair and plays with his ear.

Joe brightens and nods Yes.

MARY (CONT.)

This is your journey ...

She points with both hands to the button for the second floor.

MARY (CONT.)

You have to take the first step.

Joe steps up to her and looks at the control panel buttons.
He presses the button marked '2'.

As the room VIBRATES, he shudders and frowns and darts his eyes.

Mary caresses his hand and makes soothing sounds.

He turns to look at Mary for support. They lock eyes.

She smiles, steps closer and puts an arm around him.

He calms as she caresses his hair and ears.

MARY (CONT.)

It's okay.

She curls the hair on the back of his neck around her finger.
He SNIFFS her and his eyes open longingly. The ELEVATOR MOANS.
She smiles as she looks deep into his eyes.
He steps close to her and kisses her tenderly on the lips.
Joe and Mary continue to kiss until the ELEVATOR STOPS.
SILENCE. They open their eyes and stop kissing.
Mary smiles and looks down as she backs away.
Joe looks dopey. Then he perks up and smiles hugely.

MARY (CONT.)

(whispering)

Remember that, next time you ride
an elevator.

Mary watches him and smiles seductively.

Joe eyes her passionately and steps nose-to-nose close.

He presses the top floor button, marked '9'.

INT. ADAM'S COLLEGE DORM ROOM, NIGHT

Weightlifting and martial arts posters struggle on the walls. A bench press dominates the floor surrounded by dirty clothes, black steel weights, and motorcycle magazines.

Adam stands at the dresser, parting his hair. Joe sits on the unmade bed flipping a ten-pound steel weight in his hands.

A MIRROR reflects Adam's stare as he examines his forehead. He pulls something wrapped in cloth from a drawer. Joe laughs.

JOE

Stupid 'sapes!' ... I knew they
came in different colors, but now
I've figured it out: the black
ones hate the yellow ones, and the
brown ones hate the white ones,
and the white ones hate everybody.

Adam shakes his head and turns to sit beside Joe on the bed.

ADAM

And the white ones pretty much
killed off the red ones.

Joe shrugs.

JOE

Don't they realize they all
started out black when they came
out of Africa?

Adam chuckles, his face darkly gleeful.

ADAM

When our mission gets a green
light, we won't have to worry
about any of them much longer!

Adam reverently holds up a knife and offers it to Joe.

ADAM (CONT.)

Check out my *Hak Bai*; this is
secret, okay?

Joe accepts it and examines it closely. His eyes grow.

ADAM (CONT.)

Watch out. I keep it sharp.

Joe opens the double-edged, kris-like blade. The twisted steel
and ornate handle speak of an ancient and exotic history.

Joe concentrates as his finger traces the snaking razor edge.

JOE

They say a man walks the path of
his blade.

Joe sits back against the wall and looks at Adam.

JOE

It was your father's?

ADAM

And his father's before that.

Joe angles the blade and the edge glints. His face saddens.

Adam looks compassionately at Joe and compresses his lips.

ADAM (CONT.)

Did you ever find out any more
about what happened to your dad?

Joe's face softens. He shakes his head No.

JOE

'Top secret' is all they ever say.

Joe looks down, sad. Adam takes the knife from his hand.

Adam SNIFFS at Joe and looks at him intensely.

ADAM

I think I smell you. Been taking
your meds?

Joe's eyes swivel evasively.

JOE

Yeah, sure.

Adam silently watches Joe cross his legs and look away.

ADAM

Watch this, I just learned it.

Adam stands into a karate ready stance, open left hand
forward, right hand back, clenching the knife, blade down.

Adam punches and grunts powerfully; silver shines and the
knife point stabs the air an inch from Joe's jugular vein.

Joe flinches and pulls back his head.

Joe and Adam laugh. Adam steps over to put a disc into his
music player; a WAGNER OPERA plays loudly. He opens a jar,
dabs green paste on a cloth, and returns to sit on the bed.

ADAM

Remember the war stories the
Elders told about our ancestors?

Adam uses the cloth to rub the knife blade with green paste.

ADAM

Here, rub that in.

Adam hands the knife to Joe, who takes it and begins to rub.

JOE

Sure. Our great heroes ...

ADAM

Thirsty for blood! Remember that
picture of Vlad the Impaler?

Joe artfully stabs upward with the knife.

JOE

The Dracula guy. Killed 40,000!
Back then, that took hard work.

ADAM

He sure had style.

Joe waves the knife to conduct the surging Wagner opera.

Joe smiles and points the knife towards himself.

JOE

I'm related to Jack the Ripper!

Joe laughs and slashes the air.

Adam smirks.

ADAM

All he did was cut girls.

JOE

(defensively)

Never got caught; fooled 'em all!

Adam makes an encompassing gesture with both hands.

ADAM

Proud Neandertalers!

They smile proudly and poke each other, laughing.

JOE

I heard they put him down because
he couldn't control his rage.

Adam nods sagely.

ADAM

That was before we had the meds.

Adam takes the knife from Joe's hand and sneers.

ADAM (CONT.)

The Ripper didn't really score
much of a body count.

Joe looks offended. Adam looks seriously at Joe.

ADAM (CONT.)

Stalin killed the most!
(conspiratorially)
Our mission is important!

Joe nods. He smiles and stares raptly at Adam. With their right hands, they grab hold at the wrist and shake.

ADAM (CONT.)

This is our chance to be heroes!

They smirk and slap each other on the left pectoral with their right hands.

JOE

So, tell me! What's our target?

Joe's eyes gleam proudly.

Adam's eyes narrow as he shifts through martial arts poses to conduct the music with the *Hak Ba*.

ADAM

Can't tell. Top Secret. But it's big! Our mission will put the 'taler' nation back in our rightful place of dominance!

Adam holds up the knife to admire its gleaming edges in the light, closes it, tosses it to Joe.

Joe gleefully FLICKS the knife open in one smooth movement. The curves of the blade speak menace. His eyes dart wildly.

JOE

I can't wait for my first kill!

INT. ELEVATOR, MARY'S APT. BUILDING, DAY

Old floral brasswork decorates the door and upper corners of the antique Victorian elevator car.

Joe stands, nicely dressed, holding a bouquet of roses.

He hesitates, finger ready to punch a button.

He gathers himself, breathing in/out, in/out. He inhales and presses the top button, then braces himself against the wall.

The door closes and the elevator begins to RUMBLE upward.

Joe buries his nose in the bouquet, inhales, then stands up straight and opens his eyes, smiling.

INT. BEDROOM, MARY'S APARTMENT, DAY

Mary stands at her easel painting from a palette, in a colorful paint-smudged sweatshirt, hair tied back. Her brush strokes dance fluidly across the canvas.

MARY

I can't wait for Mom to see this!

Joe smiles and sits still in a chair watching Mary.

A vivid, colorful portrait of Joe's eyes and nose peers out of the half-completed canvas as Mary's brush dabs in eyebrows.

Mary stares intensely at the canvas, working her brush. Joy shows in her face and hummingbird-like movements.

She gently squeezes a tube to ooze paint onto her palette.

MARY (CONT.)

You sit still very well. Not everyone can.

He gazes at her, mesmerized.

JOE

I'm honored that you commit me to paint, Mary. We'll treasure it, years from now.

Mary smiles supremely. Her eyes find his and her face glows. Behind her, a poster of GUERNICA is pinned to the wall.

MARY

Picasso is my hero. Do you know his famous anti-war painting?

JOE

Guernica?

MARY

Yes, very good.

She flashes an approving smile at him.

MARY (CONT.)

I'm going to a peace rally on campus Friday. Come with me?

A poster for LYSISTRATA decorates the wall between them.

JOE

A war protest?

Mary's face and voice take on a serious tone.

MARY

The government is waging a war the people don't want.

She pauses painting to look at him with emphasis.

MARY (CONT.)

We need to tell 'em war's never just!

Mary's face intensifies and she attacks the canvas with short staccato strokes.

Joe's forehead bunches as thoughts struggle across his face.

JOE

Yes, these days wars seem to start for trivial reasons. But sometimes you hafta fight to survive ... to preserve your culture.

Mary dismisses his comments with a nod, jabbing with the brush.

Joe looks at Mary anxiously from one angle, then the other.

MARY

Stay still!

Her face stretches with irritation.

MARY (CONT.)

Old men, corrupted by politics, make selfish, near-sighted decisions that we pay for with the lives of our young men and women!

Mary squeezes a paint tube that SPLURTS onto her palette.

Joe looks at her sharply.

JOE

You should have more respect for your elders.

They look at each other with surprise.

MARY

You remind me of my father!

EXT. PARKING LOT, UC BERKELEY CAMPUS, DAY

The Campanile rings the hour as Adam arrives noisily on his MOTORCYCLE, wearing helmet and sunglasses. With Joe riding in back, Adam does a WHEELEY through the parking lot.

He parks and they dismount. Adam wears black jeans, boots, and a leather jacket emblazoned "Rulers of the Earth".

Adam walks with the smooth glide of a martial artist. He and Joe follow other students into a large concrete building.

INT. AUDITORIUM, DAY

Adam leads Joe running up the stairs of the half-full auditorium.

Adam sits and sheds his jacket revealing a tight martial arts T-shirt and rippling muscles. Joe takes a seat beside him.

Several women turn their heads and smile at Adam.

Adam's nostrils flare as he returns their smiles. He smooths his goatee and scans the crowd like a prison guard.

The clock ticks 8:10 a.m. and the INSTRUCTOR walks in, places books and a satchel on the desk. He appears a bit shaggy in a patched corduroy jacket and blue jeans.

He approaches the podium and faces the class, smiling. He peers through his glasses at the front row.

INSTRUCTOR

Today I would like to introduce an important player in human history ...

On-screen, an image of a reconstructed Neanderthal pops up.

INSTRUCTOR (O.S., CONT.)

Neandertal.

Adam lets out a long low whistle. Joe, tense, glances sideways at Adam, irritated. Joe's forehead gleams with perspiration.

A map of Eurasia snaps on-screen, showing dig locations.

INSTRUCTOR (O.S., CONT.)

Slightly ahead of our evolution in Africa, Neandertal thrived in Eurasia.

Adam and Joe sit up and concentrate on the lecture.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

After we migrated out of Africa, Homo sapiens replaced Neandertal completely, outcompeting them in a time of changing climate.

Adam swallows. Joe frowns.

Paintings of a young, primitive, hairy Neanderthal family flip by on-screen. They eat, crouching in a fire-lit cave.

INSTRUCTOR (O.S., CONT.)

Neandertal looked much like us. Some say you wouldn't recognize a Neandertal sitting next to you.

A few students giggle. Adam smiles, pointing playfully to himself, as he glances at a woman seated nearby.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

There is much conjecture about whether or not we mated.

Students giggle. Joe's face contorts. Adam sits back and smiles.

A drawing of the human evolutionary tree pops on-screen.

INSTRUCTOR (O.S., CONT.)

But recent advances in DNA analysis end this debate: Neandertal made no genetic contribution to modern humanity. They were a dead branch of the human tree, a failed experiment.

Adam and Joe look at each other disapprovingly.

Neanderthal skulls and skeletons flash onto the screen.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

The five hundred Neandertal fossil remains we've found thus far tell us they had brains slightly larger than ours. They had stone tools, used wood extensively, used animal skins for tents and clothing, and probably had limited speech.

Joe smiles. Adam laughs out loud.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

However, some researchers doubt Neandertal had consciousness as we do, but behaved more like animals.

Adam chokes and coughs briefly. Joe looks shocked.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

They had no art, used the same stone tool set for a million years, and never did learn to eat fish!

Joe smiles and Adam SNORTS.

More photos of archeological digs flash by on-screen.

INSTRUCTOR (O.S., CONT.)

Some believe Neandertal invented religion – they buried their dead, so presumably they believed in an afterlife. Some evidence suggests that burials even included flowers.

Adam and Joe watch, fascinated.

The Instructor stares into the crowd, relishing his next point.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

But before you get all sentimental, note: They did not bury their female dead.

A guy in back TITTERS. Adam smirks. Joe looks perplexed.

Catcalls come from a WOMAN in the front row.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Men! They still haven't evolved!

The Instructor smiles and refers to his notes.

INSTRUCTOR

There is evidence of funeral feasts – maybe even cannibalism.

Adam's mouth drops open. He and Joe shake their heads, offended.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

Butchery marks on skulls at some archaeological sites suggest they may have ritually eaten brains.

Adam slowly seethes. Joe leans to whisper in Adam's ear.

JOE

Can you believe this?

Adam makes a face at Joe.

A map of Europe and the Near East snaps on-screen.

INSTRUCTOR

Homo sapiens and Neandertal overlapped in Europe and the Near East, co-existing for thousands of years. Happily? We don't know. Were we good neighbors? Was it love or war? Bones and fossils can tell only so much.

Adam's red brow twists in anger. Joe clears his throat.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

History's most stubborn mystery: What became of Neandertal?

Joe presses his right hand against his left pectoral.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

Thirty thousand years ago they
disappeared from the fossil record
and have not been heard from since.

Adam and Joe glance at each other and share a smile.

INT. JOE'S COLLEGE DORM ROOM, DAY

Round, pink whorls of flesh tipped with toenails glow in a
shaft of sunlight as Joe stretches his legs under the desk.

Joe's hand CLICKS the COMPUTER MOUSE.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN - A SCREEN SAVER IMAGE

INSERT: ULYSSES HEARS THE SIRENS, B&W ANTIQUE PRINT

JOE (O.S.)

Ulysses!

CLICK (O.S.).

INSERT: FOREST OF THE IMPALED, B&W ANTIQUE PRINT

Romania, 1475: Prince Vlad Dracul gnaws a mutton leg while he
supervises the planting of a hillside with sharp stakes; each
supports the skewered body of a writhing *Homo sapiens*. He shows
brow ridges and wears rich robes and a *Hak Ba* dagger as he
directs the piercing - through the heart, neck, liver, anus...

JOE (O.S., CONT.)

Vlad!

BACK TO: JOE'S DESK

A lamp lights Joe sitting at his desk in the small room. He's
barefoot, wearing a 'Bears' sweatshirt and sweat pants. He
turns away from the vivid computer screen to resume reading.

The single bed sits neatly-made in the middle of the Spartan
room. A toothpick model of a Greek trireme hangs from the
ceiling, complete with three rows of oars. A chess set sits
ready for play on the table. On the wall is a home-made
crossbow and a colorful poster of the Periodic Table.

In the desk lamp's oval light, Joe diligently copies a table
of numbers from the open book on his tidy desk.

JOE (V.O.)

Our mission required focused
research ...

Four books are stacked neatly on the desk: *Nuclear Fission*,

Reactor Design, Radiation Chemistry, and The Journey of Man.

Joe turns a page to reveal a photo of a nuclear mushroom cloud.

He yawns. He stands and stretches his whole body, reaching up to touch the ceiling.

He remains standing as he leans down to continue reading, stretching both arms down for support.

As his eyes skitter across the page, he seems calm and absorbed. He reads swiftly, his expression studious. He sighs happily. Paper scrapes as he TURNS THE PAGE –

– with his FOOT. He flips past the next few pages, his big toe as dextrous as a finger.

INT. ADAM'S COLLEGE DORM ROOM, NIGHT

An empty chair sits at the dark desk against the wall. Dirty clothes are scattered over the BARBELL on the bench press.

A cell phone, Ipod, ear buds, and electronic gadgets litter the desk. Books hide in the dim light: *Cloud Physics, Air Pollution Meteorology and Dispersion, and The Journey of Man.*

A GIGGLE and sounds of SEX come from the SQUEAKING BED.

Adam and a young blonde WOMAN roll on the bed, half-naked.

JOE (V.O.)

Adam seemed to be conducting his own research, probing the old crone's fable – that we couldn't impregnate 'sapes'.

The Woman's long, naked legs are pale in the dim light as Adam's hand caresses them. Adam moans.

WOMAN

Oh, y-e-e-s!

Adam's face is flushed. He BREATHES heavily.

JOE (V.O.)

Immersion teaches so much about a culture.

Adam's mouth and eyes pop open, white against his purple face.

INT. CLASSROOM, UC BERKELEY CAMPUS, DAY

A bar graph of plutonium half-life snaps brightly on-screen.

Joe shades a doodle of a handprint on his notepad.

Joe and 12 students sit at desks, watching the Arab TEACHING ASSISTANT consult his notes, standing in front of the class.

TEACHING ASSISTANT

(droning)

Plutonium decays at a declining exponential rate: E raised to the power of negative Kt , where K is the decay rate constant ...

Through the overhead projector's glow, the bars of the graph ripple and fade into the teeth of Mary's smile.

Joe looks up half-asleep, then his eyes droop, half-closed.

SUPERIMPOSE: CU OF MARY SMILING

Joe's lips curl into a half-smile as he nods off, and presses his palm against his left pectoral.

INT. BARBER SHOP, BERKELEY, DAY

World War II recruiting posters line the walls of the old shop.

With the pomp and precision of a matador, the BARBER, 60s, SNAPS a smock into the air and settles it on Joe's lap. Several mirrors reflect his mustachioed smile and slick hair.

BARBER

Back for a trim already?

The Barber tucks the cloth into Joe's collar. His face thrills as he runs the fingers of both his hands through Joe's hair.

BARBER (CONT.)

Now that's a head of hair.

The Barber selects scissors and a comb and begins SNIPPING.

BARBER (CONT.)

Feeling a little down today, huh?

Joe sighs and looks dejectedly at the Barber in the mirror.

JOE

Think there's hope for mankind?

In the mirror, the Barber squints at Joe and twirls his mustache. He turns to point out the window with his comb at pedestrians carrying cell phones, laptops, headphones, Ipods.

BARBER

We're in the Electronic Age now,
that's for sure.

He looks at Joe philosophically.

BARBER (CONT.)

But it don't mean we're any more
civilized.

He resumes SNIPPING.

BARBER (CONT.)

We're still as brutal and
competitive towards each other as
cavemen with clubs.

He sneers in the mirror.

BARBER (CONT.)

"Man is a wolf to man."

The Barber leans close to the mirror and SNIPS an errant
hair from his waxed mustache.

BARBER (CONT.)

Don't you watch TV?

INT. ELEVATOR, MARY'S APT. BUILDING, DAY

The floor number indicator flicks from 2 to 3.

A moment's agitation rolls across Joe's face, then he looks
at Mary and smiles contentedly, faces front and looks up.

He and Mary hold hands as they ride up the elevator. Both wear
blue jeans and identical red T-shirts lettered 'End the War'.

She looks at him affectionately. Her eyes are shiny and alive.

MARY

I'm exhausted ... but I feel good.
We made a difference today!

Joe looks at her happily.

JOE

Me too. It was a new experience
for me ... I ... enjoyed it.

Mary smiles at Joe seductively and pulls him closer.

He beams back.

MARY

Thanks for coming with me.

JOE

Sure.

Joe smiles and looks down, awkward in the closeness. Mary moves closer and puts her arm around him.

MARY

I've decided I like you.

They both smile.

Mary leans in and gives him a long kiss on the lips.

INT. BEDROOM, MARY'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

The candle flame quivers. Excited photons cast their glow on Mary's naked back; her curves are hidden in the darkness.

Joe lies shirtless on the bed. Mary sits on top of him. Joe gives a soft moan. His belt buckle CLICKS metallicly.

MARY

Help me! I can't undo the buckle.

Metal CLICKS. ZZZZIP. Looking down, Mary inhales suddenly.

MARY (CONT.)

Oh, my G-A-W-D!

EXT. STRAWBERRY CREEK BRIDGE, UC BERKELEY CAMPUS, DAY

Redwoods shade the bridge crossing the tiny GURGLING creek.

Joe and Mary loiter arm-in-arm on the wood-plank footbridge when Adam comes POUNDING up to them carrying a gym bag.

ADAM

Hey, man!

Joe turns to see him and smiles.

ADAM (CONT.)

You've been scarce.

Mary sees Adam and her lips pucker; she points her gaze away.

JOE

Yeah, busy, you know ...

Joe evasively looks up at the towering redwoods.

Adam leers at Mary.

ADAM

On my way to Tae Kwon Do.
(to Joe)
Talk to you for a minute?

Joe looks annoyed and glances at Mary.

Adam smirks at Mary.

ADAM (CONT.)

(to Mary)
Hey, 'Go Bears'!

His eyes move down her body.

ADAM (CONT.)

'Scuse us.

Mary frowns and steps away from Adam.

Adam draws Joe aside.

ADAM (CONT.)

Want to fireweave Saturday night?

JOE

Sorry, I'm pretty sure I'm busy.

ADAM

Pokin' her, huh? She is hot!

They look at each other, smile and laugh.

ADAM (CONT.)

(confidentially)
These 'sape' chicks really dig
what we got!

They slap each other's left pectoral.

Adam glances at Mary, then turns to face away from her. He looks pointedly at Joe and cocks his eyebrows.

ADAM (CONT.)

Hey, don't get too close, huh.

Joe shrugs and looks away. Adam backs away.

ADAM (CONT.)

See you Thursday, then: We hunt
under the full moon!

Adam's eyes sparkle with eerie glee.

Joe frowns as Adam runs off, STEPS ECHOING on the bridge.

INT. FERTILITY LAB, COWELL HOSPITAL, BERKELEY CAMPUS, DAY

Mary stands beside BARBARA, cute, 20s. Both look cherubic in green scrubs, hairnet caps, and latex gloves.

In the background, THREE WHITE-COATED LAB TECHNICIANS crowd over a bank of computer screens.

Barbara's hand flips a switch and a blurring CENTRIFUGE of angled test tubes capped in bright colors whirls to a stop.

Mary gives Barbara a custodial look.

MARY

Load the next batch then I'll
check it before you spin it.

Mary sits and peers into a microscope.

Barbara unloads test tubes from the centrifuge; her eyes flash with curiosity as she turns to Mary.

BARBARA

So, you seeing anybody now that
you got rid of the big fink?

Mary looks up from the microscope; her face hardens, then looks devilish.

MARY

I did meet a guy I kinda like.

Barbara moves a rack of test tubes into a refrigerator. She walks over to Mary and raises her eyebrows.

Mary smiles widely.

MARY (CONT.)

His name is Joe.

Barbara smiles and looks at Mary.

BARBARA

Uh huh, what's his major?

MARY

Chemistry, I think.

Barbara begins loading the centrifuge with another set of test tubes. Mary sips from a water bottle.

MARY (CONT.)

We met in Pre-history, my fun class.

BARBARA

Is he romantic?

Mary's face brightens and softens.

MARY

He's really sweet. Drew me a rose.
I think we're falling in love!

She smiles brightly and her eyebrows play.

Barbara smiles warmly and nods interest.

MARY (CONT.)

He's earthy and ...
unsophisticated - in a good way.

BARBARA

Oh?

MARY

He seems so different, unpolished.
He's never had sushi! And he's a
real clothing neanderthal!

Mary and Barbara smirk at each other.

MARY (CONT.)

Blue jeans and T-shirt - everyday.
I'll fix that!

They laugh and Barbara smiles inquisitively.

BARBARA

And how's the sex?

Mary glances shyly down into the microscope eyepiece.

Faint black squiggles writhe across a bright disc.

Mary stands close to Barbara and speaks confidentially.

MARY

I think it was his first time. It-
We connected on a primal level.

Mary flushes and smiles ear-to-ear.

MARY (CONT.)

I think I've finally found a real
man!

Mary flips a switch and the CENTRIFUGE whirls into a blur.

EXT. STREET, TENDERLOIN, SAN FRANCISCO, NIGHT

A PIT BULL wearing a studded collar trots down the dark, garbage-strewn alley, past overfilled dumpsters and garish graffiti. Its paws CLACK against the asphalt.

It PANTS and slows, looking into the shadows against the wall. The dog's nostrils flare and its eyes narrow as it peers.

The dog GROWLS. It lowers its head and its ears lay flat. Its GROWL deepens and hair bristles as it bares its teeth.

In the shadows, a deep GROWL answers, as two eyes glare red low to the ground. Adam creeps into the moonlight kneeling low in front of the BARKING dog. He stares it in the eyes.

The dog bares its teeth, and releases a ferocious torrent of BARKING, approaching within inches of Adam's face.

Flecks of dog saliva build up on Adam's unflinching face. Impassive, Adam waits until the dog tires and quiets.

Adam bares yellow incisors and GROWLS deeply, SNARLS savagely. His hair bristles, his tongue spits. He ROARS and lunges.

The dog jumps backwards into the air, YELPS and runs off.

Lit by the full moon, Joe emerges from the shadows.

Adam leads Joe in a low trot silently down the alley.

They rush through the shadows, black-clad and gloved, arms at the ready. They run between dim street lamps toward a throbbing red neon 'Chinese' sign down the street.

Adam crouches between parked cars, red in the neon light.

The sidewalks and businesses are empty. MUSIC AND VOICES drift from the bright windows of a bar a few doors down.

Across the street, a MAN IN TIE and slacks sings to himself as he staggers along the sidewalk into a parking lot. He carries his coat and is searching its pockets with difficulty.

MAN IN TIE

(slurring)

Keys here ... somewhere.

The Man in Tie finds his keys and resumes singing.

Adam nods affirmative to Joe and hand signals him to wait.

The Man aims the key at the car door and sings another verse.

He takes two wildly unsuccessful passes at the lock while Adam silently creeps up on him.

Suddenly, Adam is on him. Adam's left hand pulls the Man's shoulder and spins him around. Adam slaps his palm hard against the Man's forehead.

The Man staggers backward, dropping his keys, moaning.

Adam snap kicks the Man in the groin.

The Man SCREAMS, doubles over and collapses to the ground.

Adam looks left and right, then reaches into his pocket.

Adam pulls a roll of duct tape from his jacket pocket and binds the Man's hands behind him.

MAN IN TIE (CONT.)

No, please!

Adam pulls out a plastic bag and works it down over the Man's head and mouth. The Man GASPS, inhaling the plastic partly into his gaping mouth.

Adam FLICKS his *Hak Ba* and the knife blade shines sinuously. He offers the knife to Joe.

The Man struggles but Adam holds him with one hand.

ADAM

Here.

He looks expectantly at Joe.

ADAM (CONT.)

You do him ... I give you the honor.

Joe steps back and answers hesitantly. His face pales.

JOE

I don't think I can ...

Adam glares at Joe.

ADAM

Take it! This is your chance.
Your first kill!

Adam steps intimately close to Joe and whispers in his ear.

ADAM

Make them pay!

Joe takes the knife from Adam's outstretched hand.

Joe grabs the Man by the tie and raises the knife, ready.

Joe lifts him up, close, and stares at the Man's face.

The Man stares back, terrified. He kicks and GASPS. The transparent bag fills and tightens as he tries to breathe.

Joe's mouth opens and closes as he stares in horror.

Joe's face twists with disgust.

The *Hak Ba* spears the plastic bag between the Man's teeth.

Joe releases the Man, who slumps to the ground, gasping.

Joe swallows and looks angrily at Adam.

Joe throws the knife overhand into a wooden telephone pole.

The twisted silver blade quivers, impaled in the wood.

JOE

I ... can't.

Adam's eyes burn at Joe. He SNARLS and curses.

ADAM

Shob hak!

Adam pulls the knife from the pole. He leans low and fiercely grabs the Man's head, SLICES across his neck.

A drop of blood spatters Joe's cheek.

The Man's throat spurts blood and GARGLES harshly.

Adam drops the body to the ground and glares at Joe.

Joe leans away and pukes.

Kneeling to wipe his knife on the body, Adam seethes at Joe.

ADAM (CONT.)

Ku-ja!

Joe wipes the blood from his cheek and looks at it, disgusted.

Glowing red Chinese characters reflect harshly in the black pool of blood growing around the Man's head, now still.

INT. BATHROOM, MARY'S APARTMENT, DAY

A safety razor hovers, aimed at Joe's neck.

Bright make-up lights surround the mirror which reflects colorful hand-painted fish on the shower curtain.

Mary leans over to apply the razor to Joe's face, revealing her breasts under a low-cut red top.

Joe sits on the toilet, a towel around his neck, his face slathered with shaving cream. Hot WATER RUNS in the sink.

She smiles intimately and moves in close to shave another white stripe off his face. Her BREASTS JIGGLE.

MARY (CONT.)

Just a little cleanup. You have heavy five o'clock shadow.

Joe's nostrils flare and he stares at her bobbling breasts.

Joe interrupts, taking her razor hand in his. He stands into a hug and lifts her into the air with his other hand. She SQUEALS playfully as he gives her a messy KISS on the lips.

JOE

I love you.

She smiles, shaving cream all over her face. Her eyes glow as they lock with his.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BEDROOM, MARY'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

The SHOWER SOUNDS stop, jogging Joe out of his reverie. He stops playing with the candle flame and his face calms.

His lips squeeze together and eyebrows knit in determination. He licks his thumb and forefinger.

The flame SIZZLES as he pinches out the candle.

With a flourish, he reaches his hand down to cup smoke to his nose and closes his eyes to savor it.

At the sound of the shower stall DOOR opening, Joe smiles toward the bathroom and rolls onto the bed.

INT. BATHROOM

The MIRROR has fogged up and steam fills the bathroom. Mary emerges from the shower stall wrapped in a fuzzy pink TOWEL.

She unwraps the towel and dries herself, but abruptly throws it down, and moves to the mirror.

She giggles and presses her lips together in surprise. Her blurry smile reflects in the mirror as she uses her finger to write on the fogged glass. Her BREASTS are spottily visible through the letters as she writes.

THE MIRROR READS:

Mary Carpenter

BACK TO BATHROOM

Mary stands back and surveys her work as she towels off.

She leans to the mirror and scribes an addition.

THE MIRROR READS:

Mrs. Mary Carpenter

BACK TO BATHROOM

Mary opens the bathroom door slightly as she dries herself.

Smiling, she coyly eyes the mirror and calls out to Joe.

MARY

You still awake?

INT. BEDROOM

A shaft of light stabs into the room as the bathroom DOOR opens, spotlighting Joe's face.

Joe lies on the bed and grins approval as he watches Mary finish toweling off in the bathroom.

JOE

Come and see.

Mary giggles as she SNAPS OFF the bathroom light and enters the bedroom wearing the towel.

She sits on the bed and they nuzzle.

He kisses her shoulder and makes a sour face.

JOE (CONT.)

Soapy.

Joe puts his arms around her and looks at her seriously. He glances at the candle, then into Mary's eyes.

JOE (CONT.)

Mary, I trust you -

They lock eyes.

JOE (CONT.)

- deeply. I've never connected
with anyone like this before.

Mary nods and smiles lovingly.

MARY

I know, me too.

JOE

You've opened my eyes so much!

Joe leans close.

JOE (CONT.)

I've known since we met the first
day of classes ... I want you Mary
... to be with you always!

Mary coos and her eyes sparkle. She moves closer and the light
reveals lovely curves and the smooth swell of her buttocks.

Joe encircles her with his arms, smiles, and looks directly
in her eyes, noses touching.

JOE (CONT.)

Be my wife!

A smile blooms across Mary's face. She nods vigorously.

MARY

Yes!

She holds his face and looks at him, then closes her eyes.

MARY (CONT.)

You make me feel whole.

They kiss deeply and roll on the bed. Joe smiles and closes
his eyes. Mary glows. Their HEARTS BEAT in synch.

MARY (CONT.)

We'll have beautiful kids!

One of Joe's eyes POPS OPEN.

INT. BARBER SHOP, DAY

The Barber smiles and looks at Joe in the mirror.

BARBER

So, how's my best customer?

Joe sits in the chair, smock littered with curls of his hair.

The Barber works with precision, SNIP SNIP SNIP.

BARBER (CONT.)

Something on your mind?

Joe sighs and angles an eye at the Barber in the mirror.

JOE

Stan, what do you know about
artificial insemination?

Reflected in several mirrors, the Barber's bountiful
mustache droops comically.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM, DAY

On the dark, polished rock surface of the conference table,
rough hairy hands twitch, or tap, or lay motionless.

The windowless room is carved out of the same rock as the table,
with graduated seating and elaborate audio/visual gear.

The Elder sits at the head of the table and probes the faces
of his audience while he addresses them.

A dozen Neanderthal elders face him. Masculine, grey, hairy
faces with active eyes and expressive mouths absorb his words.

ELDER

... *te* smallpox *saka bas Pana*,
dasa 300 million 'sapes'.

The Elder touches a control panel and a color bar graph blazes
to life on a wall-sized TV screen behind him, showing bars
for "Africa Smallpox - 2,000 B.C." and "Flu Epidemic - 1918".

ELDER

O flu epidemic of nineteen
eighteen, *dasa* 50 million.

Several voices growl in agreement. A third bar pops up for
"China Famine - 1958".

ELDER

O Chinese *onata*, *dasa* 25 million.

More growls of support. A fourth bar pops up.

ELDER
AIDS, *dasa* 30 million.

The voices grow in number and volume; fists thump the table.
The bar graph is replaced by a population time line.

ELDER
But each of our attacks was only
temporarily successful; the 'sape'
population has continued to grow.

An OLD NEANDERTHAL, finely dressed with ornately coiffed
white hair and beard, agitatedly slaps the table.

OLD NEANDERTHAL
Weeds!

The voices quiet, then the Elder beams at them hopefully.

ELDER
Patience. With our mothers' milk
we learn the words: "All in time."

The Elder surveys his audience. They murmur.

ELDER
At last, I am pleased to announce,
the time is here! Our research to
find a means of permanent
eradication has been successful!

Several hairy hands wrap knuckles on the table in approval.

ELDER
We are ready to deploy a new
weapon ... for the final battle!

The Elder looks around proudly; the faces stare back, hopeful.

A map of the world highlights green land and blue water.

ELDER
Radioactive contamination of
agricultural areas and fisheries
will create dire food shortages.

The map darkens: green turns brown, cities red, oceans yellow.

ELDER
We project that 92% of the 'sape'
population will starve within 23 days.

The population graph reappears with a sharp falloff.

The group murmurs excitedly. Knuckles knock on the table.

ELDER

With your approval, our 'dirty rain' project will begin a six month countdown.

Faces glance excitedly about the table and noise erupts.

The Elder smiles confidently amidst hoots and table thumping.

ELDER

As an example of our readiness, please enjoy cookies made from radiation-resistant wheat developed in our bio lab.

Hairy hands grab at platters piled high with cookies.

The Old Neanderthal reveals rows of yellowed teeth as he gobbles a cookie and smiles approval.

EXT. DIABLO CANYON NUCLEAR POWER PLANT, SAN LUIS OBISPO, NIGHT

The night is dark under a sliver of new moon. Night sounds swell: GRASS IN THE BREEZE, the creak of CICADAS.

In the dim light, a quilt of grass and bush, texture and shadow, bends with the breeze.

Numbers flicker across the shrouded blue-lit display of a Global Positioning System (GPS) locator.

ADAM (O.S.)

(muffled)

We are on target.

The shadowy quilt of grass and bush parts to reveal Adam — completely hidden in a 'Gillie suit', a camouflage net of plant fibers and colors. He is invisible until he turns to Joe.

ADAM (CONT.)

Double check me.

A clump of grass nearby opens to reveal Joe, perfectly camouflaged in his Gillie suit. He takes the GPS locator from Adam, consults it for a moment, and crawls toward Adam.

JOE

Exactly ... here.

The twin fluted concrete cooling towers of the NUCLEAR REACTOR rise huge in the bluish darkness, a mile away, outlined by blinking red lights. White clouds of steam rise up.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Diablo Canyon Nuclear Reactor"

ADAM

Set up the binoc's.

Joe pulls up his dragbag and opens the camouflaged pack. He confidently pulls out HIGH TECH BINOCULARS, blue-tinted with angled lines. He plugs in the GPS locator, snaps open the tripod legs, and rocks it back and forth into the ground.

Adam produces a small black box, pulls a cable elastically out of its corner and plugs it into the digital binoculars. Immediately a red light begins blinking on the box.

Adam peers out of his Gillie suit to look curtly at Joe.

ADAM (CONT.)

Did you power on?

Joe presses a button on the binoculars. The blinking red light on the box switches to a steady green light.

The BINOCULARS CLICK AND WHIR as they zoom and traverse in precise increments, pinpointing windows in the distant facility.

Adam smiles and relaxes. He lies down under his Gillie suit.

ADAM (CONT.)

Make yourself comfortable.

Joe settles back and rests his head in the grass.

They peer at each other through their camouflage.

ADAM (CONT.)

This is just a routine plug-and-play run. Low level shit-work, but it's low-risk, so they use us.

ZZZZT - a dragonfly drones by. A bat SWOOPS after it.

JOE

How does it work?

ADAM

Listens through the windows. Uses lasers to detect vibrations on the glass. Turns the window into a microphone - amazing, huh! We can record voices from over a mile away.

Joe cradles his head in his arms and looks up wistfully at the stars. The sounds grow of CICADAS and the BREEZE.

JOE
Reminds me of Wilderness Camp.

ADAM
Got some juicy info about our mission.

Joe looks at Adam, interested.

ADAM (CONT.)
We've hidden so long, soon we step
out of the shadows!

JOE
Yeah? When?

ADAM
Can't say. You don't need to know
yet.

JOE
What! Aw, c'mon ...

Joe sputters. He rolls closer and stretches to punch Adam.

JOE (CONT.)
I found Sally Leblanc's phone
number for you! I gave you the
answers to the Chemistry final!

Adam shakes his head No.

ADAM
This is serious. I've got orders.

JOE
I lied for you when you burned
that cheerleader's car!

Adam snickers and smiles devilishly.

ADAM
Okay, you'll find out soon anyway.

They both sit up and look at each other seriously.

ADAM (CONT.)
The Elders have reviewed the
ancient texts. Global warming is
worse than anyone realized! The
only remedy is genocide - before
the 'sapes' kill the planet! Our
time frame has been moved up - our
mission is a Go.

Joe's eyebrows rise.

Adam's eyes gleam.

ADAM (CONT.)
Our mission is the big one!

Adam leans closer.

ADAM (CONT.)
It's 'dirty rain', Joe! Bombs to
spread radiation high in the
atmosphere.

Joe's eyes widen.

Adam's eyes shine through the camouflage.

ADAM (CONT.)
I'm studying weather and geography
to plan where to explode each bomb
for maximum effect. You're
researching how much radioactive
material we need in each bomb.

Adam looks darkly toward the nuclear facility.

ADAM (CONT.)
Fuel rods in there'll be our source.

Joe's jaw drops.

ADAM (CONT.)
The radiation will scorch the
planet clean of 'sapes' once and
for all!

Adam cackles and lays back down on the grass.

Joe's eyes swell in horror. He looks down, appalled.

JOE
(to himself)
Apocalypse!

Joe pales.

Adam looks at Joe and smirks.

ADAM
Rebirth!

Adam's eyes shine maniacally.

Joe looks down reflectively with dawning horror. He pulls his
Gillie suit closed over his head and lays down, revealing the

twinkling red lights outlining the distant cooling towers.

INT. BATHROOM, MARY'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

Joe sits on the toilet with his head in his hands. All is SILENT in the shining sanctity of white tile, chrome and glass.

Joe's smile fades. Love and sorrow struggle across his brow.

MONTAGE: JOE CHOOSES

Neanderthal faces emerge from the dark to blend with:

- Mary's smile, her lips, her teeth.
- A Neanderthal woman smiles maternally.
- Fire flares as Joe's bloody hand presses Young Adam's chest.
- Candlelight flickers on Joe's hand as it caresses Mary's delicate curves.
- The fearsome face of a Neanderthal man glares heroically.
- Black oily clouds cast a dark pall over San Francisco.
- Mary's hair and skin glow in early morning sunlight.

MONTAGE ENDS

Joe's face slowly shifts from dumbfounded to determined.

Joe stands and pulls up his boxers.

He steps to the mirror and examines his forehead.

Without a wobble, he casually reaches over with his bare foot and FLUSHES the toilet with his big toe.

He turns out the light and leaves - without washing his hands.

INT. KITCHEN, MARY'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

Modern fixtures, Formica and steel. Mary puts a KETTLE on the stove. She wears a robe and slippers. Joe's in boxer shorts.

MARY

Would you like some tea?

JOE

Thanks.

Joe walks from the doorway over to touch his cheek to hers.

JOE (CONT.)

Sweetheart ... there's something I
need to tell you. Something big.

She turns to look at him, revealing the sparkling lights of
the Transamerica Pyramid through a window behind her.

Joe grabs Mary's shoulders with both his arms and holds her
at arm's length. He looks in her eyes reluctantly.

JOE (CONT.)

I've been meaning to tell you for
a while now ...

Joe releases his hold on her and looks down.

MARY

You can tell me anything, babe.

He briefly squeezes his eyes closed and looks away nervously.

JOE

There's something I have to be
honest about ...

She stills and watches him silently.

JOE (CONT.)

I have to tell you ...

Mary concentrates her stare on Joe's face and frowns.

Joe's mouth opens and closes, his eyes stare into space.

MARY

What, baby?

JOE

(choking the words out)
I'm ... uh ... sterile! ...

Mary's frown disappears, replaced with surprise.

Joe hangs his head. Mary's expression turns to puzzlement.

MARY

Sterile? You mean ...

She glances at his crotch.

Joe raises his head and looks at her desperately.

JOE

We can't have kids.

Joe looks anguished.

She looks at him with shock, then disappointment.

MARY

Oh, Joe! ... You know how much I
want to have a baby someday.

Guilt takes over Joe's face.

Mary's face twists with confusion and disappointment.

Joe's pale face distorts in reflection on the shiny silver
kettle as its WHISTLE rises to a low scream.

Mary watches her hands in her lap.

MARY (CONT.)

I think I need some time. Maybe
you should go.

The kettle's whistle rises to a shriek.

EXT. STEPS, WHEELER HALL, UC BERKELEY CAMPUS, DAY

The stone columns of the proud building tower above Joe and
Mary as they eat lunch. The white steps are dotted with
other students lounging, snacking, chatting, reading.

Joe chomps on a roast beef sandwich and downs a milk carton.

Mary applies a napkin delicately between tiny bites of tuna
sandwich. She stares at the ground.

JOE

It's a family thing. Blood types
... My sperm aren't compatible ...

Mary turns away and looks down, eyebrows pinched.

Worry clouds Joe's face.

MARY

Are you sure? Have you ever seen
a specialist?

He shakes his head 'no'.

JOE

It's hereditary.

Mary's face turns hopeful.

MARY

Honey, I'm a genetics major. Let me tell you, it's amazing what reproductive science can do now: artificial insemination, in-vitro fertilization, cloning ...

Mary throws her hands up in the air.

MARY (CONT.)

Genetic engineering! Now, we can actually transfer traits from one species to another! Glow-in-the-dark goldfish!

Curiosity slowly spreads across Joe's face, then recognition.

JOE

Really?

Mary's face twists from disappointment to determination.

MARY

We have to find out. We'll get you tested.

Mary gives Joe a quick nod and an intense look of confidence.

Joe looks stunned.

EXT. CAMPANILE CLOCK TOWER, UC BERKELEY CAMPUS, DAY

The Campanile proudly thrusts high into the sunny, cloud-dotted sky. The clock's carillon CHIMES musically.

Joe approaches, loping between the sycamore trees lining the plaza, their knobby amputated limbs raised mutely to the sun.

He walks up to Mary and wraps his arms around her. They kiss.

JOE

So, why'd you want to meet here?

MARY

I want to take you over there.

She points to Cowell Hospital looming across the plaza, separated by an apron of concrete steps.

MARY (CONT.)

That's the fertility clinic where I volunteer. Let's get you tested.

Joe's eyebrows shoot up. His hand rubs his forehead.

INT. FERTILITY CLINIC, COWELL HOSPITAL, DAY

A doctor in a white lab coat walks down the ECHOING hallway muttering into a handheld recorder.

DOCTOR
Seventy-three percent motility
falls within normal parameters ...

Mary leads Joe by the hand to approach the reception desk.

DEBBIE, the receptionist, recognizes Mary and smiles brightly.

DEBBIE
Hi, Mary!

Mary smiles warmly at Debbie.

MARY
Hi, Debbie!

DEBBIE
I thought you only came in on
Mondays.

MARY
Personal business today, Deb.

Debbie raises her eyebrows briefly at Joe and smiles.

Mary tugs Joe down the corridor.

He follows sheepishly.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM

Sterile walls, white cabinets, gleaming linoleum. A round squat ORANGE PLASTIC TUB sits open on the table next to a box of Kleenex and a pile of Playboy magazines.

Joe sits on a low padded bench. Mary sits down next to him.

MARY
Sorry if it seems a little sterile
in here ...

She sits beside him and smiles seductively.

MARY (CONT.)
(singsong)
I can help.

Joe looks at her sheepishly and grins ear-to-ear.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MARY'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

The ORANGE PLASTIC TUB sits, capped, on the counter separating the kitchen from the living room.

Joe and Mary sit at opposite ends of the couch. Her arms are folded, her lips pursed, and her legs are crossed away from him. Joe's sketch of a hand holding a rose is on the wall.

MARY

I don't know why you wouldn't let me do the tests. I'm highly trained, you know. I wish you'd told me before we went to all that trouble.

Joe smiles enormously.

Mary looks at him insistently, pouting.

MARY (CONT.)

There's something you're not telling me!

Joe looks inquisitively at Mary.

JOE

Okay, Mary. I sure want to tell you. But it's serious. Do you trust me to tell you the truth?

Mary nods.

Joe looks weary.

JOE (CONT.)

There was a war, Mary, a long, long time ago. We lost. But a few of us survived. We learned to hide.

Mary's brows furrow in concentration as she listens.

MARY

Us?

JOE

A secret society - we were a nation once. I'm - you call us - Neandertal.

Joe watches Mary carefully.

A laugh escapes her. She looks intensely at Joe, then her smile shifts to a frown. She takes a CUSHION onto her lap.

JOE (CONT.)

We're different species, Mary.
That's why we can't have kids.

Joe watches Mary carefully.

Mary's face smiles, dumbfounded. She blinks several times.

MARY

We can't have kids ... because
you're a Neanderthal.

Joe's face brightens with a small smile. He relaxes and nods.

Mary's mouth drops open. She toys with the cushion corners.

MARY (CONT.)

You having second thoughts about us?

Her head angles. Her eyebrows and lips stretch with disbelief.

Joe shakes his head No, looks down nervously and combs both
hands through his hair.

Mary seems tired as she stares at him. She sits up.

MARY (CONT.)

Right now is no time for jokes.

Joe's face pleads.

JOE

You need to understand ...

Her face flares.

She stands and throws down the cushion. Her face darkens.

Joe pales.

MARY

It bothers me that you'd toy with
me about this. How can I trust you?

She eyes him suspiciously, reddening.

MARY (CONT.)

Where do you really go when you're
off "getting a haircut"?

EXT. STREET, MARY'S APT. BLDG, TELEGRAPH HILL, NIGHT

A dog's BARKING fills the air as Joe walks onto the street.
The Victorian is dark, except for lights on the top floor.

Wind scours the dark, empty street as Joe walks to his black pickup truck, keys in hand.

He looks up to see Mary's bedroom light switch off.

As he turns to open the car door, he drops his KEYS, stoops to retrieve them, and staggers into the car door. He GROANS, breathes for a moment, then struggles into the driver's seat.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK

Sun-peeled dashboard, empty rifle rack. The cracked vinyl on the seats resembles parched desert. The outside rearview mirror is starred with a hole from a BB gun.

The door RATTLES shut and Joe droops against the steering wheel in despair. He raises his head and moans.

The inside rearview MIRROR reflects the movement as he drags his hand down over his face, puckered with anxiety, muttering.

JOE

We can't run. She can't hide. Do nothing, she dies ... they all die.

He rocks forward and backward, holding his arms.

Joe reaches over and pops open the car's glove compartment.

Light from the glove compartment spotlights the word "VITAMINS" on the label of a white plastic bottle within.

Quickly, Joe opens the bottle, SHAKES out two pills, and opens a water bottle. His movements are efficient, practiced. He stops, face anguished, and looks at the pills in his hand.

JOE (CONT.)

No, damn it!

He looks down and sighs. He slowly returns the pills to the BOTTLE, and deftly puts everything away.

Joe angrily bangs the steering wheel with both fists.

JOE (CONT.)

It's genocide! I can't lose her.

Joe pulls a CELL PHONE from his pocket and turns it on with a CHIRP. He dials a number from memory.

Joe listens expectantly - two RINGS, then CLICK.

JOE (on phone, CONT.)

Adam, it's me.

Joe smiles and places the phone close to his ear.

JOE (on phone, CONT.)
I'm glad you're home.

Joe looks relieved.

ADAM (O.S. on phone)
Yeah, I was asleep.

JOE (on phone)
I need to talk.

ADAM (O.S. on phone)
You bet, bro ... Mmm, I was with
Sandy tonight - 'sape' chicks are
so smooth and sweet!

Joe looks amused and slowly shakes his head.

ADAM (O.S. on phone, CONT.)
So, you having fun?

Joe smiles ironically.

JOE (on phone)
I'm just leaving Mary's place.

Joe's faces twists with anguish.

JOE (on phone, CONT.)
I think ... we just broke up!

Joe exhales with difficulty.

ADAM (O.S. on phone)
You're still seeing her? Time to
move on. You knew it had to happen
sooner or later. She's not one of -

JOE (on phone)
Don't say it ...
(chokes back a sob)
I don't want to hear that shit!

Joe recovers with a sniff and sticks out his chin.

JOE (on phone, CONT.)
I ... I love her.

ADAM (O.S. on phone)
Oh, yeah? She's just a 'sape'. You
know the rules.

JOE (on phone)
I don't want her to die!

Joe closes his eyes and grits his teeth.

ADAM (O.S. on phone)
Victory is near, Joe! Soon we'll
live free in a new 'taler' homeland!

Joe exhales and slumps in his car seat.

ADAM (O.S. on phone, CONT.)
Look, we've got an 8 am class
tomorrow! Take another pill and
I'll see you in the morning.

Joe leans his head back against the headrest to peer at the
full moon out the window.

JOE (on phone)
I lost my meds.

ADAM (O.S. on phone)
Oh, you screwed up, Joe!

Joe sits upright and hits a door switch to lower his WINDOW.

ADAM (O.S. on phone, CONT.)
You need some sleep. We can talk
after class. I'll bring you pills.

Joe slowly strangles the steering wheel with both hands.

ADAM (O.S. on phone, CONT.)
They've got anti-anxiety stuff in 'em.

Joe sticks his head out the window and drinks in the night
air. He looks up longingly at Mary's window, then sits back.

ADAM (O.S. on phone, CONT.)
And they build resistance to the
radiation.

Joe opens the car DOOR and gets out.

ADAM (O.S. on phone, CONT.)
Remember the Songs of the Ancients
... the stories of the Invasion?

Coit tower looms, glowing, as Joe looks up at the full moon.

JOE (O.S. on phone)
That was a long time ago. If it
was true.

INT. ADAM'S COLLEGE DORM ROOM, NIGHT

Adam sits in bed. The bed table lamp is bright white. Shirts hang from the near end of the BARBELL on the bench press rack.

ADAM (on phone)
"If" it was true?

Adam holds the phone away and stares at it in disbelief.

ADAM (on phone, CONT.)
That's blasphemy!

His mouth opens and closes in shock.

ADAM (on phone, CONT.)
We are restoring balance on Earth!

Adam looks incredulous.

JOE (O.S. on phone)
Remember when we were kids? It was fun to think about killing 'sapes' then. But now ...

ADAM (on phone)
I don't want to hear any more 'sape'-lover crap from you.

Adam's body tenses as he grips the bedspread.

ADAM (on phone, CONT.)
If we hadn't learned to hide, they'd have snuffed us out!

Adam's face is red.

ADAM (on phone, CONT.)
Get some sleep! We'll talk tomorrow.

Adam hangs up with a CLICK.

He stares at a corner of the ceiling for a long time, presses his lips together, then picks up the phone and dials.

FLASHBACK: INT. VOLCANO, MOUNT ST. HELENS, BLACKNESS

HOT GAS jets from a fissure in the cavern wall. The MUSIC OF THE FLAMES rises slowly.

SUPERIMPOSE: "Mount St. Helens - May 18, 1980"

Lamplight cuts open the blackness to reveal a frozen flow of black lava. FOOTSTEPS and lights cascade in the volcanic tube.

THREE NEANDERTHAL COMMANDOS trudge closer in sweat-soaked khaki camouflage uniforms. They approach slowly, wearing yellow hard hats, military boots, packs, and side-arms.

A MAJOR leads them, Joe's Father. He wears a gold leaf pin; his demeanor commands. Heavy brow ridges keep sweat out of his eyes.

Two younger commandos jockey a SPOOL of cable between them. The SERGEANT looks around, alert and ready. The YOUNG COMMANDO follows sluggishly; he sports a full reddish beard.

They carefully unspool cable along the floor of the cavern. Monstrous shadows stretch from their headlamps along the walls.

Sweat drips down their faces. They stop laying cable when they reach two other cables coming from different directions.

The Young Commando shifts hold of his end of the cable spool to a sloppy angle with one hand, and takes off his hard hat with the other, blotting his forehead with his sleeve.

He mutters under his breath and eyes the Major darkly.

MAJOR

Bakka hai mi shob.

The commandos smile, set down the spool and huff with relief.

The Young Commando tosses his YELLOW HARD HAT down onto the rough ground. He laughs and claps his hands together.

YOUNG COMMANDO

Ka-boom!

The yellow hard hat bounces precariously and tumbles jaggedly downhill to roll to a stop against the Major's feet.

The Young Commando nervously watches the Major.

The Major looks sternly at the Young Commando, kneels down to pick up the hard hat. He stands up and shoots the hard hat at the Young Commando with both hands, like a basketball.

The Young Commando barely catches it and loses his balance, falling over onto his butt.

The Sergeant TITTERS.

The Major looks at the Sergeant commandingly.

The Sergeant immediately stops laughing and stands at attention.

Young Commando sheepishly dusts himself off, glaring at the Major. He puts on his yellow hard hat, licks his lips nervously.

MAJOR

Akka bas.

They all take off their packs and crouch down around the intersection of the three cables.

The Major kneels down to the RADIO clipped to his pack. STATIC bursts. He turns away to speak into the radio.

MAJOR (CONT.)

Tango one.

The two other commandos unpack gear and handle cables.

MAJOR (CONT.)

(into radio)

Huk bal sop te. Shup ka nep.

The Major turns his attention back toward his men.

The Young Commando roots around in a pack, eyeing the Major. The Sergeant plugs cables into a metal box. Their CLIP-ON FLASHLIGHTS cast eerie shadows against the volcano wall.

The Major's attention is on the radio.

MAJOR (CONT.)

(into radio)

On track for extraction at Oh Nine
Hundred -

The Young Commando struggles to connect TWO CABLES.

The Major looks back and his eyes go wide with horror. He drops the radio, jumps up, YELLS and leaps at the Young Commando.

The Young Commando's hands connect the two cables.

MAJOR (CONT.)

No don't -

A microscopic blue SPARK leaps between metal terminals.

EXT. VOLCANO, MOUNT ST. HELENS, DAY - 8:32 A.M.

A bird SINGS. Smoke jets from the peak, neatly capped with snow. The MUSIC OF THE FLAMES surges.

A fiery, deafening EXPLOSION erupts from the mountain-peak. FLAMES AND LAVA SHOOT OUT. Fire and debris fill the sky.

ROARING FIRE and smoke vomit laterally from the jagged crater.

A yellow hard hat ROCKETS by.

END FLASHBACK

INT. DEN, NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

As the flame flickers, primordial chemical activity unleashes a fluid tapestry of color and light.

The ELDER'S EYES stare unblinking into the flame as he meditates calmly. He hears the MUSIC OF THE FLAMES.

Age lines his face. Pale skin and mostly missing hair add to his wizened look. His long skull is marked with prominent brow ridges. Wild white eyebrows are separated by a wide, flat nose punctuated with eruptions of nasal hair.

A CELL PHONE at his elbow stirs to life with a catchy tune.

The MUSIC OF THE FLAMES ceases. His eyes dim and he shrinks a little. His eyes blink and re-focus.

He glances at the cell phone and licks his lips nervously.

The upscale ranch-style room exudes calm, with carpet, drapes, and wall-paper in coordinated shades of moss.

He sits in a brown leather desk chair and watches the flame of a single long white candle in a golden holder sitting on the desk in front of a large GLASSED FRAME on the wall.

He glances at a PHOTO tucked in the corner of the frame.

INSERT: PHOTO OF ELDER'S SON

A young man with medium brow ridges smiles, dangling from a rope, mountain-climbing. He has reddish hair and a full beard.

BACK TO SCENE

The Elder wipes a tear from his eye with yellowed fingers.

A newspaper front page is preserved behind the glass.

THE NEWSPAPER HEADLINE READS:

MOUNT ST. HELENS BLOWS!
57 Killed, Little Warning

The newspaper picture shows billowing smoke shooting up.

He licks his arthritis-gnarled fingers.

The flame SIZZLES as he pinches it out and ominously pitches his face into shadow.

ELDER (on phone)

Hello?

ADAM (O.S. on phone)

Elder, Sir, it's Adam. Sorry to call so late. We have a problem.

ELDER (on phone)

I'll call you right back.

The Elder puts down the cell phone and turns to the desk.

A Winchester rifle and a mounted pair of bull horns decorate the wall. Books line shelves crowding the wood-paneled walls.

He flicks a switch on the COMPUTER on the desk.

Framed old photos on the wall portray him at younger ages:

- in a Civil War uniform as a Confederate officer.
- with a rifle and gas mask as a WWI dough boy.
- grinning behind the wheel of a Model T Ford.

The computer BEEPS and its screen flashes as it starts up.

A bleached white *Homo sapiens* SKULL grins from a marble mount, tagged 'JULIUS CAESAR', next to a bronze Roman dagger.

He picks up the PHONE on the desk and presses a button on a METAL BOX plugged into it – indicator lights glow.

His face is serious as he dials and listens to the phone ring. White hair pokes through the neck of his pajamas.

ADAM (O.S. on phone)

Yes?

A large MAP of the world dominates the wall. Colored push pins are spread across it, concentrated in Europe and the US, especially at a spot near the northern edge of California.

ELDER (on phone)

Go ahead.

ADAM (O.S. on phone)

Joe is ... involved with a 'sape', a female classmate.

ELDER (on phone)

Joe?

The Elder looks shocked, closes his eyes and sighs.

ADAM (O.S. on phone)

And I think he's off the meds.

The Elder's face deflates as his eyebrows rise.

ELDER (on phone)
 If so, he'll seem anxious,
 agitated ... We have to be
 careful. Monitor him closely.

The Elder looks stern. He switches the phone to his other ear.

INT. ADAM'S COLLEGE DORM ROOM, NIGHT

Adam lays on the bed, phone to his ear.

ELDER (O.S., on phone)
 You will act quickly and
 decisively if we risk exposure.

Confusion shades Adam's face.

ADAM (on phone)
 But ...

ELDER (O.S., on phone)
 You were sent with him for a
 reason, Adam! You are Joe's blood-
 pair. Remember your responsibility.

FLASHBACK: INT. CAVE, NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: "10 Years Ago"

Bonfires flicker. DRUMS echo ritual cadence in smokey darkness.

FOUR BOYS face a crowd of NEANDERTHAL MEN. All are shirtless, in loincloths. The men are hairy, with handprint tattoos, brow ridges, elongated skulls. The boys are smooth of skin and skull.

Ghastly in body paint and feathers, the Elder CHANTS and dances around the fire with a bleached white *Homo sapiens* SKULL that casts a fiery orange glow out through its eye sockets.

YOUNG JOE, blonde, slight, 11, faces the group nervously.

YOUNG ADAM smiles confidently next to him, dark-haired, muscular, 12. His eyes proudly survey the all-male crowd.

The boys are barefoot and face-painted with circles and dots. Their hair is tied back with leather headbands.

Men shout and gesture with *Hak Ba* KNIVES AND SPEARS.

The Elder waves and CHANTS shrilly. DRUMS and firelight surge.

Each boy uses a *Hak Ba* KNIFE to cut his own left wrist.

Young Joe's face shows determination as he draws a red line across his wrist with the knife.

Young Adam smiles confidently as he pierces the flesh of his left arm with the knife point and paints blood on his fingers.

The Elder CHANTS and gestures. The boys press their bloody hands to each other's chest. The DRUM pace frenzies. Each boy removes his hand, exposing a red handprint. The DRUMS stop.

CROWD OF NEANDERTHAL MEN

(in unison)

Ha chakka ma!

Young Joe's left pec shows the bloody outline of Adam's hand.

END FLASHBACK

INT. DEN, NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

A beautiful *Hak Ba* knife, ornately inlaid, with an AMBER-COLORED BLADE, shines from a glass wall case beside a stone chopper.

The Elder's eyebrows pinch together. He sighs deeply.

ELDER (on phone)

If he resists, you will use your father's *Hak Ba*.

ADAM (O.S. on phone)

I ... I understand!

ELDER (on phone)

Act swiftly! I'm sure you know how badly it went the last time we had to silence one of our own.

The computer's start-up music flourishes cheerfully.

After a moment's thought, he switches ears on the phone.

ELDER (on phone, CONT.)

The 'sapes' still worship him, the 'taler' they call Christ.

At the last word, the Elder's face puckers with revulsion.

INSERT: CHRIST CRUCIFIED, B&W ANTIQUE PRINT

Dusk glows on Jesus, CRUCIFIED naked, smeared with mud and blood. His head hangs low. From his hand, nailed to the CROSS, blood runs along his arm to the HANDPRINT TATTOO branded on his left pectoral. He drinks thirstily from a WOODEN CUP a child holds tilted to his lips. The child's

finger parts his hair, revealing a pale face creased with pain - showing Neanderthal brow ridges and elongated skull.

INT. ADAM'S COLLEGE DORM ROOM, NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

Adam puts down the phone at his side on the bed.

His face is dark. He concentrates on a corner of the ceiling. He FLICKS his KNIFE open, closed ... open, closed ...

INT./EXT. PICKUP TRUCK, GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, SAN FRANCISCO, NIGHT

The bridge lights and illuminated spires race by as Joe speeds in his pickup truck north on Highway 101 across the Bay.

He jabs at the door switch and sticks his head out the WINDOW.

His hair blows wildly as he thirstily gulps the air.

EXT. FISHING PIER, FORT BAKER, NIGHT

The moon and the Golden Gate Bridge hang in the black sky.

Joe's pickup pulls into a deserted GRAVEL parking area and SKIDS to a stop. The WIND howls and chops the waves.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK, NIGHT

Moonlit, Joe takes the white BOTTLE of pills from the glove, looks at it longingly, then drops it on the seat. He slaps the steering wheel violently and looks down with frustration.

He looks up beseechingly into the far off sky.

JOE

What would you do, Dad?

His face crinkles and his eyes squeeze shut.

EXT. FISHING PIER, NIGHT

The WAVES are angry. WIND whips rain across the concrete pier. The golden bridge looms above. Glowing clouds shroud the moon.

Joe opens the door and climbs out with the pill bottle in his hand. He raises his face to the sky and SCREAMS into the WIND.

JOE

Bakka pro mi ha cha?

A flicker of LIGHTENING traces the fingers of a hand against the blue-black clouds. THUNDER answers back.

Drops of RAIN sprinkle his face. He looks at the white bottle

with a determined expression. He winds up like a baseball pitcher, and angrily THROWS the bottle of pills into the Bay.

Joe's features relax as he turns his face up to the sky. Rain dots his cheeks as he BAYS at the moon.

DREAM SEQUENCE: EXT. BAKER BEACH, SAN FRANCISCO, DAY

A seagull hovers motionless in the wind in a perfect blue sky.

Joe in shorts, and Mary in a RED BIKINI, hold hands walking barefoot on the beach. White foamy waves tickle their feet. They gaze at each other with glowing faces, voices lost in the SURF.

They stop to wrap their arms around each other. Mary smiles alluringly, hair aglow, teeth agleam, eyes asparkle.

Joe runs ahead to write 'I love you' in big letters with his toe in a stretch of pristine sand.

He smiles and laughs, returning to kiss her and take her hand.

Mary's face lights briefly as an explosion BOOMS overhead.

SMOKEY BLACK CLOUDS roll out high in the darkening sky.

Mary's smile fades as the light dims. Her face shows fear.

Joe watches the sky in disbelief, glancing all over.

Oily clouds join to form a dark ceiling that roils and chokes the sky in all directions above the Golden Gate Bridge.

A sudden WIND brings a drop of rain to Mary's cheek.

MARY

Jo-

Mary's face freezes mid-word. A deep dry gargling CHOKE cuts off her voice. Her mouth and eyes scream silently.

Mary is frozen in place. Her skin peels redly. Rising WIND whips her hair and blows it away in clumps.

Joe's face twists with fear and guilt.

Mary's eyes shrink and hollow. Her nose falls off.

Joe turns to look at Mary and his expression melts into panic.

Mary has turned into SAND. WIND erodes her head and arms.

Joe's face reacts in slow motion, showing anguish, fear, and guilt. He presses his palm flat against his left pectoral.

Mary's head and one shoulder are gone. Both arms drop off.

Joe frantically looks at the sand in his hand as it blows away in the WIND. A clump of moist sand SLAPS the beach.

The waves erase 'I love you' written in the sand and lap over a torso-shaped clump of sand. Mary's bikini top washes away.

As the wind streams her particles away, Mary's legs and hips stand for a moment, then topple into a pile of sand.

Joe, horrified, drops to his knees, raises a hand to his head.

JOE
(screaming)
Champa hay mi ...

END DREAM

INT. PICKUP TRUCK, PARKED AT FISHING PIER, FORT BAKER, NIGHT

Joe glows saintly in the moonlight, asleep in the driver's seat. His face spasms and he jerks awake, filmed in sweat.

JOE
(screaming)
Champa hay mi shak!

He looks suspiciously at the glove compartment, then drinks from a water bottle and rubs his face with his hands. A KNOCK on his window startles him to full wakefulness.

Staring out, he opens the WINDOW. Active red/blue POLICE LIGHTS reflect off the glass.

JOE (CONT.)
Yes, officer?

An African-American POLICEWOMAN, shines a FLASHLIGHT in through the window. Dark uniform, dark hat, dark skin.

Her active eyes peer inside, revealing weathered black skin, wide nose, thick lips.

POLICEWOMAN
Sorry, didn't mean to startle you
... May I please see some ID?

JOE
Yes, of course.

She touches her gun holster as she leans in.

Her nostrils flare as she SNIFFS, and her eyes scan inside.

Joe struggles to pull his WALLET out of his pants pocket. He hands over his DRIVER'S LICENSE.

The officer steps back and shines her flashlight on Joe's ID, then on his face, glancing between the two.

POLICEWOMAN

What are you doing here, son?

Joe looks guilty and responds nervously.

JOE

Guess I fell asleep enjoying the view, officer. Just seeking some peace and quiet.

POLICEWOMAN

All right, sorry to bother you.

The officer hands back Joe's ID through the window.

POLICEWOMAN (CONT.)

Just move along. We're all a little sensitive about bridge security these days. Call 9-1-1 if you see anything suspicious.

She hooks her flashlight onto her belt and backs away.

Joe breathes a sigh of relief.

POLICEWOMAN (CONT.)

Remember, terrorists look just like you and me.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MARY'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

Joe in his leather jacket sits at one end of the couch. Mary sits at the opposite end in a robe, watching him earnestly.

JOE

I know it's late. This is serious. I can't wait.

MARY

Is this about what you said earlier? 'Neanderthal'? What did you mean?

There is caution in Joe's eyes. He looks her levelly in the eye, then begins slowly, seriously.

JOE

Last night I said I'm sterile. But that's not exactly true. You

JOE (CONT.)
 and I can't reproduce, Mary,
 because ... we're different
 species. You are Homo sapiens ...

Mary concentrates on his words.

Joe sits up to full height and puffs out his chest proudly.

JOE (CONT.)
 I am Neandertal.

He grunts as he THUMPS his left pectoral with his right palm.

INT. BATHROOM, MARY'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

Mary, barefoot in her robe, rushes in and closes the door behind her. She runs HOT WATER and tosses a WASHCLOTH in the sink, braces her arms on the sink, hangs her head, and sobs.

MARY
 Neanderthal?!

She wrings the washcloth and presses it against her face, then peels it off and looks at herself wide-eyed in the MIRROR.

MARY (CONT.)
 Bullshit! How could he...? Why?
 His hair ... He doesn't love me!

Mary reaches down to turn off the steaming hot WATER. She looks up and stares at the mirror. Emotion clouds her face.

The steam has made her writing visible again.

THE MIRROR READS:

Mrs. Mary Carpenter

BACK TO BATHROOM

Mary mops her eyes with the washcloth and compresses her lips.

She looks deeply at herself in the mirror, eyes probing.

MARY (CONT.)
 I'm in love with a Neanderthal?

INT. LIVING ROOM, MARY'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

Mary grabs Joe's shoulders and looks at him, eyes probing.

MARY

If you're going on the run, I'm going with you.

She swallows again and looks at him suspiciously.

MARY (CONT.)

But this Neanderthal stuff ...

She steps away and looks at him, challenging.

MARY (CONT.)

Prove it.

JOE

You saw how fast I heal. Our metabolism is much faster than yours. Isn't that enough?

INT. LIVING ROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Joe and Mary sit on their knees in front of the coffee table. Joe's sketch of a hand holding a rose is prominent on the wall - now glowing with watercolors.

Joe takes MATCHES from the table and LIGHTS THE CANDLE. Its bright eye comes to life.

JOE

I'm going to show you something never seen by Homo sapiens.

Her face lights up with interest.

JOE (CONT.)

Fireweaving is a meditation. Flame is a tool that helps awaken the oldest memories of my people.

They settle onto the carpet, side by side.

He concentrates on the flickering flame.

JOE (CONT.)

Gaze into the flame.

She stares into the flame.

Joe's face calms. He plays with the flame, cups it, weaves his fingers through it.

JOE (CONT.)

Observe its brightness, its color.

Mary intensifies her stare into the flame.

Joe looks at her hopefully.

JOE (CONT.)

See how it moves.

She looks at Joe disappointed.

MARY

I just see the candle flame.

Joe's face wrinkles, perturbed.

JOE

We need more contact.

He takes her hand and they kiss briefly.

JOE (CONT.)

Put both arms around me. Now, watch.

She stares into the flame and her face fills with wonder.

Joe weaves his fingers in the flame, toying with its light and heat. The MUSIC OF THE FLAMES rises slowly.

The flame brightens and its colors spread like a rainbow.

JOE (CONT.)

See inside the flame.

Conducted by his gestures, the flame grows, bends toward him.

It enfolds and caresses him.

A FLAME dances around Mary's head. It grows to envelope them both.

Fearful, she tightens her hold on Joe's hand.

MARY

Joe!

He squeezes her hand.

JOE

Let the energy flow into you.

A wall of flame seems to enfold and caress them. The MUSIC OF THE FLAMES rises in volume.

The room and flames fade into a white brilliance populated only by a single huge multifaceted, many-colored flame. In the brilliant color of the flame, Joe and Mary see ...

MONTAGE: THE ANCIENT PAST

Neanderthal faces emerge from the dark to blend with:

- The limestone cones of Cappadocia stretch into the distance.
- Terror contorts the face of a male *Neanderthal*.
- The SNARLING fangs of a lion.
- The light fades out in a blood red mist.
- Firelight flickers on the cave paintings of Lascaux.

MONTAGE ENDS

Mary and Joe stare deeply into the candle flame.

MARY

Beautiful images. What do they mean?

JOE

Watch, the beginning of the war.
Our nation collapsed as your
people flooded out of Africa to
invade our lands.

SERIES OF SHOTS: FIRE WEAVING - THE INVASION

- EXT. DAWN - MEN WITH SPEARS advance in line down a hillside to a Neanderthal 'village' - *Homo sapiens*, primitive, dressed in skins, quick, agile, trained, with dark skin and hair.

JOE (O.S., CONT.)

They were organized ...

- EXT. NIGHT - TWELVE *HOMO SAPIENS* with spears ring a cave entrance as a boy throws a FLAMING BUSH into the opening. A MAN on top drops a rock and kills the EMERGING *NEANDERTHAL*.

JOE (O.S., CONT.)

We were innocents.

- EXT. DAY - DARK-SKINNED *HOMO SAPIENS* jab with spears to prod a *NEANDERTHAL* FAMILY into a PEN made of piled thorn bushes.

JOE (O.S., CONT.)

The 'sapes' penned us like cattle.

- EXT. DAY - *NEANDERTHAL* MEN at spear point carry loads of firewood and bales of dry grass. Leashed WOMEN carry eggs and dung. Gourds of water hang around their necks by leather straps.

JOE (O.S., CONT.)

Enslaved us.

• EXT. NIGHT - Firelight flickers on the mournful face of a whimpering, naked *NEANDERTHAL* WOMAN. Her eyes grow in fear as rough, dark *Homo sapiens* HANDS GRAB her by the arm.

JOE (O.S., CONT.)

Raped our women.

• EXT. NIGHT - An OLD WOMAN gnaws on a bone and spits as she roasts a THIGH over a COOKFIRE. The eyes stare out of a skull burning in the coals. TWO MEN grunt as they wolf meat in B.G.

JOE (O.S., CONT.)

Killed the rest for meat.

BACK TO SCENE

Joe claps his hands to extinguish the candle flame. The MUSIC OF THE FLAMES fades. They sit calm for a moment.

Mary stirs, her face downcast. A tear streaks her cheek.

MARY

Joe, it was horrible! I never knew.

EXT. FRONT DOOR, MARY'S APT. BLDG, TELEGRAPH HILL, SF, NIGHT

Joe leans close and whispers into the INTERCOM.

JOE

Come down quick when I buzz.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE MARY'S APT. BLDG, TELEGRAPH HILL, NIGHT

Joe leaves Mary's apartment building as the full moon and the Transamerica Pyramid loom. He seems born to the night.

JOE (V.O.)

We've been hiding in cities ever
since there were cities. Every
'taler' knows how to steal a car.

He walks down the block and his face tints green passing through a street lamp's sodium glow. In the cool silence, the street light's BUZZ gives the night an electric edge.

He passes a late model economy car, rejects it.

Joe makes a bee line to an older sedan parked on the street. He crouches on the sidewalk, inspects the passenger-side door.

Joe takes off his jacket and rolls up his sleeves.

Angling his shins, he grips the car door low with his knees and thighs. He grabs hold of the window with his palms flat.

Joe's face turns purple as he exerts himself, groaning, and pulls downward on the window with his entire upper body.

Metal SHRIEKS as the window slips down one inch ... two inches.

He crouches and looks around alertly.

Joe reaches in to UNLOCK the door, opens it and gets in, and quietly closes the door.

INT./EXT. SEDAN, NIGHT

A TOY DINOSAUR bobs from the rearview mirror. The back seat holds a child's car seat, toys, cardboard boxes.

Joe leans down out of sight as he uses both hands and a SCREWDRIVER under the steering column.

ZZZZT, SPARK, and the ignition catches with a ROAR.

Joe shifts into the driver's seat. His eyes flit suspiciously.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE MARY'S APT. BLDG, TELEGRAPH HILL, NIGHT

The sedan rolls away from the curb and quietly coasts down the street, through the street lamp's green glow, headlights off.

INT. SEDAN, NIGHT

Sleeping houses and dark driveways roll by as Joe drives slowly along the residential lane. The sky is black.

As he stops at a Stop sign, Joe turns the headlights on.

Suddenly the pile of boxes and toys in the back seat moves. The junk parts and a figure emerges from the darkness.

A black-clad MAN in a ski mask points a STUN GUN six inches from Joe's head.

It sparks and CRACKLES with blue electricity near Joe's chin.

MAN WITH STUN GUN

Stop the car!

The Man grabs Joe's shoulder, pulls him back against his seat. A gloved hand jams the stun gun hard into Joe's neck.

Joe's mouth opens and closes.

MAN WITH STUN GUN (CONT.)

Pull over now!

As Joe pulls the car over to the curb, the Man in the back seat pulls a black RADIO from his pocket. Pressing the stun gun against Joe's head, he CLICKS on the radio.

MAN WITH STUN GUN (CONT.)
Ignition off. Don't move!

The radio squawks a burst of STATIC.

MAN WITH STUN GUN (CONT.)
(into radio)
Code Orange

He sits back into the darkness.

MAN WITH STUN GUN (CONT.)
Sit tight!

From the darkness, the Man's eyes peer out from the cutout circles of his ski mask.

EXT. STREET, TELEGRAPH HILL, SAN FRANCISCO, NIGHT

A distant street light dimly reveals the tension on Joe's face through the car window.

Joe looks grim, face pale, hands locked on the steering wheel.

Headlights glare as three black VANS barrel down the road.

Tires SQUEAL as they converge on the sedan, blocking it in.

From each van, two masked, black-clad men JUMP OUT and rush at the doors of the sedan, pointing PISTOLS WITH SILENCERS.

All six of the dark hulking figures aim their guns at Joe.

INT./EXT. SEDAN, NIGHT

Incredibly bright light shines into the sedan from above. HELICOPTER sounds (O.S.) come from everywhere.

Looking up, fear breaks across Joe's face.

In the dark back seat, the hooded Man's eyes stare alertly out the circular cutouts - and snap to attention when the radio bursts with STATIC.

VOICE ON RADIO (O.S.)
Code Purple.

The Man holsters his stun gun and reaches into his pocket.

MAN WITH STUN GUN

Unbuckle your seatbelt.

As Joe reaches to his right to release the seatbelt, the Man slaps a PATCH on Joe's left neck and presses it with his thumb.

Joe glances back around and looks confused.

JOE

What was ...?

Joe sees the vans outside blur and fade to black.

Joe's eyes vacillate. He flails briefly, then relaxes and his eyes close. He slumps in the seat and his face looks dopey.

EXT. STREET, TELEGRAPH HILL, NIGHT

The spotlight shining on the sedan intensifies. WIND beats the ground as a HELICOPTER (O.S.) descends and hovers.

Two men in black jerk open the driver's side DOOR, seize Joe by the arms and pull him bodily from the sedan.

No word is spoken as they manhandle him across the pavement to the van parked furthest away. His feet never touch ground.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE MARY'S APT. BLDG, TELEGRAPH HILL, NIGHT

Every parking space on the quiet residential street is occupied except the gap left by the stolen sedan. The BUZZ of the sodium street lamp can be heard from a distance.

After a burst of radio STATIC -

VOICE ON RADIO (O.S.)

Code Green.

On each of several parked cars, a DOOR opens and a dark, hairy figure emerges - black-clad, moving swiftly, silently.

Muffled HELICOPTER SOUNDS (O.S.) recede as an oval white light drags across the ground, spotlighting black-clad figures emerging from every parked car. They stretch, brush off, holster weapons, and melt into the shadows.

INT. CAVERN, NIGHT

Burning torches fitted in the walls flicker light on ancient wall carvings. A smooth path is worn down the room's center.

Joe lays unconscious on a stone bench. His wrists and ankles are bound with ROPE.

The Elder looks tired as he approaches with a LIT TORCH and fits it into a wall niche. Torchlight reflects off his bald pate as he watches Joe suspiciously.

The Elder steps close to SNIFF Joe.

Joe's eyes open drowsily.

ELDER

Wake up, Joe.

The Elder sits down on a nearby stone bench.

ELDER (CONT.)

We need to have a little chat.

Joe sits up groggily and registers pain from the ropes. He eyes the Elder suspiciously.

ELDER (CONT.)

I can smell that you're off the medication. Why?

JOE

I spilled some and ran out. It's only been a couple days. No big deal.

The Elder's eyes narrow. He cocks his head to one side.

ELDER

Why did you steal the car?

Joe looks at him innocently.

JOE

For our next hunt.

The Elder cocks his head to the other side.

ELDER

What have you told the 'sape'?

Joe looks offended and stares sharply at the Elder.

JOE

Nothing of importance!

The Elder looks at him closely, jealously.

ELDER

You love her?

Joe swallows and looks coolly at the Elder.

The Elder's eyebrows rise as he stares silently at Joe.

JOE

Of course not. She's a 'sape'. I spoke enthusiastically. I meant that I'm fascinated by her and she's an excellent test subject.

The Elder raises one white eyebrow.

ELDER

Test subject?

JOE

Yes, Elder, I would like to initiate a new study project - I hope this does not offend you. It would be useful to see if we can reproduce with 'sapes'.

ELDER

We all know 'talers' can't mate with 'sapes'!

JOE

It's never been scientifically tested. Perhaps we can - in the lab, with new genetic techniques.

ELDER

A test tube baby?

Joe nods, emboldened.

JOE

Gene therapy might allow traits to be transferred from one species to the other. For example, if we could transfer our resistance to radiation to a strain of 'sapes', we could keep some as slave labor.

The Elder's expression becomes interested.

JOE (CONT.)

Or, we might benefit if we could adopt their ability to digest fish oils. It seems worthy for study, Elder - before 'sapes' go extinct.

The Elder looks thoughtful.

ELDER

Perhaps so. But how does this explain your attachment to Mary?

JOE

She's a pleasing specimen, Elder.
Compliant. And she knows a lot about
'sape' reproductive science. She
allows me to ... perform experiments.

The Elder snickers.

ELDER

Is that what you call it? Sex with
a mutant. Disgusting! Bestiality!
Your mother would be ashamed. You
will stop seeing Mary, understood?

Joe nods affirmatively with a cold-blooded glare in his eyes.

JOE

May I kill her for her eggs?

The Elder looks at Joe with surprise.

ELDER

Perhaps. This all needs to go to
the Science Committee.

The Elder throws up his hands with distaste.

ELDER (CONT.)

E-mail me a proposal.

The Elder's face wrinkles into thought. He watches Joe
and purses his lips, then looks back into the cave.

ELDER (CONT.)

I think your blood-pair may have
been overzealous.

The Elder smiles, reaches into his pocket, and draws out his
Hak Ba KNIFE. He nonchalantly FLICKS it open, raises the
twisted blade to eye level, and gestures at Joe's face.

Fear breaks across Joe's face and he jerks his head back.

The Elder holds the knife up to the light and scrutinizes
the sinuous amber-colored blade, then looks sagely at Joe.

ELDER (CONT.)

The *Hak Ba* is symbolic of life.

The Elder uses the knife to cut the ropes securing Joe's
wrists, then slits the ropes binding his ankles.

ELDER (CONT.)

The curves of the blade represent
the twists and turns of fate.

The ropes drop away and Joe rubs his wrists. Joe recovers from his fear and smiles thinly.

The Elder's eyes stare upwards in thought.

ELDER (CONT.)

A hybrid child – part 'taler', part 'sape' – I wonder what it might mean ... for future generations.

He shrugs and beckons Joe to stand.

ELDER (CONT.)

Come.

The Elder leads Joe through a doorway in the cave wall.

INT. CRYSTAL CATHEDRAL CAVE, NIGHT

The natural hollow in the rock is beautifully overgrown with colorful, gleaming, fantastic MINERAL GROWTHS.

Joe smiles and looks on in awe.

ELDER

Ten years since you were here last, huh Joe, your blood-pairing?

Joe nods, remembering.

The Elder's face warms. He looks at Joe proudly. The Elder looks down reflectively, then looks Joe in the eyes.

ELDER (CONT.)

Joseph, you've always felt like a son to me. Before you go, I have something important to tell you.

They stand face to face.

ELDER (CONT.)

I knew your father. He served under me in a mission to sabotage Mount Saint Helens. That's how he died.

Joe's face shifts from shock to curiosity.

JOE

Mount Saint Helens?

The Elder's face takes on a pained expression.

ELDER

Fireweave with me. I'll show you.

The Elder activates a hidden control and a large FLAME dances from the rock, reflected by the myriad of crystals.

The Elder raises his arms to the flame, opens his eyes to receive it. Joe follows his movements. They clasp hands.

As the MUSIC OF THE FLAMES rises, in the single bright and brilliant flame, Joe sees ...

MONTAGE: VOLCANO ERUPTION

- The limestone cones of Cappadocia stretch into the distance.
- Terror contorts the face of the Male Neanderthal.
- The SNARLING fangs of a lion.
- The light fades out in a blood red mist.
- Firelight flickers on the cave paintings of Lascaux.

ELDER (V.O., CONT.)

Your father led a team for me on a mission into the heart of the volcano. If our plan succeeded in redirecting the lava flow, it would have wiped out the entire West Coast.

- Newspaper headline: 'MOUNT ST. HELENS BLOWS!'

ELDER (V.O., CONT.)

The blast detonated prematurely.

- Photo of the Elder's reddish-haired son mountain-climbing.
- In the cavern, the Young Commando drops his yellow hard hat.

ELDER (V.O., CONT.)

I lost my son on that mission.

- The Young Commando PLUGS two cables together.

ELDER (V.O., CONT.)

Something went wrong.

- The Major (Joe's Father) drops the radio, jumps up and yells.
- The volcano BLOWS in a massive fiery and smoky eruption.

ELDER (V.O., CONT.)

When the volcano blew, it killed my whole team.

MONTAGE ENDS

The Elder looks down sadly as the MUSIC OF THE FLAMES fades.

The flame recedes into the rock and extinguishes.

ELDER (CONT.)

I hope it gives you some peace to
know that your father died a hero.

Joe, speechless, nods and smiles gratefully at the Elder.

The Elder fishes his *Hak Ba* out of a pocket then holds it up.

ELDER (CONT.)

I want you to have this.

His smile spreads as he looks at Joe and offers him the knife.

ELDER (CONT.)

My *Hak Ba*. I know the volcano
took your father's.

Joe accepts the knife with awe. He gazes at it, opens it, marvels at its inlay and amber-colored blade. He smiles thinly.

JOE

Thank you.

With crooked yellow teeth, the Elder smiles sympathetically.

Joe, pale, smiles at the Elder with awe.

Joe and the Elder shake hands, grasping at the wrist, then THUMP each other's left pectoral with their right palms.

Joe looks at the Elder with respect.

The Elder smiles and looks Joe in the eyes with a steady gaze.

ELDER

Follow your flame, Joseph.

Joe's eyes sparkle and his smile opens with pride and relief.

INT. OFFICE, CAVE, NIGHT

As they enter, the Elder waves Adam into a seat at a stone table. He closes the door then sits opposite Adam inside a modern office carved into a vein of gold-streaked marble; desk, seating, shelves, bookcases, lamps are all of one stone. A touchpad telephone sits on the desk next to a computer.

The Elder looks exasperated at Adam.

ELDER

Joe does not leave your sight.

Adam nods and looks at him with respect.

ELDER (CONT.)

Tonight you will silence Mary.
Use your *Hak Ba*. We can put this
to our advantage, and avoid scrutiny
of Joseph. We'll plant semen from
the owner of a trucking firm that
ships into the nuclear facility.

Adam stands up and slaps his right hand to his left pectoral.

ADAM

Champa hak bas!

Adam smiles. His face ripples with happy anticipation.

EXT. ABANDONED FORT, BATTERY WAGNER, MARIN, DAY

GRAVEL CRUNCHES under their feet as Joe and Adam walk down
the path. The Golden Gate Bridge, the wind-whipped ocean,
and the green hills of Marin seem bigger than life.

The rising sun colors the sky as the vapor trail of a jet
etch-a-sketches a white line. Joe's face is bright with
perspiration and taut with stress.

Joe leads with an urgency in his gait. Adam frowns and crosses
his arms facing Joe. Joe gestures with his hands, palms up.

Black crows CAW and fly off as Joe and Adam approach. The Eyes
painted on the wall seem to look up. Dark clouds approach.

JOE

She understands me!

Adam's eyes are tense as he puts his arm around Joe's
shoulder and smiles. His eyes narrow as he listens.

ADAM

So you lied to the Elder?

Adam looks at Joe carefully.

ADAM (CONT.)

You've got to calm down. We all
want to screw 'sapes' - their
hormones trick ours. Every
'taler' feels it. You just need to
increase your dosage.

Joe shakes his head 'no' and waves his hands in rejection.

JOE

It's not like that! We're in love!

They walk past round concrete gun platforms, barren except for a circle of rusty red bolts. Joe leads to a concrete wall and they hoist themselves up onto the second tier.

After a few more paces Joe crouches and grabs the rim of a wide horizontal slit in the concrete. They stare into the stark blackness of a BUNKER. Joe swings into the slit, Adam follows.

INT. LOOKOUT

The concrete walls are dotted with rust and crowded with graffiti. Primitive, jagged lettering obscures faded words; the colors and lines echo the cave paintings of Lascaux.

As they jump down onto the floor, the GRATING sound of their shoes ECHOES LOUDLY inside the concrete pill box.

They lean on the sill of the lookout, staring out at the sea.

Adam puts his arm around Joe's shoulder.

ADAM

You can't love her, Joe. A 'taler'
and a 'sape' - it can't work!

JOE

I do love her! We'll make it work!

ADAM

Joe, this is why the Elders sent
me along with you - to keep you
out of trouble. She's the enemy!

Joe steps away and shrugs Adam's arm off his shoulders.

JOE

War is not the only way. I want
us to talk peace.

Adam studies Joe's face with intense eyes, then steps back.

JOE (CONT.)

It's time for us to stop hiding
and give up the old ways!

Adam punches through the air with his hand. He points at Joe menacingly, but Joe ignores him.

ADAM

We tried that once - you know the
legend - they tricked us, almost
wiped us out.

Joe brushes hair from his face and frowns.

JOE

Forget ancient hate. They have!
We can live together!

Adam's face boils with anger. His hands ball into fists.

ADAM

Joe - you know the Law. It's
death if you endanger us!

Joe looks at him and hesitates, then jumps through the doorway into darkness. Adam follows.

INT. LOOKOUT, NORTH ROOM

Huge colorful signatures hide in shadow on the dank walls.

Joe stares pensively out the observation slit, watching traffic swarm across the Golden Gate Bridge.

When Adam follows, Joe turns to face him.

JOE

Poisoning the rain is genocide!

ADAM

You forget our long road to revenge!
Ancient crimes will be avenged!

JOE

I won't fight in a war that will
destroy the planet!

ADAM

We're saving the planet from them!

Adam scans the floor and wipes his brow.

Joe looks down, upset, then turns and walks away.

ADAM (CONT.)

We need more time to talk this
out. Swear to me you won't see
Mary tonight!

Joe holds the sides of his forehead with his hands.

JOE

I need to talk to her. I won't let
you come between us!

Joe jumps up and slides his body out through the horizontal slit into the blinding light of day.

EXT. ABANDONED GUN EMPLACEMENT

The clouds darken. Crows CAW and scatter as Joe lands on the concrete platform. Adam looms above him. Red-gold spires of the Golden Gate Bridge frame the sky in the background.

Adam yells as he jumps down to the first tier.

ADAM

No! Don't go.

He stabilizes on the concrete floor, scowling at Joe.

ADAM (CONT.)

I'll hurt you, Joe, if you don't follow my orders!

Joe looks intensely at Adam. He advances, arm outstretched, to touch him on the shoulder.

JOE

Brother, you won't hurt me ...

Adam sweeps the air with his hand to grab and pull Joe's arm, shoving him against the wall.

ADAM

You're not leaving!

Joe's face registers shock and bewilderment, then anger.

ADAM (CONT.)

You're out of control! You've broken our law! Your tongue is dangerous.

Adam's eyes sear into Joe.

ADAM (CONT.)

What've you told that 'sape' bitch?

Joe glares and growls at Adam.

ADAM (CONT.)

Swear silence!

Joe spits back one word.

JOE

No!

Anger rages across Adam's face. THUNDER splits the silence.

ADAM

Then die! I must protect the tribe!

As Adam's face darkens, Joe's face registers disbelief.

With deliberate motion, Adam shrugs off his jacket, tears off his shirt, plants his feet wide in a martial stance and puffs out his chest; he SMACKS his fist into his palm like a club.

Joe glares at him.

ADAM (CONT.)

Cha-na hocknay!

Joe answers with a SNARL. In a frantic burst, he strips off his jacket and shirt, and drops into a fighting stance.

JOE

Cha-na hocknay!

They spit and glare at each other, circling in primitive duel.

Rage distorts Joe's face.

Adam's face seethes with resentment and hate.

Both adopt an aggressive crouch, weight on the back foot, arms extended forward as talons. A HEARTBEAT fills the silence.

JOE AND ADAM (in unison)

Ah ug!

SCREAMING SAVAGELY, Adam and Joe bounce off each other's chest in a ritual opening and CLAP hands.

Joe lashes with his foot to hook Adam's leg, misses.

Adam slips into a karate 'natural' stance, fist cocked at hip.

Joe hops foot-to-foot in a Capoeira crouch, head low, arms up.

Adam SCREAMS and charges, grazing Joe's hip with a sharp front kick. Joe dodges and whirls around, clawing at Adam's neck.

They grapple, grunting, chests heaving, muscles glistening.

Adam connects with a scissor kick; both crash to the floor.

Joe claws and elbows Adam's face, grunting and huffing.

SCUFFLING as they both rise from the ground, Adam grabs Joe's forearm and pulls him off balance. The HEARTBEAT races.

Joe staggers. Adam thrust kicks him into the concrete wall.

Joe spreads his arms and slaps the wall to absorb the impact, in a position of crucifixion.

In one swift movement, Adam bounces down into a low crouch – draws his *Hak Ba* KNIFE from his boot and snaps it open – turns and erupts in a booming SHOUT as silver flashes.

The BLADE sings as he completes a clockwise arc, side-to-side with Joe, right arm outstretched, blade buried in Joe's ribs.

Joe shouts, his voice trails off in a moan. Blinking, Joe freezes, shocked. The sky drips a light rain.

The Eyes stare mutely as Joe crumples against the wall, arms outstretched. Joe's cries die down and the HEARTBEAT slows.

Joe's face pales. His ferocity relaxes to delirium.

JOE

Brother, how could you stab me?!
I'm ... dying!

ADAM

I won't let you betray us!

Joe starts to cry.

Adam struggles to withdraw the knife. Blood spurts.

Regret cracks Adam's face as he looks at his bloodied hand. He holds the knife away, disgustedly, blinking – drops it.

Adam looks with remorse into Joe's face.

ADAM (CONT.)

I'm ...

Rain trickles from the sky. Joe's arms slide down to his sides. Life bleeds redly from his wound. He raises his face.

JOE

I just wanted to fall in love.

Guilt and jealousy battle across Adam's face. The HEARTBEAT continues to slow.

ADAM

You forgot who you are!

Joe's BREATHING RASPS, his eyes close. He collapses against the wall and begins to slide. Adam grabs him and holds him up.

Joe looks drunk.

JOE

I remember the ritual when we were
blood-paired ...

Joe smiles desperately. Their faces are close.

JOE (CONT.)

I remember learning to fireweave.

The HEARTBEAT slows further. Adam pulls Joe close and whispers intimately into his ear.

ADAM

I'll honor the sacred rites, my
brother; I'll burn your bones
under the full moon!

Joe closes his eyes and struggles to answer.

JOE

We don't fit anymore. Earth
belongs to the new man.

Joe gurgles and coughs. The HEARTBEAT drums unsteadily.

Adam sneers his disagreement, holding Joe at arms length, propping him up against the concrete wall.

ADAM

Traitor! The dirty rain will fall!
The 'taler' nation will rule again!

Adam releases his hold on Joe, who topples to his knees, eyes closed. Slowly, Joe leans and falls toward Adam's feet.

Adam's lips quiver, his eyes close in grief. He wipes his hand down his face.

Joe's eyes blink open for a focused glance.

Joe's upper body totters and swerves. His right hand dips into his pants pocket. His right foot steps behind Adam.

Ornate inlay glints. Joe's hand FLICKS and amber gleams.

Joe SCREAMS and grimaces with pain and fury. His arm reaches.

The knife's stinging flight is direct and merciless. The amber blade SLICES into Adam's lower spine.

Adam wobbles forward and COUGHS. He blinks.

Adam collapses to the ground.

Silhouetted against the sky, Joe topples into blackness with a THUD. The HEARTBEAT STOPS. A bird flies across the sky.

The light rain makes the Eyes on the wall seem to cry.

Their blood mingles into a growing pool between them.

EXT. ABANDONED GUN EMPLACEMENT, BATTERY WAGNER, DUSK

A RAINDROP disturbs the smooth surface of the pool of blood.

A red glob streaks the horizon as Joe's head rises. He glances warily at Adam, sits up painfully, holding his wound. He heaves into a standing position and inspects Adam's twisted, pale body.

Grim-faced, Joe kneels and reaches down painfully to yank the AMBER BLADE out of Adam's back.

Adam's head rolls lifelessly as Joe turns the body face up.

Joe's face shrivels, tortured with regret.

He places his trembling palm on Adam's tattoo, bows his head.

JOE

Forgive me, brother.

Joe catches a tear in his palm and presses it to Adam's tattoo.

The Eyes observe in shocked silence. The moon is high over the bridge in the background. Lightening CRACKS.

EXT. MARY'S APT. BLDG, TELEGRAPH HILL, NIGHT

With the Transamerica Pyramid in the background, the moon shines on Coit Tower, looming over Mary's apartment building.

In the shadows, a dark figure slowly, stealthily, CLIMBS UP the outside wall of the townhouse next door - brick by brick.

Fingers reach up to grasp between two bricks. An arm follows, trembling, then a blonde head. Shoes hang around Joe's neck.

Straining, his right leg reaches up to shoulder height and grasps. The body inches higher, DRAGGING an immobile left leg.

Long hairy toes firmly grip around a rain pipe.

As METAL COMPLAINS, Joe leans and falls six feet to SLAM against the wooden wall of Mary's Victorian next door.

His outstretched hands scramble for secure holds as Joe groans, suspended horizontally between the two buildings.

Spear-pointed fenceposts line the walkway directly below him.

As his legs follow, he gasps in pain - and SLIPS.

His right foot snags a toehold, arresting his slide. His left

leg swings and bangs dully against the building. Joe gasps.

Perspiring, Joe grimaces as he rests, and looks at the tall shafts of the tower and the pyramid rising in the moonlight.

Joe pulls himself up to the window on the top floor. Groaning, he struggles to sit up on the ledge below Mary's window.

Joe looks in cautiously and TAPS lightly on the glass.

INT. BEDROOM, MARY'S APARTMENT, NIGHT

Mary peers out the rain-streaked window.

MARY

Joe!

Mary OPENS THE WINDOW wide and grabs Joe's arm.

Joe almost falls in the window.

Mary shuts the window, glances out anxiously, pulls the blind.

Unsteadily, Joe climbs to his feet, wet, disheveled, bloody.

MARY (CONT.)

What happened?

Mary grabs Joe in a long, tight hug.

He looks dopey and pale, and moves slowly.

MARY (CONT.)

Oh my God! Is that ... blood?!

Joe looks vacantly at his rib wound.

Mary stands erect and opens his shirt.

MARY (CONT.)

Did they do this to you? We've got to get you to the hospital!

JOE

No doctors. Hide ...

Joe collapses on the floor with a groan.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Joe lies on the bed on his back, shirtless, unconscious. The left side of his abdomen is expertly bandaged with blood-spotted GAUZE. His blonde hair is long, wet, and unkempt.

Mary sits beside him, barefoot but dressed in slacks and a red sweater. She adjusts her right hand on his chest to align her fingers to fit his handprint tattoo.

Joe's eyes slowly flicker open. His face twists with guilt.

JOE

Oh, Mary!

Joe sits up and winces with pain. He roughly moves her hand away and stabs his finger into the tattoo on his left pectoral.

JOE (CONT.)

That's his handprint!

Joe's eyes are dark and wet, his face is red.

JOE (CONT.)

Forgive me, Adam.

Mary looks at him compassionately and soothes him.

JOE (CONT.)

We were blood-paired as kids -
s'posed to look out for each other.

She wipes away his tear with her fingers. As he reclines, she nestles against him and puts her nose against his neck.

JOE (CONT.)

I loved him.

Joe's face shudders with anguish.

JOE (CONT.)

And I killed him!

Joe contorts with emotion.

Mary runs her fingers through his hair. She leans over to kiss his temple. Her lips make soothing sounds.

Joe closes his eyes. She kisses them.

She rests her head on his arm and rubs his chest. Her hand moves down to his side and gently peels off the gauze.

MARY

Your wound ... There was a lot of
blood, but the cut is ... gone!

She sits up and stares at the wound. Her eyes widen.

JOE

The skin's healed, but it still hurts inside.

Joe grimaces with pain. She looks into his eyes caringly.

MARY

Joe, we should go to the police.

He shakes his head No and his eyes find hers.

JOE

Do you have a friend in the building you can borrow a car from? Tell 'em we'll leave it at the train station.

INT. BASEMENT PARKING GARAGE, MARY'S APARTMENT BLDG, NIGHT

TWO CARS sit parked in the shadows of the concrete basement.

The elevator DOORS slide apart like stage curtains. Joe's hair is now short and the same color as Mary's. With her hair scarfed, Mary's trench coat and sunglasses make her look like a spy. He takes her hand as they exit the elevator.

Limping, Joe carries a hat, coat, and FLOWERY SUITCASE. His eyes probe the car windows and basement shadows.

Wordlessly, Mary pauses Joe with her hand, then looks around the corner suspiciously. She points to a white economy car.

Joe uses a KEY to open the car door and looks at her.

JOE

You drive.

INT. WHITE ECONOMY CAR, BASEMENT PARKING GARAGE, NIGHT

As Mary fastens her seatbelt, Joe kneels on the floor in front of the passenger seat and looks proudly at Mary.

JOE

You'll make a fine fugitive!

Her weak smile fades.

EXT. MARY'S APT. BLDG, TELEGRAPH HILL, NIGHT

Joe huddles on the car floor covered by a BLANKET as Mary DRIVES out, exiting the parking garage.

The car's headlights flash on a storm drain in the sidewalk across the road as Mary pulls into the street.

As the GARAGE DOOR CLANKS closed, a lens glints inside the storm drain as a PERISCOPE angles, tracking them. Hairy fingers grasp the bars. Eyes shine in the shadows; the nose SNIFFS.

VOICE ON RADIO

STATIC. *Mi champa hak.*

INT./EXT. WHITE ECONOMY CAR, NIGHT

Flowing headlights - fluid stripes of white, dots of red - dash down Highway 101. Traffic streams by, passing at left.

Mary drives cautiously in the slow lane. Joe sits on the floor.

JOE

It's easy to setup. If one of us disappears, the lawyer mails the package to the media. It would blow the top off. They can't risk it. We can blackmail them into leaving us alone... I'll convince them Adam's death was self-defense.

Mary exhales and clasps a hand to her face.

MARY

I'm not used to this!

JOE

We'll be okay.

Joe smiles at her.

She raises her eyebrows and looks at him.

MARY

We're not taking the train are we?

Joe turns to glance at her.

JOE

No. That was just misinformation.

Mary gives Joe a double take, then looks at him mischievously.

MARY

So you had me lie to my neighbor, huh? ... I think I owe you this.

She turns and reaches to hit him in the arm with her fist.

He recoils and eyes her cautiously.

Her eyes are angry.

MARY (CONT.)

Don't you ever drop a bombshell
like that on me again!

Joe rubs his arm and glances guiltily at Mary.

Mary glares dismissively at Joe, then her face sharpens.

MARY (CONT.)

So, you were saying Neanderthals
are fighting a secret war against
us? For thirty thousand years?!

Joe nods.

Mary watches the road as she drives; her eyes drift his way.

JOE

If your land was invaded, when
would you stop fighting? We ruled
Eurasia once, now we hide in the
shadows. We want our glory back.

He looks at her ominously.

Mary turns briefly to blink at him.

JOE (CONT.)

Now, the fight's become urgent:
Your scientists underestimate
global warming. Our Elders are
convinced a kill-off is the only
way to prevent a new ice age.

Mary stares straight ahead with growing horror.

Joe looks at Mary meaningfully.

JOE (CONT.)

Your science finally created a
poison deadly enough to cleanse
the planet. We have a plan to
spread radiation worldwide.

Mary presses her hand to her trembling lips.

JOE (CONT.)

We're resistant, so we shall
inherit the Earth.

Mary looks over, scared.

MARY

What should we do?

Joe looks at her reassuringly.

JOE

I'm training to create a mathematical model for the bomb payloads. If I disappear, that'll set 'em back ... maybe a year.

Mary looks starkly at Joe.

JOE (CONT.)

But, that'll give us time, Mary! I have a plan! And I need your help.

She turns her attention back to the road.

JOE (CONT.)

We can't stop the war without an alternative. You've helped me realize what that is.

MARY

What?

Joe's face brightens. He turns and smiles excitedly at her.

JOE

Maybe we can have kids, Mary! A small bridge of understanding between us might help end the war!

Joe looks into Mary's eyes confidently.

JOE (CONT.)

I want us to try the new genetic techniques.

She nods vigorously, then smiles excitedly.

MARY

We'll need a lab to work in.

He stares at her warmly.

JOE

A hybrid species, Mary! It might help make peace possible ...

She returns his smile and returns her gaze to the road.

MARY

I want to try!

A large, well-lit sign signals the highway exit:
SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

INT. SURVEILLANCE CENTER, NIGHT

Darkness obscures the faces crowded around rows of lively COMPUTER SCREENS. RADAR sweeps green. THERMAL IMAGES glow red. Printer buzz, squeaking chairs, mouse clicks, computer beeps and murmur merge into a HUM OF ACTIVITY.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

A satellite view shows the tiny white economy car maneuver into a parking space atop an airport parking structure.

A contorted, yellowed finger stabs onto the screen and leaves a fingerprint on the image of the parked car.

ELDER (O.S.)

They've parked at SFO.

BACK TO: INT. SURVEILLANCE CENTER

The Elder's eyes narrow.

ELDER

Joe's gifted. It will set us back if we lose him. But if he escapes - if the 'sapes' find out - he could destroy us. Kill them both.

INT./EXT. WHITE ECONOMY CAR, NIGHT

Mary pushes her car door open.

JOE

Hold on.

He glances through the windshield up at the sky.

JOE (CONT.)

By now they've got a satellite eyeballing the airport.

Joe looks around the car, then into the back seat.

JOE (CONT.)

We've got a blanket. Do you have any water?

EXT. AIRPORT PARKING LOT ATOP SFO, NIGHT

The moon lights the metal doorway into the building.

Joe kicks the driver-side car door closed, then walks energetically across the asphalt carrying Mary in his arms and the suitcase. The WET BLANKET is draped over them both.

MARY
 (muffled)
 This smells really bad.

JOE
 Confuses thermal sensors.

Joe pushes through the door and into the transit corridor.

INT. SURVEILLANCE CENTER, NIGHT

A computer hard drive DRONES. A keyboard CLATTERS. The Elder and a WHITE-COATED TECHNICIAN huddle around a computer screen.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN - THERMAL DISPLAY

Glowing red marks the engine's position in the front of a faintly outlined a car. Two smaller orange dots exit via the driver's-side door, unevenly fade, then disappear.

BACK TO SCENE

A finger stabs onto the computer screen, yellow and withered.

ELDER
 What happened?

INT. AIRPORT TICKETING LOUNGE, SFO, NIGHT

The brightly lit concourse HUMS with crowds and confusion.

Mary waits, next in line for the ticket counter. She glances toward the bank of arrival screens across the room.

Joe flashes a supportive smile from the distance.

Mary steps up to the ticket counter, CREDIT CARD in hand.

MARY
 Two tickets to New York City please.

EXT. AIRPORT SHUTTLE LOADING ZONE, SFO, NIGHT

Mary waves TWO TICKETS as she walks along the asphalt to Joe.

Joe stands stretching in front of a Marin Airporter bus. He holds the suitcase and wears the hat and ill-fitting coat.

MARY
 I almost didn't recognize you with
 your new look!

Joe smiles, collects the tickets, and takes her hand.

JOE

How much time until the flight
leaves?

MARY

Two hours.

JOE

Perfect. Soon they'll know we're
here, but that red herring will
buy us time before they close in.

Mary looks at him hopefully.

He looks toward the bus and smiles at Mary.

JOE (CONT.)

Better get you safe on the bus.

Joe SNIFFS and looks down the road.

JOE (CONT.)

Go ahead. Best if you board alone.

He hands Mary the suitcase and looks at her with a clever grin.

JOE (CONT.)

I know a way to buy us more time.
Save me a seat in back.

INT. SURVEILLANCE CENTER, NIGHT

Computer BEEPS punctuate the BUZZ.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

The tiny white car outline sits unmoved atop the airport
parking structure. A CHP car sits beside it with doors open.

FEMALE VOICE ON RADIO (O.S.)

Car's empty. No trace of 'em.

ELDER (O.S.)

Show me thermal!

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN - THERMAL DISPLAY

Four faint orange dots ring a car outline, engine glowing red.

ELDER (O.S., CONT.)

He's into the concourse.

The screen BLINKS and zooms out to an airport overview
glowing with thousands of tiny orange dots.

BACK TO SCENE

The Elder's face writhes as he grimaces in displeasure.

MALE VOICE ON INTERCOM (O.S.)
I've got a credit card transaction
at SFO! Two tickets to New York City.

The Elder's face suddenly snaps to attention.

EXT. AIRPORT SHUTTLE LOADING ZONE, NIGHT

Joe SNIFFS and scans as he trots across the wet asphalt.

Nearing a HOMELESS MAN sitting on the sidewalk, swathed in blankets, Joe waves the tickets.

JOE
Hey!

Joe tosses the tickets into the man's lap.

The HOMELESS MAN'S eyebrows rise as he stares silently at Joe.

JOE (CONT.)
Take a friend on vacation. Your
flight leaves in two hours!

A PEKINESE DOG nestled under the Homeless Man's arm BARKS
pertly. Its neck is decorated with a pink bow.

INT. SURVEILLANCE CENTER, NIGHT

In the darkness, glowing red and green computer screens
reflect in the eyes of the Elder.

MALE VOICE ON INTERCOM (O.S.)
'Taler' down! We've located Adam's
body at the old Battery Wagner,
under the Golden Gate. Killed by
Hak Ba. Police there now.

The Elder's face is ugly with rage. He snatches up the phone.

ELDER (on phone)
Pickup Adam's body before any
doctors see him. Use an ambulance.
Give him full rites - tonight.

The Elder hangs up the phone and looks determined.

ELDER (CONT.)
(into intercom)
Switch to internal video cams.

The computer screen blinks and fills with a live image of a snaking line of travelers in the airport concourse.

MALE VOICE ON INTERCOM (O.S.)
Facial recognition software just
came online.

ELDER
(into intercom)
Look for Joe and Mary on all
cameras. Ease parameters to allow for
disguise according to his training.

Figures scurry in the shadows, dark screens snap to light.

ELDER (CONT.)
He's too smart to get trapped like
this.

The Elder's eyebrows limbo low then leap balletically.

ELDER (CONT.)
It's a ruse! He's stolen a car
... or hitched a ride. Search
every vehicle leaving the airport!

The Technician hastily grabs the DESK PHONE.

MALE VOICE ON INTERCOM (O.S.)
Sir, we need more manpower. With
this loose a search, we're getting
dozens of false IDs.

The Elder's face purples.

ELDER
Shob hak!
(into intercom)
Recall the chopper from Battery
Wagner. I want every available
'taler' at the airport!

EXT. AIRPORT FREEWAY RAMP, NIGHT

As the Marin Airporter bus pulls out of the airport, BLACK VANS with emergency lights flashing SCREECH up and block the road behind it. The bus leaves along a ramp signed "101 North".

INT. BUS, NIGHT

Joe and Mary sit low in the back row of the dark, half empty bus clutching each other. The bus RUMBLES along the freeway.

MARY
I got apples at the airport.

JOE

I can't eat. I'm knotted up.

Mary looks at him with a frown.

JOE

After he interrogated me, the Elder told me my father died a hero.

He thumps his left pectoral. His smile squeezes out a tear.

Mary reaches to caress the hair on the back of his neck.

JOE (CONT.)

Now, I know what to do. I believe in you, Mary, and I believe in peace. Now, I have the courage to try. For my people ... and for yours.

INT./EXT. BUS, NIGHT - 30 MINUTES LATER

Headlights glare through the windows, cars VROOM by. The white gravestones of the SF National Cemetery flash by on the left.

Dim light glints off his *Hak Ba* as Joe runs his finger along the curves of the amber blade. He closes and pockets it as Mary sleepily snuggles against him. His eyes dart.

The tires STRUM as the bus enters the metal roadway of the Golden Gate Bridge. Joe kisses Mary's head.

JOE

I wish this bus would go faster.

Mary nods without opening her eyes, and snuggles into Joe.

Joe's fingers play against the window, agitated. His eyes swell in alarm as a SIREN approaches from behind.

Joe looks fearfully out the left window to see emergency lights atop an AMBULANCE in the left lane, abreast with the bus.

Mary wakes, suddenly afraid, and strains to look out. She shifts closer to Joe and glances skyward out the window.

High in the sky, a LIGHT brightens and quickly approaches.

MARY

Is that ... a star?

They look at each other with fear and alarm.

Joe's hands press the window as he looks out, terrified.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, MID-BRIDGE, NIGHT

From the northwest, over Battery Wagner, an oval white light drags across a grassy hill and the bay, toward the highway.

A HELICOPTER zooms low and buzzes the bus as it crosses over Highway 101. Its hanging SEARCH LIGHT twinkles brilliantly.

The active lights and SIREN of the ambulance pass the bus.

INT. BUS, NIGHT

Penetrating fingers of bright white light reach into the dark bus, shifting and stretching through a dozen windows.

Watching out the window, Mary and Joe cringe as the probing beams of the HELICOPTER SEARCHLIGHT rake their faces.

INT. AIRLINE BOARDING GATE, NIGHT

A large CROWD waits in line at the counter in front of the boarding gate. Airline staff calmly smile and take tickets.

VOICE ON RADIO (O.S.)

They are boarding now! All units
converge! GO-GO-GO!

INT. AIRLINE BOARDING RAMP

The boarding ramp is calming blue, well-lit, high-tech, empty.

The Homeless Man clutches his Pekinese Dog, tickets, and a bag of clothing as he walks slowly down the ramp.

He smiles and pets his Pekinese dog as it BARKS pertly.

Suddenly, SIX MEN IN BLUE wearing bullet-proof vests and hats labeled 'POLICE' step around the corner to bar his path. SIX GUNS AIM at him.

MEN IN BLUE

Freeze! Don't move! Hands up!

The Homeless Man holds the dog defensively, yells in horror.

HOMELESS MAN

Don't shoot! She's got a ticket!

The alarmed Pekinese Dog BARKS twice.

EXT. HELICOPTER ABOVE THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, NIGHT

In the rosy sky, "Bethlehem" is readable on the side of the HELICOPTER. Its searchlight hangs bright below it.

VOICE ON RADIO (O.S.)

Roger that. Heading south.

The HELICOPTER VEERS south.

Below, the bus continues north on Highway 101 across the bridge.

INT./EXT. BUS, NIGHT

Reflected in the bus window, Joe's fingers pinch his brow.

Joe looks grimly out the left window and cries.

JOE

Look over there.

He looks teary-eyed at Mary and nods out the window.

Work lamps and strobing ambulance lights signal activity at fog-blurred Battery Wagner on the Marin hillside.

JOE (CONT.)

Adam's body.

Joe's face wrinkles, grey with remorse.

A light seizure shakes Joe's body as Mary watches, alarmed.

MARY

Sweetie, are you on medication?

Joe crosses his arms and runs his hands through his hair.

JOE

What have I gotten you into? We
can't hide from them!

Joe kneads his skull with his left hand.

Mary looks scared. She leans close and holds his right hand.

JOE (CONT.)

I've killed Adam. I'm as good as
dead. I can't ruin your life, too.

With sorrowful eyes, they each search the other's face.

Joe removes his hand from Mary's grasp and sits up, apart.

JOE (CONT.)

Stay on the bus. There's money in
the suitcase. Start your life over.

Their charged faces stare at each other in shock.

JOE (CONT.)

I never should have involved you.

Joe flings open the window; the CURTAINS flail in the wind.

With a gymnast's grace, he grabs the top of the casement, leaps up, and swings out the window.

Mary SCREAMS and rushes to the window.

Joe peeks back in, hair blowing wildly, fingers clinging to the metal window frame. She grabs his fingers, interlacing.

JOE (CONT.)

I'm sorry!

Mary's face is a volcano of emotion.

Joe disappears into the speeding black and blur of the roadway.

Mary leaps to the aisle, twists to grab the SUITCASE and steam-rolls to the front of the bus, SCREAMING, suitcase trailing.

MARY

Sto-o-op the bus!

Alarmed faces lean in to stare as Mary speeds down the aisle.

The uniformed DRIVER, in matching cap and tie, looks up from the steering wheel to see her coming in his rearview MIRROR.

MARY (CONT.)

Man overboard!

The Driver startles, shakes his head and points to a sign which reads: NO UNSCHEDULED STOPS

DRIVER

No stops!

He holds the wheel defiantly with both hands, eyes on the road.

MARY

My boyfriend fell out the window!

The driver turns to look at her suspiciously.

DRIVER

Please take your seat.

Mary's face sets with determination.

She moves in close with an aggressive stance.

MARY

Stop the bus! I will toss this suitcase through the window, or I will jerk the steering wheel to crash you into the side. One way or another, I am stopping this bus!

She looks at him fiercely.

The Driver cowers, slows, and pulls the bus over.

EXT. 6-LANE HIGHWAY, GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, DAWN

Three lanes of TRAFFIC RUMBLE north glaring their headlights. Separated by orange cones, three lanes of vehicles whiz south. Traffic signs read "101" and "45 MPH".

Joe dodges traffic, loping with quick agility from lane to lane, sometimes backward, to make his way across six lanes.

EXT. EAST SIDEWALK, GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE, DAWN

Framed by a towering red spire, Mary steps from the sidewalk into traffic, waving her suitcase at oncoming cars.

MARY

Joe!

TIRES SQUEAL AND HORNS HONK as Mary hops across the lane.

Brakes SCREECH and a red sports car changes lanes to avoid her.

The driver of a truck behind it is on a cell phone, oblivious. The truck barrels toward her.

Mary SCREAMS and stretches out her arm defensively.

EXT. WEST SIDEWALK

Joe glows in the rising sun as he steps safely onto the other side of the road. He hears Mary's cry, turns and looks.

Dawn's colors spotlight Mary, on her knees in traffic.

Surprise and fear pulse across Joe's face. His eyes dart and he dives into traffic towards her.

Joe dashes between speeding CARS HONKING AND SWERVING.

He steps onto the fender of a car to briefly hitch a ride.

Mary rolls onto the dividing line as the TRUCK THUNDERS PAST.

Joe gymnastically hops from car to van to pickup truck south.

He flips and rolls across the center line and leaps up to balance on the back step of a bus heading north. Cars HONK.

He bounces on a VW bug and slides down to the asphalt. He scoops up Mary and her suitcase with lightening speed.

Mary looks at Joe with love and alarm as TRAFFIC bears down.

Joe FLICKS open his *Hak Ba* and spins it to reverse his grip.

He leaps to stab the knife into the side of a passing moving van. It hoists them to safety as it THUNDERS past.

Joe, Mary, and suitcase dangle for a moment, then catapult into the back of an open-bed truck loaded with gardening gear.

EXT. TRUCK BED, DAWN

Joe and Mary land amongst BAGS OF MANURE in the truck bed. They roll to a stop, stabilize, then embrace.

MARY

Don't ever leave me again!

They kiss deeply.

Joe looks at Mary, love-struck.

JOE

I won't! I'm sorry. As soon as I left the bus, I knew I did the wrong thing. Forgive me!

He hugs her while she struggles with an arc of emotions.

Joe pushes equipment aside, rearranges bags of manure into a couch and pulls a tarp over them.

Under the tarp, they hug for warmth.

JOE

We'll hitchhike from Petaluma.

They kiss and hug tight.

Mary looks at him deeply and grabs his hands.

MARY

Our baby will unite the species!

He smiles, kneels and places her right hand against his left pectoral. He looks up at her, through to her soul.

JOE

If we have a boy ...

Mary's eyes flicker compassionately at Joe. Guilt and hope twist Joe's face.

JOE (CONT.)

... let's name him Adam.

Noble in the dawn light, Mary looks at him lovingly, and closes her eyes, nodding silently.

The truck plods north on Highway 101 toward Marin and enters the Waldo Tunnel, its entry arch painted a colorful rainbow.

INT. DEN, NIGHT

Light from the computer screen tints the Elder's white eyebrows blue. His brow ridges bulge as he squints at the screen.

Gnarled fingers with yellow nails peck slowly on the KEYBOARD.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

The title bar reads COMPOSE MESSAGE. In a text box:

Rain delayed.
Berkeley research team compromised.
Recruit new bloodpair.
Increase dosage.
Top pri

The last few letters appear slowly, PECKED one by one:

o-r-i-t-y

One more CLICK and the screen clears, replaced by a message:

Encrypting ...

The cursor blinks and blinks.

EXT. VERANDA, BEACH HOUSE, YUCATAN, MEXICO, DUSK - ONE YEAR LATER

An EXPLOSION marks the sunset sky with a smoky gray puff.

SUPERIMPOSE: "One year later"

A cute blond INFANT's face CRIES loudly, brow wrinkled in pain.

Mary's fingers rub CLOVE OIL into the Infant's bony brow ridges.

MARY (O.S.)

Carnival begins soon.

Palm trees and jungle ring the adobe house. Nearby, sand and

blue ocean struggle in the SURF. A MACAW CALLS out.

Silhouetted by the sky, she stands holding the baby, cooing.

The Infant stops crying, smiles, and claps with hands and feet.

Mary, wearing sandals, a Mayan wrap, and a deep tan, walks up to a door, shifts the baby to one arm, and opens it.

Inside, hanging mobiles spin. Colored lights move in a soothing display. Water TRICKLES musically.

A two month-old *Homo sapiens* boy smiles and wiggles hands and feet at an illuminated mobile, crinkling his brow ridges.

The room is full of cribs, all holding identical babies - CRYING, LAUGHING, sleeping.

Leaning over a crib, an older NEANDERTHAL WOMAN presses a stethoscope to a crying baby's chest. She looks up and smiles at Mary, showing strong brow ridges and an elongated skull.

Mary hands the baby to a short HISPANIC WOMAN in the doorway.

MARY (CONT.)

Gracias, Maria.

Mary looks back toward the veranda. Her smile glows with love.

Joe, tanned and worn, wiggles shaggy eyebrows at a baby in a WICKER ROCKING CRIB. He makes silly sounds and smiles proudly.

The blonde-haired cherub laughs and wags his finger at Joe.

Joe smiles toward Mary. He wears a white Guayabera shirt and has pronounced brow ridges, long thick blonde hair and beard.

Mary walks to Joe and encircles her arms around him. They kiss. In the distance, FESTIVAL MUSIC strains to be heard.

Mary looks off to the horizon, strong, mature, hopeful.

MARY (CONT.)

Wasn't it going to rain?

Joe narrows his eyes and looks off to the ocean and SNIFFS.

JOE

No rain today ...

Joe stares at the horizon, reflectively. His look is ominous.

JOE (CONT.)

... maybe tomorrow.

FADE OUT