

FOR HONEY OR GOLD

FADE IN:

EXT. SPACE - DAY

Earth. The blue and green marble spins around.

JACK (V.O.)  
Somewhere around 2010, a biotech  
company made what's affectionately  
called the 'Terminator seed': One  
life cycle, no seeds, then the  
plant dies.

The green from the planet slowly fades to brown.

JACK (V.O.)  
See it wasn't so bad that they made  
a seed that only grew one plant.  
Immoral? Unethical? Maybe.

INT. VAULT - DAY

A stack of gold bars. WHITE GLOVED HANDS reach out and lift  
a bar from the stack and place it on a motorized hand CART.

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

The Earth grows larger as we zoom in from space to a spot in  
North America.

JACK (V.O.)  
What they didn't count on was the  
Terminator gene being alive and  
well in the plant's pollen.

INT. VAULT - CONTINUOUS

JACK, 38, wearing white coveralls, pushes the cart of gold  
down a hallway to a metal door with a small glass window.

A buzzer sounds and the door opens. He pushes the cart into  
the other room.

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

We zoom in on the United States toward northern Kentucky.

INT. AIRLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Jack puts a helmet on his head: A makeshift mask that covers his face and neck with two eyeholes sealed shut with clear packing tape.

With the cart of gold, Jack stands in the middle of a large room. Red lights flash. An alarm BUZZES. Two massive metal doors crack open. Daylight pours in. The alarm buzz mixes with the sound of buzzing from outside.

JACK (V.O.)

See...plants use pollen to make seeds. Seeds make more plants. It's not rocket surgery. And who spreads the pollen?

Bees pour into the room. The BUZZ is deafening.

Jack pushes the cart outside into the maelstrom of bees.

EXT. FORT KNOX - MORNING

He scans the bees that land on him.

He pushes the cart of gold down a path past unmanned guard towers, past opened security gates, all the way to a parking lot full of derelict cars covered in several inches of sand.

He pushes the cart over to a pile of gold bars lying in the dirt, then heaves each gold bar from the cart into the pile.

EXT. HIVE YARD - LATER

Jack stands among a grid of about 1000 beehives, the swarm of bees so thick the sun can barely penetrate.

He opens a hive, looks up and down the honeycomb frames, doesn't see what he's looking for and puts it back.

He closes the hive, pulls out a roll of red tape from his pocket, and puts an "X" on the top.

EXT. HIVE YARD - DUSK

100 of the hives have an "X" on it.

Exhausted, Jack calls it a day. He pulls a toolbox from under the cart and takes a thermos out. Inside the tool box lie two glass vials with rubber corks, and a GAS MASK.

He pulls the cork on the vials and scoots a few bees inside them then corks them.

He opens the thermos, slides the vials into a thick brown liquid, screws the cap on, then tapes it shut with some of the red tape.

He puts the thermos into the toolbox.

EXT. FORT KNOX - CONTINUOUS

Jack rolls the cart up to two massive steel doors and waves at a camera.

The alarm buzzes and the door cracks open.

He walks inside.

INT. AIRLOCK - CONTINUOUS

The doors close behind Jack. He pulls the gas mask from the toolbox and puts it on.

The massive steel doors close behind him.

Bees buzz around inside the airlock.

The alarm stops.

White gas billows from vents inside the airlock and the bees drop to the ground.

A WHOOSH sounds as the gas is sucked out of the room.

The metal door with a small glass window opens.

CARL, 33, a scrawny guy wearing faded worn Army fatigues with low ranking corporal stripes, stands before Jack.

CARL

I know you're not bringing more  
bees in here.

Jack ignores Carl and walks past him. Carl motions for two guards, also in Army fatigues, to stop Jack.

INT. FORT KNOX - CONTINUOUS

They step in front of Jack and halt him.

CARL  
(to guards)  
Check the box.

The guards yank the toolbox from Jack's hands.

JACK  
Really, Carl?

CARL  
Overseer Nicholls.

JACK  
Funny...you were Carl when we were kids and I kept the bullies from kicking your ass. And you were Carl when you joined the Army to 'Show those bullies who's a real man now'. And you were still Carl when you begged me to come here and help keep these crops alive, because you were never any good at deflowering anything.

The guards snicker. Carl glares at them. They stop.

Carl steps close to Jack and whispers.

CARL  
Look, Jack. You keep these plants growing, and that keeps us alive. Thanks. But what happens if one of your little bees goes all 'bouncy ball' across the grow room? Huh? What happens when some of that shit that killed all the plants gets in here? You're the gardener. Tell me.

JACK  
Botanist.

Carl raises an eyebrow at him.

JACK  
Some of us were smart enough to go to college to learn something useful, like botany.

CARL  
I see. I'm just a dumb soldier. Well if it weren't for me, you'd be out there dead with the rest of them.

JACK

Just because you were on the late shift here when the world fell apart, doesn't mean you run this place. Remember, without me growing these plants in here, you'd also be dead. You'd just be dead in here.

A guard pulls the thermos from the toolbox.

GUARD

What's in here?

JACK

Nothing. Don't open it.

The guard looks at Carl.

Carl nods.

The guard opens the thermos. A rancid smell punches him in the face.

JACK

Told you not to open it.

GUARD

What the fuck is that?

JACK

Ten parts urine, one part bleach, and a little excrement as a binder.

GUARD

What the hell for?

JACK

It irritates lesser forms of life.

The guard closes the lid and throws it back in the toolbox. Jack looks concerned when the thermos hits the toolbox.

Carl notices.

CARL

Look, Jack. The only reason I tolerate your bee fetish is because you grow my dinner. You really think you're going to find a queen bee in that swarm out there? You think you're going to save the planet by growing 'clean bees'? And you call me dumb?

Carl picks up the toolbox. Jack watches him.

CARL

Hey, you want to waste your life looking for a large needle in a pile of big needles, go right on ahead. But the second you risk my life by letting one contaminated bee in here, I'll throw your ass outside and you can spend the rest of your life with your precious bees.

Carl shoves the toolbox into Jack's chest.

CARL

Understood?

Carl waves to the guards to follow him and they walk away.

INT. LAB - NIGHT

Jack sits at a table in a small lab. He takes the thermos out of the toolbox, opens it, and slowly pours the liquid into a large beaker.

The glass vials slide out and clink on the bottom of the beaker. Jack reaches in and pulls them out and examines their contents. The bees inside buzz. A green residue glimmers on the bee's legs.

He sets the vials inside a sealed glovebox, a clear plastic box with rubber gloves attached to it, and closes the hatch.

Jack works all night, spraying chemicals on the bees, wiping them, cleansing them, trying different solutions on them. Each time he checks the bees for the residue, it's still there.

He works until he passes out, face smushed into the glovebox.

INT. LAB - MORNING

Jack wakes, the logo of the glove box imprinted on his cheek where he pressed it against the box.

He blinks his eyes. A bee crawls along the glass on the other side of the box. He focuses on the bee. No residue.

COUGH!

Jack whips his head around.

Carl stands there with his guards.

CARL  
No bees. Grab him.

The two guards lunge at Jack.

JACK  
Wait! They're clean. The bees...

CARL  
Throw him out!

INT. FORT KNOX - CONTINUOUS

The two guards drag Jack to the vault entrance.

JACK  
Dammit, Carl, I did it. They  
aren't infected anymore. We don't  
have to live in here anymore.

The two guards pause.

CARL  
I said throw him out!

The guards hesitate for a moment then drag Jack to the vault doors.

JACK  
Carl, I can fix this. Just give me  
one chance!

CARL  
Wait!

The guards stop.

CARL  
One chance?

JACK  
One.

Carl ponders the idea.

CARL  
Okay.

JACK  
Really?

CARL  
(to guards)  
Throw him out.

The guards throw Jack into the airlock and close the door behind him.

Jack yells through the glass window.

JACK  
Wait! You said you'd give me one more chance!

CARL  
I am. I'm giving you the rest of your life to find your queen. Find your queen and I'll let you back in. If you don't find her...

Carl shrugs his shoulders.

The outer door alarm buzzes.

CARL  
Better put your mask on.

INT. AIRLOCK - CONTINUOUS

The bees swarm into the room.

Jack struggles to put his mask on amid the swarm of bees.

CARL  
(through the window)  
Good luck.

INT. FORT KNOX - CONTINUOUS

Carl and the guards walk away from the window. Jack pounds on it.

JACK  
Wait! Carl! Stop! Stop!

EXT. HIVE YARD - LATER

Jack stands among the hives. He pulls the red tape out of his pocket and scans the hives. 100 down only 900 more to go.

He opens the next hive and scans.

## MONTAGE:

-Jack scans a hive. An "X" goes on top.

-"X"s appear on several of the boxes.

-The sun sets.

-Jack sleeps on the cold ground among the hives.

-The sun rises.

-"X"s appear on 200 of the boxes.

-The sun sets.

-Jack shivers in the darkness among the buzzing of the hives.

-The sun rises.

-Exhausted, Jack struggles to search the boxes. Thirst drives him mad.

-Only half of the hives have "X"s on them.

-Jack opens a hive to inspect.

## BACK TO SCENE

Jack looks over the frames. There's nothing there but worker bees. He sifts through them, hoping to see a queen. Nothing.

He collapses against the hive and cries.

He looks up at the sun setting low on the horizon and chokes on dust.

A thick swarm of bees within the maelstrom buzzes around Jack without him noticing.

The thick swarm gets closer and closer until he's engulfed in it. Almost all light is blotted out by the swarm.

Jack looks around at the swarm.

He reaches up to unzip his overalls.

There on his hand. A queen.