

Restart

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FADE IN:

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - NIGHT

An eight story apartment building is on the corner.

A MAN (early 40s) in a long coat walks along the sidewalk in front of the building, holding his coat closed against the night chill.

A lone cat scampers from behind a planter containing a few winter-stripped bushes and looks around.

The volume of an ambulance's siren a couple of streets away suddenly increases, startling the cat, and it runs behind some trash cans.

A small bird ruffles its feathers as it sits on a third story windowsill of the building.

INT. APARTMENT BEHIND THAT WINDOW

PAUL NEYCART (early 30s) lies in bed asleep.

A legal pad, its top page half-filled with strings of letters, numbers, and symbols, a mechanical pencil on top of it, rests on a table next to the bed, along with a lamp, a speakerphone and an empty glass.

A computer sits on a desk next to the window, its screen-saver running. It's a small digital display of the time and date: 5:51 AM, December 29.

Paul rolls over, still asleep, with the hint of a smile on his face.

INT: PAUL'S DREAM

The huge passenger section of a 747, its windows dark, is unoccupied except for a man and woman who are making love in one of the reclined center aisle seats. They are Paul and SYDNE SYLVIAN (early 30s). Sydnie is on top.

They are naked, the lower parts of their bodies covered by a thin blanket.

They seem oblivious to the rising whine of the jet's engines, the gradual tilting of the plane away from horizontal, and a WOMAN'S (late 20s) pre-recorded voice explaining emergency procedures.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(calmly, filtered)
...oxygen masks will descend. In case of
emergencies over water, the following
instructions apply....

Paul and Sydney roll over, but as Paul looks down for her she's gone.

He stands up and lifts the blanket, looking under it.

PAUL
Am I going crazy?

He stands absorbed in thought as the engines' whine grows louder, the plane tilting even more.

PAUL
Sydney?

The entire compartment begins vibrating.

PAUL
(with quiet realization)
I'm going to crash.

INT. BEDROOM

Paul sits up rapidly, his eyes still shut.

PAUL
I'm gonna crash!

After a few seconds he opens his eyes and looks around the room, then takes a breath.

He turns in his bed and puts his feet on the floor.

He picks up the empty glass from the bedside table, accidentally knocking the legal pad and the pencil to the floor, stands up and walks wearily toward the open bathroom door.

INT. BATHROOM

Paul fills the glass from sink faucet as he looks at his uneasy face in the mirror.

When the glass is full he takes a drink, turns off the faucet, and walks out the door carrying the glass.

INT. BEDROOM

He sits back down on his bed, takes another drink, and punches a button on the phone.

Seven tones sound as the phone speed-dials. After two rings, a click.

SYDNIE
(sleepily, filtered)
Hello?

PAUL
Sydnie?

SYDNIE
(filtered)
Paul? What is it?

Paul doesn't answer.

SYDNIE
(filtered)
It's too early for this, Paul.

Paul doesn't answer.

SYDNIE
(filtered)
We're not together anymore. I hear my alarm. I've gotta go.

PAUL
Bye.

SYDNIE
(filtered)
Bye.

The speaker in Paul's phone clicks with her hang-up.

He closes his eyes.

The dial tone begins and he presses the hang-up button without opening his eyes, silencing it.

After a few more seconds he opens his eyes.

He puts down the glass, gets up, bends down and picks up the pad and pencil, puts them back on the table, and walks toward the bathroom, passing in front of the computer screen.

The screen-saver now reads: December 29, 6:01 AM.

EXT. AN LED DISPLAY

A red-charactered LED display shows Universal Time:
15:17:23...15:17:24...15:17:25...15:17:26....

REPORTER (V.O.)
General Walters, would you answer a few
questions?

GENERAL WALTERS (V.O.)
A few.

A second line of the display reads: PTX-1.

REPORTER (V.O.)
Straight answer: Do we have any nuclear
weapons in space?

The LED display is recessed into a white, curved surface.

GENERAL WALTERS (V.O.)
Straight answer: No, and neither does any
other country.

Printed in black on the white, curved surface, next to the
display, is "PTX-1" and, next to that, an United States flag
insignia.

REPORTER (V.O.)
How sure are we?

Over the edge of the white, curved surface appears the
blackness of outer space sprinkled with stars.

INT. UNITED STATES NUCLEAR DEFENSE SYSTEMS COMMAND
HEADQUARTERS

A TECHNICIAN (mid 20s) in a military uniform is monitoring a
computer screen.

GENERAL WALTERS (V.O.)
Our intelligence services maintain up-to-
the-millisecond information.

On the screen is a diagram: the Earth surrounded by six
evenly-spaced satellites.

Each satellite is identified by a code name and has three major cities listed under it beneath the heading "Primary Targets."

GENERAL WALTERS (V.O.)

Our military technologies are second to none.

One satellite's symbol is larger. It's labeled "PTX-1."

At the top of the screen are the words "Oppenheimer Ring Systems Status: Nominal."

GENERAL WALTERS (V.O.)

When, and if ever, plans are made to implement such devices, the American people will be fully informed, I promise you.

EXT. SPACE

The huge curved edge of the Earth comes into view behind the white, cylindrical space-borne nuclear weapon.

GENERAL WALTERS (V.O.)

I'd like you to direct your further questions to the man I'm about to introduce. Mr. Joe Harris, of MilTech Corporation, is the leader of the team the U.S. Nuclear Defense Systems Command contracted to analyze and update our core computer infrastructure.

INT. MILTECH CORPORATION'S TWELFTH FLOOR ONE TIMES SQUARE OFFICES

On the small screen of a portable TV on one of many computer-laden desks, JOE HARRIS (mid 40s) steps up to the podium.

Five OFFICE WORKERS (20s and 30s) are clustered around the TV, watching.

Paul is sitting at his workstation a few desks away clicking his mouse and looking at his monitor.

OFFICE WORKER

(at the portable's screen)
Go Joe!

An office worker (late 20s) standing next to him laughs.

On the small screen Harris clears his throat.

HARRIS

(filtered)

Thank you, General Walters. We at MilTech were honored to have been selected by our government to perform this task. We've enjoyed working closely with the USNDSC over these past years, and are proud of our achievement....

As Harris continues, Paul double-clicks a button on his monitor screen labeled "Get Mail", a window appears and a list scrolls down.

One message is from Harris. Paul double-clicks it open. It reads:

"December 29, 9:03 AM

Paul,

Just a reminder regarding today's meeting. The last few have gone well. Don't blow it. There's a limit to everything. I've heard more than once from higher-ups. I know you, they don't.

Joe"

HARRIS

(filtered)

...regarding the safety of our national defense systems, our thorough investigations....

Paul grimaces, stops clicking, and looks to one side of his monitor, listening, but not turning to look at the TV.

After a couple of seconds, still frowning, he looks back at his monitor and moves the cursor to the bottom right corner of the screen with his mouse, causing the screen to go dark.

Two seconds later a dialogue box appears in the middle of the screen reading "Restricted Access. Password Required."

Paul slides his chair back, stands up, and walks a few steps to a nearby window.

He turns his head and looks at the office workers clustered around the TV watching and listening to Harris, then leans against the window enclosure and shakes his head slowly, looking out and then down the side of the building.

Nine stories below he sees an immense champagne bottle, part of a New Year's Eve ad campaign, next to the building, surrounded by a scaffold.

A huge white balloon shaped to look like a giant spray of champagne extends from the top of the bottle, its surface ruffling in the breeze.

EXT. CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE SCAFFOLD

Two men are inflating the champagne-spray balloon.

One (early 20s) is holding a large hose attached to a fitting in the balloon.

The other (early 40s) is monitoring some gauges on a loud pump.

High above them, on an enormous SONY Jumbotron screen attached near the top of the building, Joe Harris is fielding reporters' questions.

YOUNGER MAN

Just two days away, man. It's gonna be a hell of a party down there.

OLDER MAN

Times Square? You ain't doin' that?

YOUNGER MAN

Why not?

OLDER MAN

Cause you're right, it's a hell.

YOUNGER MAN

You're just old.

OLDER MAN

You never done it before?

The younger man shakes his head.

OLDER MAN

Millions of people, no room to move, cold.

YOUNGER MAN

Gotta ring in the year dude!

OLDER MAN

Go ahead and ring it then, dammit. I
don't give a fuck. New year, same shit.

The younger man looks amazed.

YOUNGER MAN

Damn....

EXT. SEVENTH AVENUE - STREET LEVEL

Below the huge bottle, the press conference is being watched and listened to by a HOT-DOG VENDOR (early 50s) and another MAN (early 40s) eating a hot-dog, on a small portable TV on the vendor's cart.

On the small TV screen, Harris points to an offscreen reporter.

REPORTER (O.S.)

(filtered)

Mr. Harris, can you assure the world that all chances of an accidental nuclear weapons launch by the United States have been eliminated by your work?

HARRIS

(filtered)

We've done everything possible to achieve that level of assurance.

SCOTT DUNN (late 30s) walks past the hot-dog cart.

He goes into One Times Square through doors above which news headlines scroll 24 hours-a-day on the belt-like electronic display that encircles it.

INT. ONE TIMES SQUARE LOBBY

Dunn walks to an elevator, swipes his card through the slot by the door, and waits.

JOHN EDWARDS (mid 50s), the security guard, is standing behind the security desk next to the elevator.

EDWARDS

Excuse me Mr. Dunn. Is Miltech going to be open day after tomorrow?

DUNN
(dismissively)
No.

EDWARDS
I hate to bother you, but I'm doing the
New Year's Eve shift and I need to tell
the day guard whether to keep this
elevator open.

DUNN
Can't you get it to go any faster?

EDWARDS
(insulted)
No.

The elevator arrives as its bell rings, the doors open, and
Dunn gets in.

INT. ONE TIMES SQUARE - TWELFTH FLOOR

The elevator doors open into Miltech Corporation's offices.

Dunn emerges, turns left, and walks past an open door.

Just inside the door Paul, seated, and another man, MATT
(late 20s), standing and looking over his shoulder, are
staring at a computer monitor.

Dunn disappears down the hall.

Paul begins keying numbers into the computer.

MATT
Thanks for coming to my rescue Paul. I
went to Sydnie first, but she was too
busy.

Paul grimaces.

MATT
Sorry buddy, but I can't believe that
didn't work out. You seem made for each
other.

PAUL
I'm almost done with this.

Matt frowns, then watches Paul work a few moments.

MATT

Man, you're sure good at these things.

PAUL

Code breaking has been a hobby of mine since I was a kid. That's how I found the anomaly.

MATT

Haven't you dropped that yet?

PAUL

No.

MATT

You gonna bring that up again at your meeting today?

Paul clicks the mouse, then returns to punching keys.

PAUL

I'm thinking about it.

MATT

At this late date?

PAUL

I can't stand how they're so sure they're right and I'm wrong.

MATT

Didn't the rest of the team check that implementation before it was installed?

PAUL

Yes.

MATT

You really should drop it or you'll be putting your position at MilTech in jeopardy. I used to work under Joe Harris. That guy operates from pure reason. It's almost impossible to change his mind once he's made a decision.

PAUL

Maybe a nuclear warhead dropping into his back yard would loosen him up.

MATT

How could that possibly happen after all the multi-checking that's been done?

Paul finishes his work at the computer.

PAUL
Now you're set.

MATT
Thanks. So what exactly is this anomaly
you can't drop?

PAUL
Let's get some coffee.

INT. COFFEE BREAK ROOM - DAY

Paul and Matt put their steaming cups on a table and sit
down.

PAUL
When it was my turn to review Dunn's plan
I was surprised to see the method he was
using.

MATT
What is it?

Paul stands up, erases a message about Harris' New Year's Eve
party from the chalkboard, and writes two strings of code.

He points to a section of the top string.

PAUL
Unnecessary.

MATT
It looks harmless enough. What'd he say
it was for?

PAUL
He said it's the best way to write around
the ZD-24 chip.

MATT
That CompCon made back in the 70's? He
runs CompCon, Paul. That's why they
brought him in.

PAUL
(shaking his head)
It could cause a problem.

MATT
Like what?

PAUL
I'm not sure.

MATT
I admire your persistence, but could they
all be wrong?

PAUL
You can fix any problem if you think it
through thoroughly.

MATT
What more can you do?

PAUL
I've gotta know it's safe.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Joe Harris' team of twenty-two men and women, including Paul and Dunn, are seated around a conference table.

Harris is standing at the head of the table leading the meeting, running down some statistics.

Paul's laptop is open in front of him, but his eyes are turned to an empty space on the table beside it. He looks tired.

Something in his peripheral vision glints. He turns his head slightly and sees a gold ring on Dunn's right ring finger.

Its top is a circle divided in half vertically.

Paul frowns some slight curiosity.

A MAN (early 30s) next to Dunn is looking at it too.

MAN
New ring?

Dunn motions for him to be quiet and points at Harris.

HARRIS
...so this is our last meeting for the
year.

Most of the them applaud.

HARRIS
I'm proud of you all. We met every
deadline and the government is happy.

Paul raises his hand.

PAUL
There's just one thing.

HARRIS
That thing?

PAUL
I'm not satisfied.

Dunn rolls his eyes.

HARRIS
Paul, we signed off on that months ago.
We reviewed and approved Scott's plan
before it was implemented. You were
outvoted. That's it.

Paul shakes his head.

HARRIS
Scott knows more about ZD-24s than anyone
else here.

Paul turns to Dunn.

PAUL
You didn't run CompCon when they were
made.

DUNN
What difference does that make?

Paul looks around the table.

PAUL
Remember the UL-32 circuit? I was right
about that.

HARRIS
Because you were the expert in that case.

Harris changes his tone.

HARRIS
Paul, things have been going fine.
Don't --

PAUL
But I was right.

HARRIS
Look Mr. "Think Different," we tested
Scott's implementation fifty ways to
Sunday.

PAUL
I've got a feeling....

HARRIS
No Paul, you've got a problem...

Harris points to his own temple.

HARRIS
...in here. We need to go on record one-
hundred percent rock-solid behind our
work.

PAUL
Something might --

Harris looks away from Paul.

Paul leaves his sentence unfinished and looks at his laptop
screen, pressing a key that causes "ZD-24" to repeat over and
over, filling line after line.

Harris checks his watch.

HARRIS
It's after four. I'll see you all next
year if I don't see you at my party
first.

Everyone gets up and begins leaving the room except Paul.
Harris stops Dunn at the door.

HARRIS
Scott, thanks for the help with the new
antenna up there.

Harris points his thumb at the ceiling.

DUNN
My pleasure.

HARRIS
Coming to the party? It's not MilTech-
only.

DUNN
Thanks, but I'm flying to Miami in the morning.

HARRIS
Really? Have a great time.

DUNN
I will.

Dunn leaves.

Harris walks over to Paul.

Paul closes the lid of his laptop as he approaches.

HARRIS
Paul, it's one thing to fix a problem and another to be fixated on it.

Paul stares at the table.

PAUL
I believe in stopping problems before they start.

HARRIS
That's what Scott did. That's why he's here.

PAUL
But the way he did it....

Paul shakes his head slowly, then turns to Harris.

PAUL
Two years ago one teenage hacker brought down three-fourths of the entire infrastructure of one of the biggest banks in the world. We're dealing with nuclear weapons here.

HARRIS
(getting angry)
Who knows that better than me? They took Scott and I on a tour. I was this close to 20 million tons of TNT on a stick controlled by the computers we were hired to fix.

Paul returns to staring at the table.

Harris calms himself.

HARRIS

You work by yourself too much. Why don't
you come to my party?

Paul doesn't respond.

HARRIS

(sadly, as he turns to leave)
See you later Paul.

INT. PAUL'S CUBICLE - DAY

Paul sits wearily straightening a pile of folders.

He sighs.

His monitor is turned off.

His clock shows four-thirty.

He slips his laptop in its case and aligns the case on his desk.

He picks up the top two folders from the pile and opens a drawer.

The movement of the drawer causes an open envelope inside to shift and an engagement ring slides out and makes a sound as it hits the bottom of the drawer.

Paul looks at the ring and the envelope, which has "Paul" written on it, puts the folders back on his desk, and takes the ring and envelope out of the drawer.

He looks at the ring a few seconds, puts it down on his desk, and removes a folded piece of paper from the envelope.

At the bottom of a page-full of handwritten text he reads that the writer says Paul is too much inside his own head to be an interactive-enough partner in their relationship.

The letter is signed "Sydnie."

Still holding the letter, he picks the ring back up and examines it thoughtfully, moving it slowly back and forth between his thumb and index finger.

He looks up and away from the ring and stares in thought.

INT. MILTECH MEETING ROOM

Sydney is outlining a data encoding procedure on the chalkboard.

Four new members (mid 20s) of her communications satellite department are taking notes seated at two tables.

Sydney finishes writing a string of numbers.

SYDNE

See? The transfer rate is fifty times faster this way. You have any questions about transfer rates, see me, 'cause around here, about data transfer, I'm the Man.

The newbies laugh.

The door opens a little. A woman, JENN (late 20s), sticks her head in.

JENN

You've got a call.

SYDNE

Who?

Jenn mouths Paul's name silently.

Sydney grimaces slightly, then turns to the others.

SYDNE

Be right back.

She goes out the door.

INT. OFFICE SPACE OUTSIDE THE DOOR

Jenn points to a phone on a desk.

SYDNE

Thanks, Jenn.

Jenn leaves as Sydney picks up the receiver and puts it to her ear.

SYDNE

Paul? I told you yesterday I explained everything in the letter.

INT. PAUL'S CUBICLE

Paul is on his phone.

PAUL
It's not about that.

INTERCUT - OFFICE SPACE/PAUL'S CUBICLE

Sydney looks confused.

PAUL
Scott's implementation is --

SYDNE
Not that again. The job's over, right?

PAUL
They released the report this afternoon.

SYDNE
Paul, if this is a pretext for getting us
back together, I'm telling you right now
I'm not gonna change my mind.

PAUL
I just want you to look at it.

SYDNE
I've gotta go.

PAUL
DelFloria's at seven?

SYDNE
(answering out of habit)
Seven-thirty.

She hangs up the phone, looks slightly exasperated, then
turns toward the meeting room.

As she takes a step the phone rings. She stops and answers
it.

SYDNE
Paul, I don't -- Oh, Joe.

INT. HARRIS' OFFICE

HARRIS
Sydnie, please come to my office for a
minute.

INTERCUT - OFFICE SPACE/HARRIS' OFFICE

SYDNIE
I'm in the middle of an orientation.

HARRIS
It's important.

SYDNIE
Now?

HARRIS
Please.

SYDNIE
Okay.

She hangs up and walks past Jenn, tilting her head momentarily towards the meeting room door.

SYDNIE
Tell them I'll be right back.

Sydnie passes a MAN (early 20s) and WOMAN (mid 20s) hanging up New Year's decorations.

INT. HARRIS' OFFICE

Sydnie enters and walks up to Harris' desk.

SYDNIE
What?

HARRIS
You and Paul are pretty close, right?

SYDNIE
Yes.

HARRIS
Do you know about his problem with our
implementation?

SYDNE

Too much.

HARRIS

Do you care about his future here?

SYDNE

What are you saying?

HARRIS

I can't defend him forever.

SYDNE

If you're asking me to talk to him, I have, more than once.

HARRIS

On a personal basis?

SYDNE

Only.

Harris shakes his head slowly.

HARRIS

My last ditch effort.

Both remain silent a few moments.

SYDNE

Are you done?

HARRIS

I didn't mean to pry.

SYDNE

I've got new people waiting.

Sydney turns and leaves the office.

As the door closes, a piece of electronic equipment on a desk behind him begins beeping quietly.

He swivels his chair around and keys a code into its keypad.

The beeps stop as a letter-sized sheet of paper emerges from a slot on its side and drops into a tray.

He picks it up and reads.

He frowns sadly.

The last two sentences are: "The board votes to terminate Mr. Neycart's employment by MilTech. Please begin declassification procedures immediately."

INT. MILTECH OFFICES

Matt is making copies on the machine by Jenn's desk. He picks up his paper cup of coffee and takes a sip.

Jenn is sitting at the desk reading the top sheet of a stack of pages. Her right hand rests on the handle of a mug on her desk.

She stops reading, waits a moment, then looks at him.

JENN

Anything funny going on with them?

She raises a finger at Sydney's office door.

MATT

You don't know?

JENN

Know what?

MATT

It's over, according to Paul.

Jenn turns and looks sadly at Sydney's door.

MATT

Remember the Christmas party?

Jenn nods.

MATT

I didn't see them together more than five minutes.

She nods again.

The copier beeps.

JENN

Back in July, at the convention, you couldn't keep 'em apart.

Matt smiles regretfully to himself.

MATT
Computer people.

He stares at the wall over the copier, Jenn stares into space.

JENN
They're alike in a lot of ways.

EXT. SEVENTH AVENUE IN FRONT OF ONE TIMES SQUARE ENTRANCE -
SUNSET

Sydney is standing a few steps in the street hailing a cab.

Dunn comes out of the building and walks up to her.

DUNN
You look great today.

Her eyebrows knit together, she frowns and turns to see who spoke. She recognizes Dunn and her face relaxes.

SYDNEIE
Scott. Thanks.

A cab pulls up and stops. Sydney opens the door.

DUNN
Which way you goin'?

SYDNEIE
53rd and 5th.

DUNN
I'm goin' a little farther. Wanna share
it?

Sydney smiles.

SYDNEIE
Sure.

They get in.

SYDNEIE
(to driver)
53rd and 5th.

The CAB DRIVER (early 30s) nods and pulls away from the curb.

DUNN

You won't be seein' me around anymore.

SYDNE

Because the project's over.

DUNN

Sorry to see it end. I liked working with you, with almost everyone. Just one guy that really got under my skin.

Sydney watches the passing buildings.

DUNN

You know Neycart well?

She twists her mouth slightly still looking out her window.

SYDNE

Kind of.

DUNN

That guy's a freak.

She frowns and doesn't turn her head.

SYDNE

He's very dedicated.

On Sydney's side the cab passes a stopped police car against which a YOUNG MAN (late teens) is leaning as a POLICE OFFICER (mid 30s) is handcuffing him.

Another POLICEMAN (late 20s) is motioning for the small gathering of onlookers to move back.

Dunn and Sydney both see this.

DUNN

This civilization is destroying itself.

SYDNE

That's Manhattan. Never live here?

DUNN

This isn't living.

They ride a short distance in silence.

INT. DELFLORIA'S RESTAURANT

Paul is sitting on a couch in the foyer of the restaurant looking out a large window. A full manila envelope rests beside him.

He sees a cab pull up and stop, then sees Sydnie get out and turn around to speak to someone else in the cab. When Dunn leans toward her and shakes her hand, Paul recognizes him.

He watches her close the cab door and wave to Dunn as it leaves, then walk to the restaurant's door.

He stands up and meets her as she enters.

PAUL
What're you doing with him?

SYDNIE
Sharing a cab.

PAUL
That's all?

SYDNIE
Jesus.

The HOSTESS (mid 20s) enters.

HOSTESS
Table for two?

INT. DINING ROOM

Paul and Sydnie are sitting at a table. There's no food on it yet.

Sydnie is looking at the opened MilTech report in front of her.

She starts to close it.

SYDNIE
You've been focussed on too many details too long.

Paul stops her, reopens it, and flips pages. He points to a diagram.

PAUL
Look.

SYDNE
What?

PAUL
The date.

Paul points to the bottom of the diagram.

PAUL
There. It's this year.

SYDNE
So?

PAUL
Scott drew this this year. He said the original was in bad shape. Look.

Paul points again.

PAUL
Doesn't this look funny?

SYDNE
No. You think he made a mistake?

PAUL
The circuitry doesn't have the right feel. ZD-24s are seventies. This looks nineties.

SYDNE
It's not a painting, Paul. Feel doesn't matter. You're doing that obsessive interior thinking thing again. They criticised you and now you've got to show them.

PAUL
Can you even consider I might be right? What does that take?

SYDNE
I don't know.

A WAITER (late 20s) brings their food.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK SOUTH - SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Paul and Sydnie are walking slowly and thoughtfully.

SYDNIE

From what you've shown me, they have just
as much chance of being right as you.

Paul says nothing.

They continue walking silently.

They pass several two-horse carriages lined up waiting for
customers.

Sydnie looks from the horses to Paul.

SYDNIE

Been riding lately?

Paul shakes his head.

SYDNIE

You shouldn't give that up. You always
say it clears your mind.

More silent walking.

SYDNIE

Going to Joe Harris's party?

Paul shakes his head again.

SYDNIE

I am. So's Jonah. He's coming into town
to pick me up. You could ride out with
us. You oughta get your mind on something
else. It'd be good for you.

He doesn't respond.

Sydnie turns her head and looks at him with a sort of curious
concern, then steps into the street and hails a cab.

Paul stops walking.

PAUL

What're you doing?

A cab stops.

SYDNE

Going home.

She opens the cab door, gets in, and, keeping the door open, leans out a little.

SYDNE

Think about it.

PAUL

Maybe.

She pulls the door shut and the cab drives away.

Paul stands and stares after it.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

Paul is walking slowly along a dark sidewalk paralleling a roadway, lost in thought.

No one else is around. There is no traffic on the road.

The sound of dead leaves being crunched behind a dark thicket of trees and bushes near him across the road brings him to alertness.

With one motion he stops walking and leans back into a recess between the buttresses of the small building he was passing.

Keeping hidden, he leans out slightly and watches the edge of the thicket.

From behind it a street vendor's cart appears, its wheels crunching leaves, followed by the VENDOR (early 50s) pushing it.

Paul heaves a sigh of relief and steps out of his hiding place, still watching the vendor.

He takes a step towards the street to cross but, before he turns his head forward, a large black car has raced out of the dark towards him.

He jumps back against the small building, slamming his back against the wall as the car whizzes past and disappears down the road.

Still leaning against the wall and gathering back his composure, he sees the vendor across the street staring after the car, shaking his head and muttering to himself.

A church bell a few blocks away begins tolling.

Paul glances down and sees a newspaper page half-submerged in standing water along the curb.

Big print at the top of the dry part says "Only Two Days Left!"

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Paul enters, switches on a light, and closes the door behind him.

He walks to the bedroom door, reaches in around the door frame and flicks the light switch. No light comes on.

Paul frowns and peers into the bedroom.

By the light of the room behind him he sees his computer desk lamp is laying on the bedroom floor beside three zip storage disks.

He walks in, squats, and picks up the disks.

The phone rings.

He stands, still holding the disks, and lifts the cordless receiver to his ear.

PAUL
Hello...Matt?

Paul walks back into the main room.

PAUL
Someone's been in my apartment.

He puts the zip disks on a small table next to his outside door and opens the door.

He leans out and looks cautiously down the hall to his left. No one's there.

PAUL
I'm not paranoid.

He turns his head and looks down the hall the other way. It's empty.

PAUL
My lamp's broken and some other stuff's
moved.

He leans back in, closes the door, picks the disks up again,
and walks back to the bedroom.

There's a knock at the door.

Paul stops, turns, and looks across the room at it.

PAUL
(to Matt)
Wait a second.

Another knock.

PAUL
(to the door)
Who is it?

WOMAN (O.S.)
Cat. From across the hall.

Paul walks back to the door.

PAUL
(to Matt)
Just a minute.

He lays the phone down on the small table, looks through the
peephole, frowns, puts the disks down next to the phone, then
opens the door.

A woman, CAT (late 20s), is standing there. The door behind
her is open.

CAT
The super asked me to tell you he let the
plumbers in your place today to fix the
radiator.

PAUL
What?

Paul steps out the door, banging it closed behind him,
leaving the phone sitting on the table.

MATT (O.S.)
(filtered)
Paul? What happened?

INT. HALL

Paul is standing in the hall scowling at the SUPERINTENDENT (late 50s) of the building standing in a doorway.

SUPERINTENDENT
If they broke it they'll pay for it. Mrs. Jones said she had water coming down.

PAUL
Fuck that! I don't want anyone let in!

SUPERINTENDENT
You want her to go floating into the street?

PAUL
It couldn't have been that much!

SUPERINTENDENT
It would've been if I didn't see to it like I did. Remember last winter, that leak in your bathroom ceiling? Should I have left that too?

Paul pauses, takes a deep, slow breath, then exhales.

PAUL
Okay, Okay.

He turns quickly and walks away. The superintendent leans against his door frame watching him.

SUPERINTENDENT
God...damn....

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT

Paul comes in, closes the door behind him and sees the phone on the table.

He picks it up and raises it to his ear, listens, then, with a sad look, lowers it, punches the hang-up button and carries it back into the bedroom.

He puts it back in its cradle and it rings before he takes his hand off it.

He picks it up, punches the answer button, and raises it back to his ear.

PAUL
Hello?

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT

MATT
What happened?

INTERCUT - PAUL'S APARTMENT/MATT'S APARTMENT

PAUL
I blew up at the super.

MATT
Why?

PAUL
He let some plumbers in to fix a leak today.

MATT
Did they?

PAUL
He says.

MATT
You're too wired man.

Paul rubs his forehead with his free hand.

PAUL
All these things....

MATT
My advice: Cool out. Go to Harris' party.

PAUL
Maybe I should.

MATT
About the Knicks tomorrow. Meet you at three, right?

PAUL
That's right.

MATT
See you then.

PAUL
Okay, bye.

MATT
Bye.

Paul hangs up the phone.

On the wall beside it hangs a small framed portrait of Sydney.

INT. JENN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

On Jenn's computer monitor a window filled with Sydney's face is open.

Jenn is sitting at her computer desk in her pajamas. A plate with half a sandwich sits beside the keyboard.

JENN
(towards the microphone)
I didn't know.

INT. SYDNEY'S APARTMENT

Sydney's sitting at her computer holding a glass filled with Coke and ice. The Coke can rests on the table. Jenn's face is on her screen.

SYDNEY
That's where we met. Paul stood up and argued with the lecturer for five minutes.

Sydney picks up the can and pours more Coke over the ice.

INTERCUT - JENN'S APARTMENT/SYDNEY'S APARTMENT

JENN
So he's always been this way.

SYDNEY
He has other modes.

She takes a drink.

JENN
So why....

SYDNE

He's been in them less and less. I hated to hurt him, but marriage....

JENN

Still friends, though, right?

SYDNE

Somehow.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Paul is sitting at his computer in his underwear. A different lamp illuminates the table.

He double-clicks a "Check Mail" button.

Three new messages are listed.

The first is from Barnes & Noble, the second says "Don't Miss Out!" and the third proclaims itself "Important!"

He clicks open the first.

It's a newsletter detailing book releases and sales.

He clicks open the second.

"Don't let life pass you by! Order by secure server transaction our new publication Relationships The Way They Should Be!"

Without reading further he opens the third.

"Revelation 11:7

'And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.'"

A motorcycle roars by outside, setting off two car alarms.

"'And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city....'"

Paul shakes his head and quits the program.

EXT. SUBURBAN RESTAURANT - DAY

Scott Dunn holds the door open as his WIFE (mid 30s) and two small children, a boy, KEVIN (7) and his sister, DENISE (5), walk past him onto the sidewalk.

He lets the door close and joins them as they walk across the parking lot.

MAN (O.S.)
(filtered)
The end is near! Repent!

All four of them look toward the street.

A MAN (early 50s) in a dark suit is yelling at passing cars through an electronic megaphone.

MAN
(filtered)
The end of all things is upon us!

DUNN
(to his wife)
Some people don't know when to quit.

As they reach their car, the kids start skipping and chanting.

KEVIN	DENISE
The end is near! The end is near!	Repent! Repent! Repent! Repent!

Dunn squats down and puts a hand on a shoulder of each of them as his wife looks on.

DUNN
Hey, hey. You guys. We've got lots to do before we leave tomorrow. Can you be a little gentleman and a little lady till then?

KEVIN	DENISE
Yes daddy.	Okay daddy.

Dunn stands up, opens the car door, and the kids get in.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - AN EXIT - DAY

Paul and Matt walk out amidst a small crush of others.

They turn and continue down the sidewalk.

MATT

You look preoccupied. Is it both things?

PAUL

Yeah, maybe both.

A YOUNG MAN (early 20s) is standing on the sidewalk offering people cards from a stack he's holding.

MATT

You should get over 'em. Try something new.

The young man sticks a card in front of Matt as they pass. Matt takes it and scans it.

MATT

Here.

He hands it to Paul.

MATT

Join a cult.

Paul takes it, looks at it and starts to toss it in a trash can as they both laugh.

Then, just before he lets it go, he frowns and looks at it again.

At the top of the card are the words "The Hands Of The Lord". Beneath that is a black circle divided in half by a vertical black line, and, beneath that, a phone number. There's nothing else on it.

He shows it to Matt as they reach a subway entrance.

PAUL

This look familiar?

MATT

No.

Paul, still looking at the card, begins descending the subway steps.

Matt steps off the curb to wait for a "Walk" signal and turns and yells over the traffic noise.

MATT

See you tomorrow night!

Paul nods without looking away from the card and continues his descent.

INT. SUBWAY STATION

Still holding the card in one hand, but not looking at it, Paul walks to the turnstile, takes a token from a pants pocket, drops it in the slot, and goes through as a train slows to a stop in front of him.

The doors part and he steps in along with many others.

He grabs an overhead support and studies the card again as the car fills.

YOUNG MAN (O.S.)

Time is running out! Get right with God!

Paul looks around and sees, through the car window, a group of three people, a YOUNG MAN (late 20s), an OLDER MAN (early 40s), and a YOUNG WOMAN (mid 20s), standing around a small table against a wall some distance away in the station.

A large placard taped to the wall above the table reads "The Hands Of The Lord".

The table has small stacks of cards and pamphlets on it.

Another train pulls into the station with sustained cacophony and the young man cups his hands around his mouth.

YOUNG MAN

The day of judgement is at hand! Earth shall be no more!

Paul takes a step towards the doors, but they close.

The train jolts slightly and pulls out of the station.

He watches the three around the table until he disappears into darkness.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Paul enters and closes and locks the door behind him automatically.

He reaches in his coat pocket, pulls out his keys and the card Matt handed him, and tosses them on the table.

They land next to the ring Sydnie gave back to him, which rests on the envelope containing her "Dear John" letter.

He looks back and forth between the ring and the card and seems to be trying to remember something.

PAUL'S MIND'S EYE

He sees a ring on the right ring finger of a man's hand.

The symbol on the ring is similar, not identical, to the symbol on the card.

He remembers a man's voice....

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

New ring?

He sees it's Dunn's hand as he saw it at the meeting.

He thinks of the diagram he showed Sydnie at DelFloria's.

He sees the strings of code he drew on the blackboard for Matt.

He sees Dunn's ring again.

INT. APARTMENT

PAUL

(with sudden fear)

What if it's not a mistake?

He takes the card from the table, goes into the bedroom, and switches the light on.

He picks up the phone, dials the number on the card, and listens.

The line clicks and a pre-recorded message, spoken by a WOMAN (early 30s) begins.

WOMAN'S VOICE

(filtered)

There is a time to every purpose under heaven. You've reached out to the Hands Of The Lord.

(MORE)

WOMAN'S VOICE (cont'd)
We're located at 15 East 17th Street, one
block from Union Square. We're open noon
to midnight, seven days a week.

The recording ends.

EXT. EAST 17TH STREET - NIGHT

Paul is walking along the sidewalk looking at building numbers. He finds 15.

It's a small storefront with one large window and one door. No light shows in either.

Painted on the window in medium-sized letters is "The Hands Of The Lord" and, beneath that, a version of the divided circle symbol.

By the light from the street he sees stacks of literature piled on a desk inside.

He steps to the door.

A sign hanging in it reads "Closed until January 2nd."

Paul looks disappointed.

He turns his head to his right and notices the large hanging banner of the big Barnes & Noble bookstore on Union Square.

INT. BARNES & NOBLE - NIGHT

Paul is standing in an aisle in the Religion section of the store holding a thick book, flipping to different sections and reading for a few seconds at a time.

Its front cover shows it's Cults And Their Methods by Hugh Allen, Ph.D..

He looks at the back cover. There's a picture of Professor Allen and, beneath it, a short blurb.

A LARGE MAN (early 30s) edges past him in the narrow aisle, bumping him against the shelves.

LARGE MAN
Sorry guy.

Paul answers with grim silence, then looks back at the blurb.

The last sentence is, "Professor Allen resides in New York City."

INT. PROFESSOR ALLEN'S STUDY - NIGHT

Professor Allen's study is a small room with filled bookshelves running up all four walls. A lamp on a large, paper-strewn desk is the only illumination.

No one's there.

A phone on the desk rings.

The door opens and the sound of several people in lively conversation leaks in as PROFESSOR ALLEN (mid 50s) enters.

Leaving the door open, he walks to the desk and answers the phone.

PROFESSOR ALLEN

Yes?

INT. BARNES & NOBLE

Paul is talking on a pay phone beside some elevators.

PAUL

Professor Allen?

INTERCUT - BARNES & NOBLE/ALLEN'S STUDY

PROFESSOR ALLEN

That's me.

PAUL

My name is Paul Neycart. I took your class in contemporary psychology at NYU about six years ago. I wrote a paper on man-computer interaction.

PROFESSOR ALLEN

I remember. Very insightful.

PAUL

I just bought your book on cults. I'd like to ask you some questions about them.

PROFESSOR ALLEN

Fire away.

PAUL

In person.

PROFESSOR ALLEN

In person? What are you doing tomorrow evening?

PAUL

Dropping by your place if that's possible.

PROFESSOR ALLEN

There'll be a party in progress. Okay with you?

PAUL

Sure.

PROFESSOR ALLEN

Thirty-five East Fourth, Number Five. About nine?

PAUL

That's good. Thanks. Bye.

Paul hangs up.

INT. PAUL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Paul is laying on his still-made bed, propped against the headboard with a pillow supporting his back, reading Professor Allen's book.

Above the computer table raindrops are running down the outside of the slightly fogged window.

Jazz is playing softly on the radio in his living room. As the music fades, the female DJ (mid 30s) speaks.

DJ

We're with you all through the night,
playing music for lovers.

Paul lays the book beside him on the bed as the next song begins.

He turns and puts his feet on the floor, stands up, stretches his back with a slight groan, and walks into the other room.

He gazes around the room as he takes a deep breath, then sighs, walks to the window, and leans against the window frame.

Movement down in the street catches his eye through the fogged pane.

He wipes a space clear with his hand and sees a MAN (mid 20s) and a WOMAN (mid 20s) embracing under a streetlight.

They kiss.

Paul looks at them sadly through the streaking drops as the song on the radio reaches its bridge, and a slow, sensuous sax solo begins.

EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE STREET - NIGHT

A cab stops in front of a well-kept brownstone.

Paul gets out, pays the driver, and walks to and up the steps.

He finds Professor Allen's buzzer and presses it.

After a short wait, the professor opens the door.

PROFESSOR ALLEN

Paul?

PAUL

Yes.

PROFESSOR ALLEN

Come in. How've you been?

He indicates a door at the end of a short, narrow hall, and Paul precedes him towards it.

INT. HALL

PAUL

Good.

When they get to the door Professor Allen reaches around Paul and pushes it open.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Paul and Professor Allen walk into a wood-paneled living room occupied by several people (various ages), some sitting and talking on couches, some standing, talking and leaning on shelves, almost all holding drinks.

The professor steps toward his study door and motions for Paul to follow.

INT. STUDY

They enter, the professor closing the door behind them.

He points Paul to a chair, walks to his desk, picks up an empty videotape slipcover and hands it to Paul.

It's titled "Doomsday Cults".

PROFESSOR ALLEN
Ever see this?

Paul shakes his head.

Professor Allen picks up a remote, clicks at a VCR beneath a TV against the wall, and the tape begins.

PROFESSOR ALLEN
The last of my guests will be leaving
soon. Then we can talk.

Paul is intently reading the back of the slipcover and doesn't answer.

The professor frowns genially at the slight, then leaves, pulling the door closed behind him.

Paul turns his attention to the TV and sees the screen filled with a maniacal PREACHER (early 50s) wagging a finger straight up above his head.

PREACHER
God has an army!

The preacher lowers his arm.

PREACHER

And we
 (jabbing all ten fingers at
 himself)
 are the soldiers!

INT. SYDNIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

JONAH SYLVIAN (early 30s) is sitting on a couch in the living room. He stubs his cigarette in an ashtray and picks up a small clock from the coffee table.

He turns a knob on its back till the alarm rings.

JONAH

It's ten-thirty already! Let's go!

Sydney answers from the bathroom.

SYDNIE (O.S.)

Stop with the clock, Jonah. What are you,
 five years old?

JONAH

Hurry it up!

SYDNIE (O.S.)

I wouldn't have to if you'd been on time
 for dinner.

JONAH

How come we're so much like Mom and Dad?

SYDNIE (O.S.)

Don't wake it up.

She walks in fixing her hair.

SYDNIE

I want tonight to be fun.

EXT. PROFESSOR ALLEN'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

The door opens and Paul emerges with a small, full, black carry-all bag hanging by a strap over his shoulder. The corners of the objects within it make little points on its surface.

He turns around as the professor appears in the doorway.

PAUL
I'll return these as soon as I can.

PROFESSOR ALLEN
Keep 'em as long as you need 'em.

PAUL
Thanks.

Paul turns and descends the steps.

The professor watches him leave, frowns some curiosity, then steps back in and closes the door.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - NIGHT

A van with the words "Sylvian Plumbing Company" is moving down the street.

INT. VAN

Jonah is driving. Sydnie is looking out the passenger-side window.

JONAH
What time did you tell him?

SYDNIE
Ten-thirty.

Jonah checks his watch.

JONAH
It's ten-twenty nine.

He points to a building.

JONAH
That it?

Sydnie looks, then shakes her head.

SYDNIE
The next one.

INT. PAUL'S BEDROOM

Paul rests the black bag on his bed, unzips it, lifts it, and dumps its contents on the bedspread.

There are three videotapes, a few books, a manuscript, and some thick manila envelopes.

He lets out a breath.

His doorbuzzer buzzes.

He looks at his watch.

PAUL

Shit.

He lifts his coat from the back of a chair, switches the light off, and goes out.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Paul, Sydnie, and Jonah are driving along the Long Island Expressway, all three in the front seat, Sydnie in the middle.

The tools hanging in the back rattle when they encounter bumps.

The clock in the dashboard reads 10:57 PM.

SYDNIE

(to Jonah)

If you want us to get there in one piece stay under the speed limit.

Jonah rolls his eyes.

JONAH

(mockingly)

Yes dear.

Paul is looking out the window. Jonah glances at him.

JONAH

Paul, you bring that Mac info with you?

PAUL

Forgot.

SYDNIE

(to Paul)

See? Too focussed too long.

Paul give her an aggravated look, then looks back out the window. He sees a sign saying "Exit 37 Next Exit."

PAUL
Hey, CompCon's only two minutes from here.

JONAH
What's CompCon?

SYDNE
Paul's latest obsession. Computer chip makers.

PAUL
(to Sydney)
Let's go look at the original.

JONAH
It's New Year's Eve. Are they open?

PAUL
We've got 24-hour access.

Sydney shakes her head to herself. Paul sees her.

PAUL
(to Sydney)
You were right, I should get my mind off it. If Scott didn't make a mistake, I'll be able to.

JONAH
(to both of them)
What're you talking about?

PAUL
There's the exit. I'll explain on the way.

Jonah looks curiously at Paul, then at Sydney. She makes a "what's the use" expression.

EXT. COMPCON COMPLEX - NIGHT

The van drives into the empty parking lot.

The windows of the two-story main building are dark. A security light shines from one corner.

A large dish antenna is on the roof.

The van rolls to a stop.

Paul gets out and turns back around.

PAUL
(to Sydnie)
It'll go faster if you help.

Sydnie sighs with resignation. She turns to Jonah.

SYDNIE
You coming too?

JONAH
I'd rather wait here if you're not gonna
be too long.

PAUL
Twenty minutes tops.

Sydnie gets out of the van and she and Paul walk toward
CompCon's entrance.

JONAH
(calling after them)
Don't get lost in the past.

EXT. MAIN BUILDING

Paul and Sydnie reach the door. Paul sticks his card in a
slot beside it, the door unlocks with a click, and they go
in.

INT. FOYER

They leave the lights off and walk across the room to a
closed door. Paul opens it.

The lights in the next room are on.

INT. RECORDS ROOM

Paul enters, Sydnie following.

There are several computer workstations in the room,
screensavers running on some of them.

PAUL
They left the lights on for us.

Paul sits down at a terminal, keys in a password, and begins searching the records.

Sydney pulls a chair over and sits next to him, looking at the monitor.

Paul searches quietly for about 20 seconds.

PAUL
I'm not finding it.

Sydney rolls her chair to another terminal.

SYDNEIE
I can't believe I'm here doing this on
New Year's Eve.

She begins keying in the password.

Her screen freezes as the computer crashes.

SYDNEIE
(mostly to herself)
Damn, it crashed.

PAUL
Just like us.

Sydney grimaces, staring at the frozen screen as Paul continues working his keyboard, his back still to her.

PAUL
Just restart.

SYDNEIE
(aggravated)
I know.

She hits the right keys, the screen blacks out and the familiar motif plays, signaling the beginning of the computer's restarting process.

Sydney sits dejectedly as the restarting process continues.

SYDNEIE
Where's your restart button Paul? How do
I restart you? You act like a computer,
but without a way to let things go.

Paul hesitates a few seconds, thinking to himself. He frowns sadly, his back still turned to her.

PAUL

Maybe.

His computer beeps and he turns his attention to his screen.

PAUL

Got it.

Sydney rolls her chair back next to him.

At the bottom of the screen a line reads "ZD Series Chips Schematics - 1970-1980 - Hard Copies - Building B, Room 3A."

SYDNE

(mostly to herself)

Building B.

Paul points his thumb over his shoulder.

PAUL

It's out back.

SYDNE

I know.

Paul stands up. He takes a step and Sydney touches his forearm.

SYDNE

Paul.

He stops.

SYDNE

Jonah was nice enough to bring you out here. Will you leave if we don't find it another ten minutes?

PAUL

Absolutely.

Sydney stands and follows Paul out the door.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Jonah is standing outside the van, leaning on it and smoking.

The van's radio is on, not loud, and New Year's Eve and the approaching midnight are being mentioned, including how many minutes are left until the start of the new year.

His eyes drift over to some big pipes embedded in concrete about 30 feet away across a small metal bridge over a concrete-lined ditch running beside the parking lot.

Jonah walks over the bridge.

He sees, attached to the biggest pipe, a large valve control wheel with heavy-duty chains threaded through the openings between its spokes.

The chains are secured with three padlocks.

Jonah looks at the locked wheel with curiosity.

His eyes trace a path from the pipes to the ditch.

He sees that the wheel controls the run-off of a large body of water that extends into the darkness between banks of trees.

He follows the ditch with his eyes the other way.

He sees it becomes a concrete drain tunnel when it gets past the parking lot and runs alongside and then behind the main building.

Looking only somewhat satisfied with his reconnaissance, Jonah walks halfway back across the bridge, stops, leans on the railing and tosses his cigarette butt into the ditch.

He looks at his watch.

It's 11:03.

He looks at the main building.

EXT. BUILDING B

Paul and Sydnie walk up to the door. A sign on it reads "Closed Until Further Notice."

Paul moves his hand to grab the door handle, almost touches it, stops, and moves his hand away.

He stands looking at the door, then shifts his eyes to one side of it, thinking.

Sydnie turns to leave and touches Paul's arm to turn him around too.

Paul puts his hand on hers.

PAUL

Wait.

Paul keys numbers into the keypad beside the door.

The keypad display reads "Access Denied. Invalid Executable Code."

He tries a different sequence and fails again.

SYDNIE

Paul.

PAUL

I've got to know.

Paul holds three buttons down while pressing another button three times.

They hear the dull click of the door unlocking.

The display reads "Open."

Paul turns the handle, opens the door and goes in.

Sydney follows.

INT. BUILDING B

Paul and Sydney enter. The lights are on.

SYDNIE

Maybe somebody's here.

Paul points to the door of Room 3A. It's partly open.

He walks over, opens it and they go in.

INT. ROOM 3A

File cabinets line the walls.

Paul and Sydney check the labels on the drawers.

PAUL

Here.

Paul opens a drawer, scans the folders, then pulls one out. Before he has a chance to look inside he and Sydney are distracted by a mechanical sound outside the room.

Through the door they see an indicator over an elevator showing it's coming up.

The elevator motor hum stops.

The door opens and Scott Dunn steps out dressed in a strange-looking long blue robe talking on a cell phone.

Paul's eyes widen. Sydnie looks bewildered.

Paul closes Room 3A's door to a crack so they won't be seen.

Dunn walks toward the exit opposite Room 3A.

DUNN

It's in His hands now. I just sent it. In less than an hour the cleansing will begin. Those who've lived by the sword will die by it, and we'll be delivered into immortality.

Dunn listens to whoever he's talking to.

DUNN

Jimmy and Tom are picking me up.

Dunn reaches the exit, turns out the lights, and leaves the building.

Sydnie's expression shows she's trying to understand what she just saw.

SYDNIE

What was that?

Paul pulls the ZD-24 schematic out and inspects it.

PAUL

It's different.

Paul points to a detail of the schematic.

Sydnie nods slowly, seeing he's right.

They look in each others eyes, then at the still open elevator door, its light shining eerily in the dark.

EXT. BETWEEN BUILDING B AND MAIN BUILDING

Dunn walks toward the rear of CompCon's main building, goes up the few steps, keys a short sequence into the keypad by the door, and enters.

INT. UNDER BUILDING B

Darkness.

A shaft of light shines out from between opening elevator doors revealing a narrow hall that Paul and Sydnie step into.

They walk cautiously about twenty feet to a door at the other end.

Paul puts his hand on the knob.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

Paul and Sydnie enter a large dark room.

Paul switches the lights on.

Some large tables are pushed together in the center of the room supporting several computers, monitors on.

Covering the far wall is a mural of a pair of hands emerging from robed sleeves plunging a flaming sword into the Earth.

In front of the mural is a podium with about thirty folding chairs arranged in rows facing it.

Paul and Sydnie walk slowly through the room, taking it in.

Crates are stacked along one wall, some with lids off.

Paul and Sydnie look in one and see automatic weapons.

Grenades fill another.

On a table against the wall are piles of booklets.

Sydnie picks one up.

The cover says "The Hands Of The Lord" and shows the same flaming sword/Earth motif as the mural.

Sydney opens it, reads "That God's Earth may be cleansed and made ready, we exchange these mortal lives for lives eternal...."

She shows it to Paul.

They reach the mural and turn around to see five computer monitors.

Two screens show maps, one Russia, the other, China. Another is filled with moving rows of numbers and letters.

On the fourth is the logo of the United States Nuclear Defense Systems Command.

The fifth displays only one line: 0 hours, 53 minutes, 37 seconds...36 seconds...35 seconds...34 seconds....

SYDNE

Oh God.

INT. DUNN'S OFFICE

Dunn is on his knees still wearing his blue robe. His eyes are closed. He's holding a Bible to his chest with both hands, his lips moving silently.

He stops, gets up, sits at his desk, picks up the phone and dials.

DUNN

Kevin?

Dunn listens.

DUNN

Soon son. Put mommy on.

Dunn waits.

DUNN

Ready?

Dunn listens.

DUNN

The kids too?

Dunn listens.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

Paul and Sydnie are sitting at computer terminals bringing up and scanning screenfuls of information.

SYDNIE
How do we know this is real?

PAUL
I recognize the codes.

They work a few more seconds in silence.

PAUL
These aren't ground-based.

More silent work.

A dialog box appears on Paul's screen asking for a password.

He tries one, fails, tries another, fails, tries a string of code, fails.

PAUL
I'm not getting any deeper.

INT. DUNN'S OFFICE

Dunn is still on the phone.

DUNN
Make sure they're dressed. See you soon.
I love you.

Dunn hangs up and turns the framed pictures of his wife, his son, and his daughter face down on his desk.

He looks at his watch. It's 11:08.

He gets up, goes to the coffee machine, pours a cup and stands completely relaxed, sipping coffee.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

Paul and Sydnie are working at the terminals.

Paul types "Trace Path" into a dialog box and presses "ENTER."

SYDNE

Paul. Look.

Paul gets up, goes to her and looks at her monitor.

He sees a diagram: the Earth surrounded by a ring of six satellites.

Each satellite is identified by a code name and has three major cities' names listed under it beneath the heading "Primary Targets."

One satellite's symbol is larger. It's labeled "PTX-1."

At the top of the screen are the words "Oppenheimer Ring Systems Status: Armed."

Paul looks at the flaming sword wall painting, at the monitor with the countdown proceeding on it, then back at the diagram.

PAUL

They'll consider them first strikes and retaliate.

Paul's terminal beeps.

He goes back to it.

A message on the screen reads: Time since transmission: 9 minutes, 23 seconds.

He keys "Trace Path" in again.

A message appears: FURTHER ACCESS DENIED.

SYDNE

What is it?

PAUL

We've got to get to MilTech.

EXT. CLEARING NEAR PARKING LOT

Jonah walks into a clearing surrounded by bushes and trees.

He has a "tired of waiting" look on his face as he unzips and starts urinating.

He hears something, glances up and sees a helicopter coming.

It passes over him and he turns his head to follow it, still urinating.

He sees it's heading towards CompCon.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

Paul is standing on a chair looking out a high window.

He closes the frosted window and turns to Sydnie as he climbs down.

PAUL
It's a helicopter.

Paul returns to the terminal he was working at and sits.

PAUL
He's already sent the signal. We could shut this whole place down and it wouldn't make any difference. Look.

Paul points to another monitor.

PAUL
Here's what USNDSC is seeing.

The diagram on the screen is an exact duplicate of the one Sydnie found earlier, except the word "Nominal" is in place of "Armed."

SYDNIE
Then they've got no idea.

Paul begins working the keyboard.

PAUL
When the countdown reaches 0, PTX-1 will initiate launch in the other five.

SYDNIE
We need the interrupt code.

PAUL
I haven't been able to get it. Plus, he's trashed the transmit app. Is the new antenna fully configured?

SYDNIE
Back in town? Almost.

PAUL
(still working the keyboard)
There's something on my laptop. I didn't
know what it was. I came up with it
analyzing Dunn's codes. With that and
this --

Paul points to a window full of code he just brought up on
the screen.

PAUL
-- I can compile the interrupt. We can
send it from MilTech.

SYDNIE
One problem.

PAUL
What?

Sydnie points to the digital clock readout on Paul's screen.

It's 11:10.

Paul looks at the time, his eyes widen a little, and he takes
a deep breath.

He grabs a disk from a half-filled box near the monitor,
sticks it in the computer and starts using the mouse and
keyboard to set up the download.

EXT. MAIN BUILDING'S ROOF

The helicopter has landed the roof, motor still loud, rotors
still turning.

A man in a dark suit, TOM (mid 30s), is getting out the
passenger side as Dunn emerges from the roof door carrying
his briefcase.

Tom walks towards the edge of the roof and points the parking
lot out to Dunn.

Dunn hands the briefcase to the helicopter PILOT (mid 30s),
who's still seated at the controls, and joins Tom.

Dunn sees Jonah's van.

He looks back to the computer bunker's windows and sees the
lights are on inside.

He motions for Tom to follow.

They go down the fire escape.

EXT. BESIDE COMPCON'S PARKING LOT

Jonah emerges from the bushes.

He sees Tom holding a gun running back to Dunn and shaking his head to show he found no one in the van.

Both Dunn and Tom run back behind the main building towards Building B.

Jonah trots over the bridge back to his van.

He glances up at the helicopter still running on CompCon's roof.

He tries the van door, finds it still locked and looks puzzled.

He walks to the main building's entrance and pulls on the door handle.

The door doesn't open.

He steps to the side of the door, peers into a darkened window and sees nothing.

He begins walking close to the outside of the building looking in other windows.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

Paul pulls the disk out, shoves it in his coat pocket.

He and Sydnie go down the narrow hall to the elevator.

They hear it descending.

Sydnie looks at Paul.

SYDNIE

Jonah?

PAUL

No card. Listen.

They both listen.

PAUL
Helicopter's still here.

Paul sees the elevator's main power box by the door and yanks the handle down.

The elevator motor goes silent.

Paul and Sydnie run back into the computer room, look for an exit, and find a heavy steel door.

Paul uses his three-fingers-plus-one technique on its keypad and the door's locking mechanism clunks open.

Sydnie goes out first, Paul delaying, keying more numbers into the pad.

SYDNIE
What are you doing?

PAUL
(still keying)
We don't know what's out there. We might
have to get back in.

Paul finishes and the large bolt sticking out the edge of the door retracts with a thunk.

The keypad LED blinks "LOCKED OPEN" twice, then goes dark.

Paul moves to leave, a gunshot rings out and the bullet hits beside him on the wall.

Paul turns and sees Dunn and Tom have forced the elevator doors apart just enough to shoot through.

Dunn sees Paul through the opening before Paul turns and disappears through the closing steel door.

INT. TUNNEL

Paul and Sydnie are in almost total darkness as the door closes behind them. Each looks both ways.

SYDNIE
It's gotta be left.

Paul nods in agreement and they run into the darkness, footsteps echoing.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

Dunn and Tom force the elevator doors apart enough to get out.

Dunn slides feet first down to the floor, followed by Tom.

They run down the narrow hall into the computer bunker.

Dunn scans the room as he enters.

He sees the ZD-24 schematic laying beside the terminal Paul was using.

He runs up to the terminal and sees a dialog box on the screen that says "Downloading completed."

DUNN

Stop them any way you can.

Tom goes out the steel door with his gun drawn.

The door closes behind him

The LED display beside the door blinks "LOCKED OPEN" twice and goes dark again.

Dunn, already working at the terminal, his back to the door, doesn't see the "LOCKED OPEN" message.

INT. TUNNEL

Paul and Sydnie have almost reached the end of the tunnel.

A shot rings out loudly and the bullet whizzes past them.

They emerge into the open ditch beside the parking lot, orient themselves, then start up the sloping side of the ditch.

Sydnie slips on some slime and Paul grabs her before she falls.

They reach ground level and run toward the van.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Jonah, trotting back to the van, sees Paul and Sydnie running towards it.

He arrives just as they do.

JONAH

Was that a shot? What's going on?

SYDNE

Get in! We've gotta get outta here!

Paul and Sydney run to the other side of the van.

Jonah quickly unlocks the driver's-side door and jumps in.

He leans over and unlocks the passenger door.

Sydney and Paul jump in.

Jonah floors it and they screech out of the parking lot.

EXT. DITCH BESIDE PARKING LOT

Tom runs out of the tunnel and starts up the side of the ditch, slipping on the slime but not falling.

He reaches ground level and sees the van disappear down the road.

He runs to the fire escape and climbs to the roof.

He runs to the still idling helicopter and gets in.

He says something to the pilot and points to the speeding van.

The pilot looks at the van, holds his watch up to Tom's face, says something and looks aggravated.

Tom says yells something back at him and points towards the computer bunker.

The pilot reluctantly turns to the controls, lifts the helicopter off and heads after the van.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

Dunn is working at the computer terminal.

On the screen is a window titled "Recent Downloads."

Dunn is bringing up and closing other windows in rapid succession.

He hears the helicopter taking off and stops working.

He looks disappointed.

He turns his head and sees the flaming sword/Earth mural.

He picks up the phone beside the terminal and dials.

INT. HELICOPTER

Tom's cell phone rings, he takes it out of his pocket and answers.

TOM

Mr. Dunn?

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

DUNN

What happened?

INT. HELICOPTER

TOM

They're in that van heading for the expressway.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

DUNN

Tom, the people in that van are evil. They're against God, against all He stands for, against this great cleansing. I know them. Their kind created this dangerous, horrible system God wants destroyed. They've stolen something that may enable them to interfere.

INT. HELICOPTER

TOM

We wanted to be with our families.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

DUNN
I did too. But we will be, afterwards, if
you stop them.

INT. HELICOPTER

Tom looks down at the van as it feeds into the expressway.

The helicopter banks sharply.

Tom's hand bangs against the door.

He drops the phone.

He grabs for it but it bounces out.

He grabs the door edge to steady himself and looks down at
the falling phone.

With an exasperated look on his face he leans back in and
buckles his seat straps.

INT. VAN

PAUL
(to Jonah)
Believe me, it's real.

Jonah shakes his head, trying to take their explanations in.

He sees the helicopter in his rear-view mirror.

JONAH
They're coming.

Paul looks in the outside mirror on his side and sees the
helicopter closing in.

Jonah and Sydnie see a "DETOUR" sign ahead and road work,
with no one around, beyond it.

Paul turns forward and sees the sign just as Jonah starts to
turn towards the detour.

No!

PAUL

SYDNIE
Wait! No time!

PAUL
Go straight!

JONAH
Alright! Alright!

Jonah drives straight into the road work area as a bullet fired from the helicopter hits the roof of the van.

EXT. ROAD CONSTRUCTION SECTION OF EXPRESSWAY

The van reaches an unpaved section of road and swerves around a parked steamroller as another bullet hits the roof.

The helicopter is a few car-lengths behind as the van speeds through some puddles, mud splashing on the windshield.

Jonah turns the wipers on and pushes the van harder.

A bullet smashes one of the rear door windows.

A second bullet hits the rear door lock.

The van hits a bump and one of the rear doors jars open, banging loudly.

A box of tools bumps over, the tools scattering out the back door.

Paul makes his way to the rear of the van as the helicopter descends behind them.

Paul tries to grab the open door and a shot hits near him.

He tries again, ducking when he hears another shot.

The van hits a bump and Paul loses his balance.

He almost falls out but Sydnie has followed him back there and grabs his arm, steadying him.

Their eyes meet for a few seconds, then another shot hits the van.

Paul grabs the door and yanks it shut.

He grabs a chain from a box and loops it through the rear door struts and a rib along the van's wall, then locks it with a lock he gets from the same box.

They go back to the front.

A shot hits the passenger-side exterior mirror and knocks it off.

Paul and Sydnie reseat themselves beside Jonah.

Jonah's his foot is almost flooring the accelerator, his hands maneuvering the wheel, fighting the rough road.

JONAH

God...damn...mother...fuckin'....

One of the helicopter's runners bangs into the top rear part of the van's roof.

Jonah floors it and swerves out from under as they enter a less bumpy section of road.

The van hydroplanes when it hits a wet area and starts a spin for a few moments.

SYDNIE

My God!

Jonah regains control.

The helicopter runners bang down on the van's roof.

The van bounces on it's shock absorbers, Paul and Sydnie grabbing the dashboard for support.

The helicopter bangs again, then flies in front of them and descends.

Tom leans out of the helicopter and fires.

The shot penetrates the van's hood.

Sydnie points at a several huge, long consecutive sections of concrete pipe ahead, partially sunk into the road.

SYDNIE

Jonah! The pipes!

Jonah swerves into the first section at full speed as the helicopter ascends in front of them.

The van jolts each time it hits a gap between sections, bouncing Jonah, Paul, and Sydnie in their seats.

Fifteen seconds later the van emerges from the last section and the helicopter descends behind them again.

INT. HELICOPTER

Tom fires.

EXT. VAN

The bullet hits the roof.

INT. HELICOPTER

The "clip empty" mechanism clicks out the top of Tom's gun.

TOM
Last round.

The pilot sees another overpass ahead and ascends sharply to avoid it.

INT. VAN

JONAH
(seeing the near-crash in his
mirror)
They're insane.

Paul checks his watch.

PAUL
Forty minutes.

INT. HELICOPTER

The pilot stabilizes the helicopter at the higher altitude.

He points behind and between the seats keeping his eyes on the van.

Tom reaches there and pulls a black cloth off several small boxes.

He lifts one box to his lap, opens it, ejects the clip and begins reloading it bullet by bullet.

EXT. EXPRESSWAY

Jonah smashes the van through some "END OF ROAD WORK" barriers.

He heads under the overpass and sees the detoured traffic bottlenecked as it reenters the expressway ahead.

Beyond the bottleneck, the road is almost empty.

INT. VAN

JONAH
(glancing in his mirror)
They pulled back.

They speed along a few seconds, no one speaking.

JONAH
(to himself)
No wonder they chained that valve.

Paul looks at Jonah.

PAUL
What?

JONAH
(eyes glued to the road)
That ditch. There's a valve by the parking lot. They chained it so no one can flood it.

Paul turns his head forward again, staring through the windshield, thinking to himself.

JONAH
When we get there what're you gonna do?

SYDNIE
Transmit an abort signal from the roof.

Paul pulls the disk from his coat pocket.

PAUL
With this.

The van hits dip in the road and the disk jolts from Paul's hand.

PAUL

Shit!

Sydney catches it and hands it back to him.

He examines it briefly, slips it back in his pocket, and heaves a sigh of relief.

Jonah pulls his cell phone out of his pocket.

JONAH

Can't you call someone?

Paul's and Sydney's eyes widen when they see the phone.

Paul takes it, dials a number and holds it to his ear.

PAUL

(into the phone)

Washington D.C. information.

(a pause)

United States Nuclear Defense Systems
Command.

Paul listens, dials a number, and puts the phone back to his ear.

PAUL

(into the phone)

I'm a security systems analyst with
MilTech Corporation. There's a problem
with PTX-1. Someone is --

(a beat)

MilTech Corporation --

(a pause)

Right. Somebody's hijacked PTX-1. They've
transmitted --

(a beat)

It's not a weather satellite!

(a beat)

Listen --

(a pause)

Goddammit, the world's about to end!
Don't --

Sydney raises her hands palms down and lowers them, signaling him to calm down.

PAUL

(to Sydney)

I'm on hold.

Paul looks fed up.

He suddenly removes the receiver from his ear and ends the call by pushing a button.

SYDNE
(to Paul)
What are you doing?

PAUL
Got a better idea.

INT. HELICOPTER

Tom finishes loading a clip.

Two more, fully loaded, are laying on top of the bullets in the box on his lap.

He jams the just-loaded clip into his gun and and slips the other two in his coat pocket.

He replaces the box behind and between the seats.

He cocks the gun.

The pilot looks at the gun, then at Tom, and motions for him to wait.

Tom moves his hands apart in a "Why?" gesture.

The pilot points to a section of the instrument panel labeled "Winch Control."

Tom sees this and nods.

The pilot begins to descend.

INT. VAN

Paul is dialing again.

Jonah watches him for a few seconds.

He looks back at the road and sees he's about to crash into a slow-moving backhoe.

He swerves the van around it.

Paul stops dialing and all of them grab for support.

As Jonah restabilizes the van they hear a loud bang on the rear doors.

Paul and Sydnie turn and look back.

Jonah checks his mirror.

JONAH
They've got a winch.

The hook bangs into the door again.

JONAH
That's the hook.

EXT. EXPRESSWAY

The helicopter is 25 feet above the rear of the van.

The hook is close to the road's surface, dangling on a heavy chain.

The hook bangs into the van's bumper, then drags on the asphalt for a few seconds sending up a shower of sparks.

The helicopter ascends slightly and the hook catches the bumper.

It comes loose when the van hits a bump.

INT. A CAR DRIVING BEHIND THE VAN

The MAN (early 40s) driving is talking on his cell phone.

A WOMAN (early 40s) is in the passenger's seat.

WOMAN
Call the police.

MAN
(glancing at the hook and the
van)
I am, I am.... Yes. I'm near Exit 27
going west on the Long Island Expressway.
There's a helicopter trying to wreck a
van....

INT. HELICOPTER

The pilot is focussed on the van, his hands working the controls with precision.

TOM
(hitting the pilot in the
shoulder)
Look out!

The pilot looks up and sees high-tension wires stretching across the expressway ahead.

He pulls back on the stick.

EXT. EXPRESSWAY

The helicopter climbs rapidly and the hook barely misses catching on the wires.

INT. HELICOPTER

The pilot pushes the stick forward, descending towards the van again.

EXT. EXPRESSWAY

The hook catches the latch holding a metal ladder attached to van's roof.

The latch opens and the ladder flies off the roof, clanging down on the asphalt.

The car behind swerves to avoid it.

The hook catches the van's rear bumper, the helicopter ascends slightly and the rear wheels rise a few inches off the asphalt.

INT. VAN

JONAH
They got us.

Jonah, keeping his eyes moving between the road ahead and his mirror, moves his right arm behind him and points to a large pair of chain cutters hanging on a rack.

Paul sees them and hands the cell phone to Sydney as he gets up.

He grabs the chain cutters and makes his way to the back of the van.

He opens the unchained rear door.

A shot rings out.

The bullet hits near him on the door frame and he ducks.

EXT. EXPRESSWAY

The van's rear wheels touch the asphalt with a screech, then rise again.

INT. VAN

Paul loops his left arm through a heavy leather strap hanging from a tool rack, adjusts his footing and leans out.

He cuts the chain as another bullet slams into the open door.

EXT. EXPRESSWAY

The loose hook hits the road with another shower of sparks as the van's rear wheels drop to the pavement with a loud screech.

INT. VAN

Sydney, watching Paul, sees him lose his balance momentarily.

SYDNEIE

Paul!

Sydney gets out of her seat and starts towards the rear of the van.

EXT. EXPRESSWAY

The car behind them swerves to avoid the loose hook.

The helicopter ascends rapidly, free of the weight of the van.

INT. VAN

Paul almost falls out, then hauls himself in and slams the door shut.

He and Sydnie go forward and retake their seats next to Jonah.

Paul reaches for the phone in her hand, she gives it to him and he dials.

INT. JOE HARRIS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Harris' New Year's Eve party is in full swing, music blaring, people talking loudly, laughing, blowing horns.

A phone rings on a lamp table next to a couch.

No one hears it.

A clock beside the phone shows 11:26.

The phone rings again.

Still no one hears it over the noise.

INT. VAN

Paul looks grim.

SYDNIIE

Who are you....

Paul's expression changes and he interrupts her by holding his hand up signaling her to be quiet.

PAUL

(into phone)

This is Paul Neycart. I must speak to Joe Harris. It's an emergency.

A shot bangs loudly on the van's roof.

INT. HARRIS' LIVING ROOM

The woman Paul is talking to, HARRIS' WIFE (mid 40s), looks across the crowded room and sees Harris having an animated conversation with three guests. All four are holding drinks.

She waves at him, he sees her, excuses himself and comes over.

HARRIS' WIFE
(handing him the phone)
Paul Neycart?

Harris' expression brightens, he nods and takes the phone.

HARRIS
(slightly drunk)
You're missin' it Paul. Helluva party.

Harris raises his glass and nods to a friend walking past.

INT. VAN

PAUL
Joe, listen. Scott's a member of a cult.
They're gonna start World War Three. He's
tied in --

INT. HARRIS' LIVING ROOM

HARRIS
(straining to hear over the
noise)
What? Scott what?

Harris holds the receiver away from his ear, takes a sip of his drink, then puts it back to his ear.

HARRIS
He's in Miami. I'm here and you're
nowhere.

Harris holds his drink up to his eyes and peers through the glass.

HARRIS
I'm lookin' through you Paul.

INT. VAN

PAUL
Joe, please, USNDSC won't listen to me.
They know you. You've got to call them
and convince them. I..

INT. HARRIS' LIVING ROOM

HARRIS
(straining to hear again)
Convince what?

One of the men (late 30s) Harris had been talking to walks up and claps him on the shoulder.

HARRIS' FRIEND
(more drunk than Harris)
Joe, Brian's tellin' about the time he
and Gates....

He focuses his eyes with difficulty on the receiver in Harris' hand.

HARRIS' FRIEND
Whozat?

HARRIS
(turning to his friend)
Neycart....World's gonna end....Details
at ten....

Harris' friend shakes his head.

He grabs the receiver from Harris and holds it in front of his own face.

HARRIS' FRIEND
(loudly at the phone)
C'mon man, you're late to the party!

He tries to put the phone back on it's cradle, misses, then succeeds.

He puts his arm around Harris' shoulders.

HARRIS' FRIEND
You gotta hear this story.
(shouting across the room)
Joe's comin' Brian! Hold up!

They walk away from the phone, Harris shaking his head sadly before taking a big gulp from his glass.

INT. VAN

SYDNE
(to Paul)
What's happening?

A shot hits the roof of the van.

PAUL
He hung up.

Jonah sees a big electronic road sign on their right flashing the message "Queens Midtown Tunnel Delay - 30 minutes".

He points to it.

JONAH
Look.

Paul and Sydney see it.

PAUL
We'll have to take the bridge.

JONAH
No choice.

Jonah takes the exit ramp and races down it.

EXT. INTERSECTION

The light at the intersection turns green as the van speeds under it, turning onto Van Dam Street, the tires screeching.

EXT. VAN DAM STREET

The van's horn blasts as the van tears by a MOTORCYCLIST (mid 30s), who swerves almost out of control into a gas station driveway.

The next light stays green as the van speeds underneath.

So does the third.

Over the next light, an elevated subway train moves slowly above the street.

The light turns yellow as the van dashes under it and curves under the tracks onto Queens Boulevard.

EXT. QUEENS BOULEVARD

The subway tracks form a roof over the street.

A YOUNG MAN (mid 20s) in a leather jacket and torn jeans is shuffling along the sidewalk.

He tosses his empty beer can at the van as it races past.

The can falls short and clatters into the gutter.

INT.VAN

The road edges out from under the subway tracks and the bridge looms into view.

The traffic is getting heavier.

Jonah looks ahead frowning.

JONAH
What's this? Maybe an accident.

INT. HELICOPTER

The pilot points ahead at traffic stopped on the bridge and backed up on the entrance ramp.

Tom nods he sees it.

INT. VAN

PAUL
(to Jonah)
You said there was a valve that could flood that ditch?

JONAH
So?

PAUL
(to Sydnie)
Remember how I locked that door open?
(to Jonah)
I locked the door we came out of open.
If we get out now you can go back and flood them out. If we
(MORE)

PAUL (cont'd)
(Paul points to Sydnie and
himself)
don't make it, you might.

Paul looks at his watch. It's 11:31.

PAUL
They can't follow all of us. We'll get a
cab on the other side.

INT. HELICOPTER

Tom and the pilot see the van slowing.

It disappears under an overpass.

INT. VAN

Jonah brings the van to a stop.

JONAH
If I'm gonna do that, you've gotta get
out now or I'll never get outta here.

PAUL
(opening his door)
We're out.

Sydnie looks at Jonah.

SYDNIE
Jonah....

JONAH
I know. We'll make it. Hurry!

Paul helps Sydnie out and they run toward the bridge between
stopping cars.

Jonah notices the cell phone on the seat, honks at them but
his horn is lost amid many others.

Paul and Sydnie don't look back.

He leans on the horn, forces his way to the far right lane
and takes the off ramp.

MAN (O.S.)
 (to Paul and Sydney)
 Who you hidin' from?

Paul and Sydney, still crouched beside the car, turn to look for whoever spoke, see no one, then look up and see a WELDER (early 40s) in a metal gondola looking down at them.

He's holding a welding torch, wearing a welding visor raised to reveal his face.

Paul points over the hood of the car at the helicopter.

DRIVER
 (to himself)
 It's a fuckin' bullet hole!
 (to Paul and Sydney)
 You're gonna pay, goddammit!

PAUL	SYDNIIE
(turning back toward the driver)	Look out!
Get down!	

DRIVER
 For what?

A bullet slams loudly into the car's hood.

The driver turns around quickly, sees the helicopter and ducks.

DRIVER
 Motherfucker!

WELDER
 Up here!

Paul and Sydney scramble up onto the raised median and into the gondola, slamming the door shut and crouching down with the welder.

INT. GONDOLA

Paul sees the gondola controls.

PAUL
 We've gotta get across.

The welder points in the helicopter's direction.

WELDER

Who are they?

A bullet clangs into the gondola's side.

Paul thinks to himself a moment.

PAUL

They're terrorists. They've planted a bomb in Times Square. It's going off at midnight. We know where it is.

WELDER

You tell the police?

SYDNIE

We just found out.

The welder reaches up to the gondola controls, opens the throttle, and the gondola starts moving along its track above the honking cars.

EXT. BRIDGE

DRIVER

(still crouching, shouting at the gondola)

What's the name of your insurance company!

INT. GONDOLA

Paul looks over the upper edge of the gondola and sees the helicopter pacing them.

He moves back down.

He touches his coat pocket, feels the disk there, and heaves a sigh.

WELDER

You sure it's true?

PAUL

It's true.

Paul thinks a moment.

PAUL

You got a truck?

The welder points ahead of them.

WELDER
At the end of the bridge.

SYDNE
Can you drive us to Times Square?

WELDER
Sure.

INT. HARBOR PATROL (HP) HELICOPTER

The HP HELICOPTER PILOT (early 40s) and the PATROLMAN (mid 30s) in the passenger seat are looking down through the bottom of the bubble windshield at the CompCon helicopter hovering 200 feet below them beside the bridge.

The HP pilot touches his throat microphone.

HP PILOT
Dispatch, this is Harbor 5. We've got an unidentified by the bridge not responding. Investigating.

He turns to the patrolman as he takes the helicopter down.

HP PILOT
Those damn news copters and their traffic jam scoops.

As they near the CompCon helicopter the HP pilot hits a switch.

HP PILOT
(filtered, through the external megaphone)
You're too near the bridge!
Pull away!

INT. COMPCON HELICOPTER

The pilot and Tom look around for the source of the voice and see the HP helicopter hovering beside them.

Tom motions the pilot to lean back, aims across the pilot's chest, and shoots into the HP helicopter.

INT. HP HELICOPTER

The shot ricochets inside the HP helicopter's cabin and hits a box of flares.

One of them ignites and they start firing inside the cabin, blazing up the inside of the bubble windshield one right after another.

INT. COMPCON HELICOPTER

Tom and the pilot see the HP pilot and the patrolman engulfed in the white cloud filling the HP helicopter's cabin as the flares continue firing inside.

The HP helicopter starts to lose altitude.

Tom motions toward the gondola.

EXT. BRIDGE

The CompCon helicopter resumes moving alongside the bridge as the HP helicopter veers down towards one of the bridge's huge supporting pylons.

A few people are running to the side of the bridge. The first ones there lean over looking down at the HP helicopter.

It slams into the pylon with a deafening explosion and becomes a huge ball of flame.

INT. GONDOLA

PAUL

What the hell was that?

WELDER

Maybe your friends.

He looks straight up at the diminishing bridge structure.

WELDER

We're almost there.

EXT. BRIDGE

A huge tractor-trailer lies overturned blocking the end of both Manhattan-bound lanes of the bridge.

On the bridge side of the wreck a sedan is smashed into the side of a truck parked up on the curb.

INT. GONDOLA

The welder brings the gondola to a stop.

The three of them peer over the edge of the gondola's walls, then stand up cautiously, still scanning for the helicopter.

PAUL
I don't see 'em.

WELDER
Shit! My truck!

EXT. BRIDGE

Paul, Sydney and the welder climb down from the gondola to the roadway.

The welder hurries to his wrecked truck and inspects the damage.

WELDER
This ain't goin' anywhere.

Paul starts trotting away from the wreck toward moving traffic, Sydney following.

EXT. AVENUE

Paul and Sydney reach the avenue and start hailing cabs. Many pass by, none stopping.

EXT. BRIDGE

The helicopter rises from behind the bridge's superstructure.

EXT. AVENUE

Sydney looks over her shoulder and sees the helicopter.

She touches Paul's arm and points it out to him.

She looks at her watch.

SYDNE

We can't wait for a cab.

A horse whinnies.

Paul turns and sees a police horse tied up outside a deli across the avenue.

Through the deli window he sees the POLICEMAN (late 30s) inside, leaning on the counter drinking coffee and talking to the COUNTERMAN (mid 40s).

PAUL

We're not gonna.

Paul takes Sydnie's hand and leads her, stopping and starting, through the traffic and across the avenue.

They reach the horse.

Paul glances in the deli door and sees the policeman still at the counter.

He pats the horse's neck reassuringly, hauls himself up and reaches down to help Sydnie mount.

She hesitates a second.

The counterman points over the policeman's shoulder and the policeman turns around.

POLICEMAN

(walking towards door)

Hey!

Sydnie sees the policeman coming.

She turns and reaches for Paul's hand.

He helps her up and they gallop down the avenue.

The policeman reaches the door and pushes his way through a gang of New Year's celebrators.

He looks down the avenue after Paul and Sydnie and raises his walkie-talkie to his mouth.

EXT. BUSY STREET

Paul and Sydnie gallop around a corner and head down the street between rows of slow-moving cars.

Paul is forced by traffic to ride up on a section of sidewalk disrupting a three-card-monte game.

The table is knocked over.

The CON-MAN CARD DEALER (mid 20s) stumbles into a large table full of New Year's Eve horns, hats, and novelties.

He grabs the edge of it and brings it crashing down on him.

Paul sees the street ahead is blocked off with barricades routing traffic around some construction.

He turns down an avenue almost knocking over an OLD MAN (early 60s) leaning on a cane.

The old man shakes his fist after them.

OLD MAN

Fuck you fucking fucking fucks!

Paul cuts through the middle of a block through the tubular Plexiglas tunnel leading under a waterfall into the McGraw-Hill garden.

He gallops out of the garden onto 48th Street.

INT. HELICOPTER

Tom is watching Paul and Sydnie through binoculars.

He sees them galloping down 48th Street.

The pilot swerves the helicopter to avoid a water tower.

PILOT

We can't go any lower.

TOM

We've got to see where they're going.

EXT. STREET

Paul and Sydnie turn onto 45th Street, galloping towards Times Square at the end.

A FOOT POLICEMAN (late 30s) on the sidewalk midway down the block sees them.

He steps into the street blowing his whistle and waving his arms.

Paul gallops past him and around the corner.

They see One Times Square three blocks away, across the densely-packed, curb-to-curb sea of New Year's Eve revelers.

The red ball, poised to drop at midnight atop the building, shines in spotlight beams.

The SONY Jumbotron is flashing New Year's Eve messages.

Blue police barricades rim the edges of the huge crowd.

News vans with camera crews atop them form islands in the crowd.

The expressions on Paul and Sydnie's faces drop.

Paul heads the horse into a parking garage.

INT. GARAGE

The ATTENDANT (early 30s) comes walking up slowly from the center of the garage with a surprised look on his face.

Paul and Sydnie dismount as he reaches them.

ATTENDANT

What....

Paul hands the attendant the horse's reigns, automatically taking the parking ticket stub from the attendant's hand.

Paul and Sydnie hurry out the door they rode in.

EXT. STREET

Paul and Sydnie reach a blue police barrier.

They slip through and start fighting their way through the crowd.

The policeman they rode past rounds the corner and stops. He looks around but doesn't see them.

He sees the parking garage and heads toward it.

INT. HELICOPTER

Tom is watching Paul and Sydnie through the binoculars.

He sees them fighting their way through the crowd.

He sweeps the binoculars' field of view to the roof of the old three-story Bond's building.

He sees a space behind the huge lighted billboards facing Times Square that's just big enough for a helicopter to land in.

Tom lowers the binoculars and points to the rooftop.

TOM

There.

PILOT

We'll never make it.

TOM

It's got to be around here.

The pilot looks at his watch.

It's nineteen minutes to midnight.

He heads the helicopter down.

EXT. CROWD

Paul is slightly ahead of Sydnie as they both push between people towards the building.

A ROWDY MAN (mid 20s) grabs Sydnie's arm as she passes him.

ROWDY MAN

Hey baby, let's celebrate!

Sydnie tries to shake his hand off.

SYDNIE

Stop it!

Paul turns around and sees the rowdy man holding her.

Paul pushes back through the crowd and shoves the rowdy man away from her.

The rowdy man loses his balance and falls against the people behind him.

They keep him from falling to the ground while they laugh at him.

ANOTHER MAN IN THE CROWD

(to Paul)

You tell him, dude!

EXT. OLD BOND'S BUILDING ROOF

As the helicopter lands on the roof, one wheel comes down atop a dark, low protrusion, causing the helicopter to tilt.

The rotor barely grazes the metal support structure of a huge billboard, making a sharp metallic sound and sending out a shower of sparks.

Tom and the pilot get out and scan the roof looking for a way down.

Tom sees top of a fire escape ladder and points it out to the pilot.

They head for it.

They reach the ladder and look over the edge of the roof.

The alley below exits on 44th Street only fifty feet from the tumultuous crowd on the other side of the police barriers.

They begin climbing down.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE LADDER

PILOT

We'll never find 'em.

TOM

Let's get down there first.

The pilot's foot slips, he recovers and keeps climbing down.

EXT. STREET

They get to the bottom and run down the alley, emerging on 44th Street.

They run up to the police barriers and start scanning the crowd intently.

Tom turns and sees two pay phones a short distance away.

A MAN (late 20s) wearing a hat is using one.

TOM
Keep looking. I'll call Mr. Dunn.

Tom runs toward the phones.

The pilot looks after him and sees the phones, then turns back to the crowd.

He grabs a lamppost and steps up on its base raising himself a bit.

He continues scanning the crowd.

EXT. PAY PHONES

Tom reaches the phones.

He lifts the receiver of the open phone and moves it towards his ear, then notices the loose, dangling, ragged end of the cord. It's been yanked out.

He frowns in exasperation.

He steps into the man using the other phone.

The man turns around with an aggravated expression on his face.

Tom, looking right in his eyes, reaches under the man's arm and up his back and touches the base of his skull with his gun barrel.

A loud firework explodes nearby as Tom fires.

A tiny trickle of blood runs out from under the man's hat as Tom eases him down into a sitting position against the wall beside the phones.

He stands, lifting the receiver, hangs up with his finger, drops in a quarter and dials.

EXT. CROWD

Paul and Sydnie are about to cross 44th Street struggling deep in the crowd.

EXT. STREET

The pilot, scanning the crowd, turns to look at Tom on the phone, checks his watch, looks back at Tom and misses his best chance to spot Paul and Sydnie as they push by about fifty feet from him.

INT. COMPCON COMPUTER BUNKER

There is a rifle placed at every other high window, aimed out.

Dunn is sitting on the floor against the wall under the split-Earth mural.

The painted sword tip is a few inches above and to the right of his head

He's staring up at the monitor the countdown is proceeding on.

He has a worried expression on his face

His left hand rests limply on an open Bible on the floor beside him.

He's holding a handgun loosely in his right hand, tapping the side of it absentmindedly on the floor in time with the seconds ticking down on the screen.

The phone on the computer desk rings.

He jumps up and picks up the receiver.

EXT. PAY PHONES

TOM
(speaking loudly above the
crowd noise)
Mr. Dunn?

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

DUNN
Did you stop them?

EXT. PAY PHONES

TOM
We couldn't yet. We followed them to
Times Square. They came to Times Square.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

Dunn looks at the wall clock.

It's 15 minutes to midnight.

Dunn's face shows he's thinking.

DUNN'S MIND'S EYE

Dunn sees Times Square, sees One Times Square, then remembers
and sees the new antenna he helped install on the building's
roof.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

Dunn has an extremely worried look on his face.

EXT. PAY PHONES

TOM
Mr. Dunn....

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

DUNN
They're going to MilTech. In the big
white building with the news running
around it.

EXT. PAY PHONES

Tom turns and sees it.

TOM
Got it. Where in it?

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

DUNN
Twelfth floor. Stop them for God, for our
future, for the world.

EXT. PAY PHONES

TOM
Maranatha.

Tom hangs up and runs back to the pilot.

He points to the building as he passes him, and slips through
the police barriers into the crowd.

The pilot follows Tom through the barriers.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

Dunn lifts his hand from the receiver he's just placed back
in its cradle and raises his hands, palms apart.

DUNN
God, smite our enemies, the evil of the
world. Enable us, your true servants, to
complete our glorious plan. Show me the
way. Show me the way.

EXT. CROWD

Paul and Sydnie reach the police barriers next to One Times
Square.

They slip through the barriers as two POLICEMEN (both mid
30s) are taking away a handcuffed YOUNG MAN (mid 20s).

They run up to the glass doors which have a big chain looped
through the handles secured with a large padlock.

They see security guard Edwards inside at the security desk
watching the festivities outside on a small TV.

Paul presses the intercom button.

Edwards looks up, sees them, smiles at them with recognition, and presses his intercom button.

EDWARDS
What's up?

PAUL
We need to get in our offices.

Edwards points down a hall.

Paul and Sydnie turn and run down the sidewalk toward the back of the building.

EXT. 42ND STREET - BACK OF THE BUILDING

Paul and Sydnie round the corner and run to a metal door with a small window of wired-embedded glass in it.

Edwards face appears in the window.

He unlocks the door.

Paul and Sydnie rush in.

INT. HALL

He relocks the door.

EDWARDS
What's the deal?

PAUL
We've gotta get to our floor. What's the fastest way?

EDWARDS
(pointing to an elevator)
Freight elevator, but I gotta unlock it first.
(pointing with his head to the passenger elevators)
They're locked too.

Edwards pulls out a key on a long chain.

EDWARDS
How come --

A wall phone rings.

EDWARDS

Wait a second.

Edwards punches a button on the phone and picks up the receiver.

Paul raises his hand to grab the key from Edwards.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

Dunn is seated at the computer desk holding the phone to his ear.

DUNN

Is this the security guard at One Times Square?

INT. HALL

EDWARDS

Yes.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

DUNN

This is Scott Dunn. A man and a woman may try to get into MilTech tonight. You musn't let them in. They're industrial spies.

INT. HALL

Edwards gets a look of confusion on his face.

EDWARDS

(to Paul and Sydnie, half-joking)
Are you guys spies?

The pilot's face appears in the door's window.

Sydnie turns and sees it.

A gun appears in the window.

Sydnie pushes Paul out of the line of fire as the gun shoots through the glass.

Paul grabs the key out of Edwards' hand.

He unlocks the freight elevator's buttons, presses "UP", the door opens and they hurry in.

Edwards turns to the door and draws his gun, still holding the phone at his side.

A bullet blasts through the door under the knob.

The pilot and Tom push the door open and rush in.

The pilot sees Edwards' drawn gun and fires as Edwards shoots back.

Both of them fall, Edwards dropping the phone.

It bangs against the wall and hangs there.

The door to the street slowly closes automatically.

Tom sees the indicators above the freight elevator door showing it on the way up.

He sees the entrance to the stairway, looks back at the elevator indicators, then looks at his watch.

EXT. STREET BESIDE COMPCON'S PARKING LOT

Jonah coasts the van to a stop behind some large bushes and checks his watch.

It's 11:50.

He looks worried.

He twists around, locates the chain cutters on the van floor and picks them up.

He carefully opens his door, steps to the ground and begins closing the door, then stops and looks like he's thought of something.

He reopens the door a bit, leans in, locates the cell phone on the passenger seat, picks it up and slips it in his coat pocket.

He leans back out and gently pushes the van door almost closed.

He hurries to the metal bridge.

As he starts across it, he turns his head and sees horizontal slits of light coming from several low-to-the-ground windows about a hundred and fifty feet away.

Rifle barrels are sticking out of every other window.

He makes an amazed, confused expression.

He reaches the chained valve control wheel.

There's a hedge hiding both him and the wheel from the distant low windows.

Jonah squats to begin cutting the chains and the cell phone drops out of his pocket onto the concrete with a clatter.

He grimaces and slides the phone to one side with his foot.

He looks through the hedge at the windows.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

Dunn, still sitting by the phone he called Edwards from, holding the receiver in his hand, with a dazed expression on his face, becomes alert and cocks his head.

He gets up and goes to a window.

He slides the rifle to one side and peers into the darkness.

Seeing nothing unusual, he begins turning away.

A faint metallic clink sound from outside gets his attention.

He stops in his tracks.

INT. MILTECH OFFICES

The freight elevator doors open and Paul and Sydnie hurry out.

Paul holds the doors open while Sydnie slides a chair between them so they can't close.

INT. GROUND FLOOR HALL

Tom looks up at the indicator showing the elevator stopped on the twelfth floor.

He punches the UP button forcefully several times.

INT. MILTECH OFFICES

Leaving the doors opening and closing on the chair, Paul and Sydnie hurry down the hall.

INT. SYDNIE'S OFFICE

Sydnie rushes in, goes to a desk against the wall and picks up a briefcase-sized black case. She loops the strap over her shoulder, picks up another small piece of electronic equipment, opens a drawer in the desk and takes out some test leads.

She picks up a cell phone, then hurries out.

INT. MILTECH OFFICES HALL

Sydnie emerges from her office and sees Paul running towards her down the hall carrying his laptop.

PAUL

Where?

She points down another hall.

SYDNIE

Out there! There's no inside connection yet!

She runs down the hall she pointed down, Paul following.

EXT. TWELFTH FLOOR ROOF OF ONE TIMES SQUARE

A door flies open and Sydnie and Paul rush onto the roof into the tremendous cacophony of the giant noisy crowd below, fireworks, New Year's Eve noisemakers, and helicopters.

The door bangs against the outside wall and swings back, almost reclosing, leaving only a six-inch gap.

INT. GROUND FLOOR HALL

Tom has gone back to where Edwards fell. He snatches Edwards' key ring off his belt.

EXT. TWELFTH FLOOR ROOF

Sydney runs ahead of Paul to the front of the roof where it narrows behind the huge CUP NOODLES sign high above the crowd.

Wisps of steam are rising from regularly spaced openings in a pipe running behind the top of the huge cup.

There are three small twelve-inch dish antennas clamped a few feet away from the sign, aimed in different directions.

Sydney sets the cell phone down near her on the roof.

She clicks open an untarnished metal junction box near the antennas and plugs in a small control unit.

The small LCD screen on the control unit illuminates.

She points Paul to a spot near the back of the CUP NOODLES sign.

Paul sits on a roof vent and puts the laptop on another low vent in front of him.

He opens the computer and turns it on.

Sydney pushes a switch on the control unit and the LCD screen displays a compass rose.

She turns a knob and an indicator on the compass moves to a southwest position and starts blinking.

EXT. TWENTY-FOURTH FLOOR ROOF OF ONE TIMES SQUARE

A MAN (late 30s) is standing on a raised platform beside the building's flagpole ready to lower the illuminated red ball at midnight.

Thirty feet behind him, MilTech's new nine-foot wide black dish antenna begins to turn slowly on its base towards the southwest.

EXT. TWELFTH FLOOR ROOF

Sydney pulls a small black device from her case, peels the protective covering off its sticky patch and sticks it to the back of the laptop.

She plugs a cable dangling from the device into the modem jack at the rear of the laptop.

Paul reaches in a coat pocket.

PAUL
What's that?

SYDNE
A radio modem. We just got it.

Paul digs deeper in the pocket.

He looks panicked.

He reaches in another pocket, then heaves a sigh of relief as he pulls out the disk they brought from CompCon.

He inserts it in the laptop, and begins working.

SYDNE
Here's the receiver.

She sets a piece of equipment on a vent beside her. It has a seven-inch LCD screen on it, and many switches and buttons.

He opens a window on his screen

PAUL
How far?

SYDNE
A thousand feet.

She opens a small door on its side, pulls out a cord, opens a junction box next to the three small antennas and plugs the cord into a jack inside.

She clicks a switch and the seven-inch screen illuminates.

She punches a few buttons, looks frustrated, then punches the same buttons again.

SYDNE
(to herself)
Unterminated.

She hurries to a six-foot tall metal all-weather cabinet about 35 feet away from Paul, standing to the left of the door she and Paul ran out of.

She pulls out her key ring, finds a key, and unlocks the cabinet. It's filled with hundreds of small wires, terminal strips, and switches.

Paul sees where she's gone, and continues working.

She peers into the cabinet at the tangle of wires, squinting in the glare of a light on the wall next to the door, then begins moving them carefully apart in different places, looking at the connections behind them.

EXT. COMPCON COMPLEX - TUNNEL EXIT IN DITCH BESIDE PARKING LOT

Dunn, holding a rifle, skulks out of the depths of the tunnel Paul and Sydnie were chased out of earlier.

He stops while still inside.

He peers out while keeping in shadow.

He hears a faint clink and turns his head trying to get a fix on where the sounds are coming from.

He zeroes in on the hedge across the metal bridge by the parking lot.

He starts creeping along the ditch wall towards the sounds.

He quietly clicks the gun's safety off.

EXT. TWELFTH FLOOR ROOF OF ONE TIMES SQUARE

Paul presses a key and a window on his screen fills with line after line of code.

He scrolls the window and locates a particular line, selects it and copies it.

He moves the cursor to the top of the screen and selects a menu item.

A small dialogue box opens, he pastes the copied line into the box and clicks "OK".

The dialogue box disappears and a new window opens and fills with text.

At the metal cabinet, Sydnie unplugs a small wire and plugs it into an adjacent socket amidst the tangled mass of wires.

SYDNE
(yelling above the noise)
What's the screen say?

PAUL
(yelling and typing)
What?

SYDNE
(yelling)
On the receiver! What's it say?

Paul looks from his computer's screen to the receiver's.

PAUL
(yelling)
Unterminated!

SYDNE
(to herself)
God.

Sydney unplugs the wire she just moved, plugs it back into its original socket, unplugs another one and plugs in into the just-vacated socket.

SYDNE
(yelling)
What about now?

Paul looks from his computer's screen to the receiver's again.

PAUL
(yelling)
Nothing. It's blank...Wait...Input signal!

SYDNE
(yelling)
Send it now!

PAUL
(yelling and typing)
Almost ready!

Paul is keying in the last few commands.

Through the space between the metal cabinet and the wall, in the six-inch gap between the almost closed door and its frame, Sydney sees a hand grab the inside doorknob.

Tom opens the door and steps out, squinting in the glare of the bright security light above the door.

His gun is partially raised.

He searches for a sign of Paul and Sydnie.

Sydnie is hidden from his view by the metal cabinet.

She looks down and sees a three-foot long board leaning against the wall beside her.

She quietly picks it up and raises it slowly, getting ready to hit him through the gap between the cabinet and the wall.

Tom sees Paul sitting near the end of the roof working at the laptop.

He takes aim.

Paul sees the instruction "Press Enter To Transmit" appear on his screen.

Tom is about to pull the trigger.

Paul reaches for the "Enter" key.

 SYDNI
 (whacking Tom on the head)
 Paul! Look out!

The gun fires as Paul turns quickly towards her.

The bullet misses Paul and hits the laptop, knocking it over the steam pipe and onto the top edge of the CUP NOODLES sign.

It teeters precariously.

Its screen still shows "Press Enter To Transmit".

Paul sees Tom slump to the roof and Sydnie standing with the board in her hand.

 PAUL
 (yelling)
 You okay?

 SYDNI
 (yelling)
 Okay!

Sydney closes the roof door and jams the board under the doorknob, kicking the bottom of the board in towards the door to secure it.

She runs to Paul.

Paul turns back to where the laptop was.

He sees it's gone.

He glances around the roof looking for it.

He sees the illuminated laptop screen through the steam rising from the pipe.

He goes to the edge of the roof and places one hand on the pipe for support, grimacing at the heat against his palm.

Sydney puts her arms around his waist as he leans out, extending his arm.

Just as he's about to grab it, it falls over the front side of the sign.

EXT. HUGE ELECTRONIC SIGNS RUNNING DOWN FRONT OF BUILDING

The slowly rotating laptop passes in front of the CUP NOODLES sign.

It passes in front of the huge Budweiser bottle.

It passes in front of an ANCHORMAN'S (mid 40s) enormous face on the giant Jumbotron screen.

It reaches the zipper, the belt-like sign that encircles the building announcing the latest headlines on its never-ending scrolling display.

It pillows into the huge white champagne spray-shaped balloon extending from the top of the immense bottle and begins sliding down the side of it.

EXT. TV NEWS CAMERA SCAFFOLD ADJACENT TO BUILDING

A TEENAGE BOY (mid teens) has climbed up on a lower section of the scaffold. He's about two stories above the street and out of view of the camera operator on the platform above him.

The scaffold is right next to the giant bottle.

The teenager opens his arms as if to embrace the neck of the bottle and drink from it.

Some people in the crowd below laugh at his joke.

He sees the laptop sliding towards him on the balloon.

He stands up, grabbing the scaffold for support, leans out and catches the computer just before it slides off the balloon.

He restabilizes himself on his perch under the camera platform.

He opens the laptop all the way.

"Press Enter To Transmit" is still on the screen.

He looks up at the top of the building with a confused expression.

EXT. TWELFTH FLOOR ROOF

Paul and Sydnie are leaning over the edge of the roof beside the CUP NOODLES sign scanning the crowd below. Both have extremely anxious expressions on their faces.

Sydnie looks up slowly at the sky with a look of worried expectancy.

EXT. TV NEWS CAMERA SCAFFOLD

The teenager looks back the laptop screen.

He looks left, then right as if he's worried he might be in trouble.

He hunches his shoulders with a "why not?" gesture and presses the "Enter" key.

EXT. TWELFTH FLOOR ROOF

Paul and Sydnie are staring with dazed expressions at the huge noisy crowd below.

Sydnie turns to Paul.

Paul looks back at her.

The red ball begins to descend the flagpole high above them on One Times Square's upper roof.

The crowd is counting down the last seconds of the year in unison out loud, their voices filling Times Square.

An icon labeled "transmitting" flashes on the LCD screen of the radio modem receiver but neither Paul nor Sydnie notice.

The radio modem receiver beeps twice.

PAUL
What's that?

Sydnie sees an icon flashing on the radio modem receiver screen and hurries over to it.

"Signal acknowledged. Launch sequence aborted." scrolls onto the screen.

SYDNIE
It got through.

Paul looks at the edge of the roof.

PAUL
(almost disbelieving what's
happened)
Someone must've sent it. Somehow....

Sydnie looks where Paul is looking, then quickly switches off the radio receiver modem.

The screen goes dark.

Paul and Sydnie take deep breaths and exhale as the red ball reaches the bottom of the flagpole.

The crowd below erupts in a cacophonous New Year's Eve celebration of shouting, singing, and horn-blowing.

Fireworks start exploding overhead.

Sydnie glances down and sees the cell phone laying on the vent.

SYDNIE
Jonah.

EXT. COMPCON COMPLEX - DITCH BESIDE PARKING LOT

Dunn is standing in the ditch directly in front of the sluice gate aiming his rifle at Jonah, who's standing by the valve control wheel holding his hands up.

The cell phone Jonah dropped and shoved aside earlier begins beeping.

Dunn is distracted by the beeping and looks for its source.

Jonah drops behind the hedge, grabbing and turning the valve control wheel on his way down, snapping the last partially-cut-through chain link.

A torrent of water rushes out of the sluice gate into the ditch, knocking Dunn off balance.

He tries to regain his footing but is washed back towards the tunnel opening flailing his arms, still holding his rifle in one hand.

INT. TUNNEL

Dunn stumbles backward into the tunnel opening, waist-deep in the rushing flood.

He sees the door to the computer bunker has been forced open by the water.

DUNN
Oh my God!

Dunn drops the rifle.

He manages to grab the edge of the doorway and hauls himself toward the opening against the flow.

He makes it into the current rushing in the door and is swept inside.

INT. COMPUTER BUNKER

Dunn gets to his feet and starts trying to push the door closed against the flood.

The water knocks over one of the computer tables and begins shorting out the bunker's electrical systems.

The sparking end of a cable falls into one of the open munitions crates.

EXT. ROOF OF COMPUTER BUNKER

The low roof of the bunker explodes upward with a huge blast of sound and fire.

Smaller explosions follow as dark, billowing smoke rises into the night air.

EXT. VALVE CONTROL WHEEL BESIDE PARKING LOT

Jonah is holding the cell phone to his ear.

JONAH
(into the phone)
It's not only flooded, it's exploding.
(pause)
I'm okay. What about you?

Jonah looks relieved at the answer.

JONAH
I'm gonna wait for the police.
(in a loving voice)
See you soon.

EXT. TWELFTH FLOOR ROOF OF ONE TIMES SQUARE

SYDNIE
(into the cell phone)
Soon.

Sydnie switches the phone off and looks at Paul.

SYDNIE
Well, you finally got someone to start believing you.

Paul harrumphs, then seems to realize something.

He looks at her and smiles.

PAUL
Sydnie, I think --

SYDNIE
Way too much.

Paul pauses a few seconds.

PAUL

No...

He looks deeply into her eyes.

PAUL

...not enough.

The doorknob on the roof door jiggles.

Something slams into the other side of the door.

Paul holds Sydney close as they look at the door.

Something slams into the door again.

The board Sydney jammed under the doorknob gives way.

A POLICEMAN (early 40s) pushes the door open, gun drawn, and squints in the security light's glare.

He sees Paul and Sydney at the far end of the roof.

He glances down at the unconscious Tom near his feet.

He sees Tom's gun lying near Tom's open hand.

He lowers his own gun.

POLICEMAN

(loudly, to Paul and Sydney)

You two okay?

Paul and Sydney look relieved and nod, then, still embracing, look back at each other.

POLICEMAN

Guard downstairs called us. Shot in the leg but he's okay.

The policeman looks up at the fireworks exploding and raises his free hand to cover his ear.

POLICEMAN

It's like the end of the world up here.

Paul smiles into Sydney's eyes.

PAUL

Restart.

Sydney smiles back.

They kiss.

FADE OUT.