

Man X

By

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INT. RETIREMENT HOME - MORNING

The Sunny Days old age home. An old man, SCOTT MAJORS, near 70, sits watching cartoons on tv. He is a classy looking fellow with crystalline clear rimmed glasses on. He has on a painter's cap and fine robe over his designer pajamas. He has a carved wooden cane propped up against the arm of the very comfortable chair he's sitting in and he twirls the handle back and forth as he gazes, grinning, at the television set.

A young woman early 30's, enters the room, SARAH MAJORS. She has a very professional haircut and looks uptight. With her is a 12 year old boy, JACKSON MAJORS.

As they walk up behind the elder gentleman, the boy rolls his eyes.

The woman puts her hand on the man's shoulder and speaks gently to him.

SARAH

Dad?

The old man switches in his seat, looking up. He cranes his neck slightly.

MAJORS

Ohhh.. Hey darlin.

He's grinning.

She smiles reassuringly but not wholeheartedly.

SARAH

I brought someone with me. Be polite, say hello to your grandfather.

The boy gives a two second smile and resumes brooding silently.

MAJORS

Heyyy.. Jackson, how are you my boy?

The boy just looks bored.

SARAH

Dad. How are you? I'm sorry I
couldn't get away the last few
weeks, it's just that it's been,
you know, so busy at work.

The old man scoffs and waves her off.

MAJORS

You're here now, that's all that..

Suddenly a cell phone rings from inside Sarah's purse. She pulls it out, holding up one finger to her father as if to say, "hold on". She speaks quickly into the phone and turns away.

The old man and the boy eye each other in stone silence.

SARAH

Dad. I'm so sorry. I have to run
out for a little while. This damn
project... Could you...would you...
Can you watch Jackson for an hour
or so?

The old man grins.

MAJORS

Seems like it's more a matter of
him watching me.

He winks at the boy. No response.

SARAH

Thanks so much dad.

She turns to Jackson, brushing his hair from his face.

SARAH

Be nice, okay?

She rushes out the door.

SARAH

Thanks again dad!

They both watch her leave and then slowly turn their gaze on each other. The boy sits on a chair across from the old man. They sit in silence for a long moment. The old man twitches his cane around.

MAJORS

Got any gum?

The boy looks bored.

JACKSON

Nope.

The boy pulls out a comic book from his back pocket.

MAJORS

What's that ya got there? Comic book?

The boy raises his eyes, gives the old man a look, and lowers his eyes back to the comic.

MAJORS

I used to love comic books. Now I watch cartoons all day. Heh. A return to the center, I guess.

The boy shows no response.

A nurse walks up.

NURSE

Mr. Majors it's time for your shot.
Hi Jackson.

Jackson takes no notice.

MAJORS

He aint in a talking mood today.

The nurse rolls up the old man's sleeve. On his arm is a large and ornate tattoo that reads "MITCHELL". She gives him the shot and he rolls his sleeve back down. She walks away.

The boy's eyes are still staring at the old man's arm.

MAJORS

You like the tattoo eh?

JACKSON

What does it say?

Majors twirls the cane a little faster.

MAJORS

It says Mitchell.

JACKSON

What's a Mitchell?

MAJORS

It's not a what, it's a who. Josh Mitchell.

The boy watches the cane twist between the old man's fingers.

JACKSON

Why do you have his name on your arm?

MAJORS

So I don't forget.

The boy resumes staring at his comic.

The old man's cane appears, pushing the comic away from the boy's face.

MAJORS

If you like comic books, then you must like superheroes, right?

JACKSON

Sure.

The old man taps his cane on the ground and eases forward toward the boy.

MAJORS

(whispering)

Well... Josh Mitchell was a
superhero.

JACKSON

Bullshit.

The old man grinds the cane into the ground with both hands
and laughs, grinning from ear to ear.

MAJORS

Hah! I like your style kid. No,
Josh Mitchell was a real person.

The smile drops from his face.

MAJORS

He saved my life.
(whispering)
He tried to save us all.

He leans back in the chair, looking off.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

There is an interstellar battle going on. One small saucer
like ship is weaving in and out of dozens of others, being
pummelled with laser blasts. It is chaos. It banks hard left
and right, shooting back and destroying one or two or the
other ships, but taking heavy damage. The solitary ship is on
the verge of being destroyed.

MAJORS V/O

He was a goddamned hero.

INT. SAUCER

Inside the cockpit is a grizzled looking man with a beard and
wild brown hair, in his mid 30's. He has the look of angry
death in his eyes. He is wearing a blue jumpsuit and his name
is embroidered on it. MITCHELL.

INT. RETIREMENT HOME

The old man points a gnarled finger at the boy.

MAJORS

You ain't never met a man like Josh Mitchell, and you probably never will.

The boy looks bored.

JACKSON

Mmm.

The old man scratches his wrinkled chin, thinking.

MAJORS

That woulda been...mmm.. almost 40 years ago.

INT. NASA RECRUITMENT CENTER - DAY

A waiting room full of men and women. Some of them are sitting at attention, some of them look scared, many of them look nervous.

At the back of the room, two young men in their late 20's are sitting next to each other. One of them (MITCHELL) has short brown well trimmed hair, khaki pants, leather shoes, button up shirt and is nervously biting his nails, his shoulders shrunken down as he slouches in the seat. The other (MAJORS) has a crew cut, a gray pilots flight suit and is smiling and wearing sunglasses.

He is chewing gum and reading Time magazine.

He sets the magazine on the table. On the cover are a smiling man and woman wearing space suits and holding helmets. The headline reads: THE NEW ASTRONAUTS: WILL YOU BE ONE?

The inner door of the room opens. On it is the NASA symbol. Out steps a middle aged nurse with a clipboard.

NASA NURSE

Mackenzie?

She looks around the room. A young man steps up and leaves with her through the inner door.

Majors leans over, still chewing.

MAJORS

Waddya think they're gonna do to us?

He continues to chew, grinning.

Mitchell looks at him, nervously.

MITCHELL

I.. Uh..

Majors looks around the room in a manner that suggests he's making sure no one is listening.

MAJORS

(under his breath)

I hear they make you swim twenty five laps in the pool, wearing a space suit and sneakers.

He raises his eyebrows and shrugs.

Mitchell stares at him, petrified.

MAJORS

Where ya from?

MITCHELL

Iowa.

Majors grins.

MAJORS

No, I mean what division?

Mitchell shifts in his seat.

MITCHELL

Oh.. Uh.. Mission Planning and Analysis. Rendezvous and proximity operations trajectory designs. You?

MAJORS

Air Force.

The inner door opens and out steps the woman again.

NASA NURSE

Majors?

Majors stands and turns to Mitchell.

MAJORS

Good luck pal. Scott Majors.

He extends his hand.

MITCHELL

Oh.. Josh Mitchell.

They shake. Majors walks to the door. He turns to the nurse.

MAJORS

Hope yer ready for me darlin.

The door shuts.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM 1

Majors is standing in a room wearing only boxer shorts. One technician is drawing his blood. He is well built and strong. He is still chewing gum and smiling.

A team of three technicians are looking at a clipboard with his chart on it. They are smiling.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM 1

Mitchell stands wearing boxer shorts, also having his blood drawn. He looks meek and nervous. He is thin but in relative shape. He nervously scratches one foot with the other.

The team of technicians looking at his clipboard aren't smiling.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM 2

Majors is lying flat on a table getting an MRI. The machine scans over him.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM 2

Mitchell is getting his MRI. He keeps fidgeting.

The technician scowls and looks into the room at him.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM 3

Majors is grinning and wearing a smock. He holds up a cup of yellow liquid which the female technician takes from him, smiling.

INT. EXAMINATION ROOM 3

Mitchell hands his cup to the technician. She smiles and hands him back another, slightly larger, cup.

MITCHELL

More?

She shakes her head gently, "no", smiling.

INT. JET SET BAR AND GRILL

Majors walks through the lobby of a hotel. He sees a bar and grill and ventures in. As he makes his way to the bar he sees Mitchell sitting there, slouched, drink in hand.

He sidles up to the bar and bangs his fingers on the railing.

MAJORS

Waddya say Mitchell?

Mitchell turns and acknowledges him with a nod.

MITCHELL

Oh, hey Scott.

He resumes brooding over his drink.

The bartender approaches. Majors points at Mitchell's drink.

MAJORS

I'll have what he's having.

BARTENDER

You want a Shirley Temple too?

Majors grimaces.

MAJORS

Oh...uh..um yea, but make mine for grown ups.

He swivels around on the bar stool taking in the room. His eyes center on a couple of lovely ladies in the corner.

MAJORS

Now, waddya wanna bet they've never met any astronauts before?

Mitchell glances over and resumes brooding.

MITCHELL

They're regulars, I saw em trying to bang Sedarsky last week.

MAJORS

Ohh..right.. Where is Sedarsky, anyway?

MITCHELL

The others are upstairs doing laxative shots and watching the Right Stuff.

The bartender brings the drink. Majors pays him and takes a slug.

MAJORS

So, watsup gloomy gus? Why the long face?

Mitchell pushes his drink around in little circles.

MITCHELL

I don't know if I can hack this,
Scott.

MAJORS

You're still here.

He slides a napkin over to him and grabs some peanuts out of a bowl, putting them on the napkin.

MITCHELL

Yea, but for how long? Maybe it's just a waste of time. I could be doing something important. Two years is a long time to be away from my research.

MAJORS

Well, don't think of it like that man. Once you get through this circus, you'll be doing plenty of important research.

Majors tosses a peanut into the air, catching in his mouth. He looks over at the girls, who are giggling and watching him. He smiles.

MAJORS

Can I ask you something?

MITCHELL

Sure.

MAJORS

Why'd you get into this? I mean, why go through all of this, if you don't really want to?

MITCHELL

My father.

Majors downs his drink, and hails the bartender for another.

MAJORS

Your father wants you to become an astronaut?

MITCHELL

My *father* wanted to become an astronaut. My father wanted *me* to play soccer. My father wanted *me* to learn to play the saxophone...

MAJORS

Ahh.. The plot thickens.

Mitchell sips his drink.

MITCHELL

I was never adventurous. I like research, running tests, working with numbers. My father was a navy pilot. When I was a kid he always talked about trying out for the astronaut candidacy. Never did.

Mitchell steals a peanut from the napkin.

MITCHELL

So I got as close as I could. I figured working for NASA in the engineering department was almost as good as being up there.

He looks to the sky.

MITCHELL

When he died last year, I told myself.

(beat)

You can do this. For dad. And now that I'm here... I don't know if I can make it.

Majors claps him on the back.

MAJORS

You're gonna make it, my man. Trust
in Scotty Majors. He's never wrong.

He stands, pulling Mitchell by the elbow.

MAJORS

Know what the difference between a
blonde and a brunette is?

Mitchell looks confused.

MITCHELL

No.

MAJORS

About three feet.

Majors grabs him by the arm and leads him, sashaying over to
the table of girls.

INT. TESTING ROOM 1

Majors is hooked up to a bio kinematics chair. A team of
technicians are taking measurements of him and photographs.
His arm is being bent and twisted in strange positions.

INT. TESTING ROOM 1

Mitchell is hooked up to the kinematics chair. His eyes look
tense, frustrated, nervous. He is sweating and he keeps
looking over at the female technician. She shows no emotion,
just keeps jotting things down on his chart.

INT. TESTING ROOM 2

Majors has a gaggle of electrodes hooked up to him. He's
doing squat thrusts.

INT. TESTING ROOM 2

Mitchell does the same. His squat thrusts are not as rigid. He's constantly glancing over at the reactions of the technicians. They show no emotion.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Majors and Mitchell are playing chess. The board is laid out on an end table between two beds.

Mitchell yawns.

Majors is staring intently at the board, scratching his chin.

MAJORS

Maybe next time we can try a real game, like poker.

Mitchell smiles.

MITCHELL

Aww, you're doing great man.

He examines the board.

Majors moves a bishop.

Mitchell immediately moves his queen into a check position, but it's now vulnerable.

MAJORS

Hahaaa..

He quickly takes the queen with his bishop.

Mitchell quickly moves his bishop into Majors bishop's old spot.

MITCHELL

Checkmate.

Majors jaw drops.

MAJORS

I...uhh..what the..

MITCHELL

It's called a gambit, and you fell for it. Sometimes you have to sacrifice the best piece to get the whole pie.

Majors is still examining the board.

INT. TESTING ROOM 3

Majors is wearing a smock. A middle aged male technician comes in. He's smiling. He pulls on a rubber glove, snapping the rubber. As he picks up a colonoscope, Majors eyes lock onto it, following it as the technician steps towards him.

INT. TESTING ROOM 3

Mitchell is turned around, bent over the exam table. He is not smiling and his eyebrows are bunched up nervously. He is sweating.

The technicians writes something down on his chart.

TECHNICIAN

You can get dressed now.

The technician leaves the room, hanging the clipboard on the front of the door. As he exits, there is Majors, leaning against the wall outside the door.

As soon as he is out of sight, Majors grabs the clipboard and steps inside the room, closing the door behind him.

Mitchell looks surprised to see him.

MITCHELL

Scott?

Majors looks at the clipboard. Mitchell gets dressed.

MAJORS

Well, lets see here. Subject Josh Mitchell. Hmm... low blood pressure... Well, we can fix that.

He pulls the pencil out of the clipboard and erases Mitchell's blood pressure reading.

MITCHELL

What are you doing?

MAJORS

You look like a 120 over 80 man to me. No that's too obvious, lets say.. 110 over 80. Hmm this is interesting. I think that nurse likes you. She wrote "nervous". Well, we can't have that. Wait, what's another word for "nervous".

He mockingly thinks about it.

He erases it. He writes.

MAJORS

"Ex-cep-tional"

MAJORS

I think that's more accurate.

He winks at Mitchell. Mitchell smiles.

MAJORS

Now, let's go get somethin to eat.
I'm so hungry I could ride a horse.

Majors opens the door, looking to see if anyone is coming. He places the clipboard back on the door.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Mitchell is getting packed. He has a suitcase on the bed and folding his clothes and placing them in it. He stops to tie his tie.

There is a knock at the door. He answers. It's Majors.

MAJORS

I saw Sedarsky at the bar. That guy
really can't hold his liquor.

Mitchell resumes packing his bags.

MITCHELL

I reaaally fucked up the psych
tests today, man.

Majors shrugs.

MAJORS

Well, you never know how they read
these things.

INT. TESTING ROOM 4 - PSYCH

Mitchell sits in small, bare room at a table. Across from him
is a tall middle aged female evaluator wearing a lab coat and
holding a clipboard.

EVALUATOR

Do you have any phobias?

Mitchell looks ponderous.

MITCHELL

I..dd..uh..

He smiles sheepishly.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

MAJORS

And anyway, we've still got the
interviews tomorrow. You'll be
fine, man.

Mitchell sits on the edge of the bed.

MITCHELL

That's just it, man. I won't. I can pass all this cognitive thinking bullshit, but I'm terrible at speaking in front of people. When I was a kid, my mother asked me to say grace and I peed my pants.

Majors claps him on the shoulder.

MAJORS

Look buddy boy. You're just as good as any of these other assholes. Besides, you aced the technicals.

He looks thoughtful.

MAJORS

Okay, here's what you do. Just tell em that story you told me... about your dad and the whole "wanting to be an astronaut" thing. They'll eat it up.

He stands and heads toward the door.

MAJORS

After that session today, I need a steak and a beer. Care to join me?

Mitchell drops his head.

MITCHELL

Does the pope shit in the woods?

Majors grins.

INT. MAJORS APARTMENT

The apartment is nice, but unkempt. Photos on the walls, clothes tossed here and there on the floor.

The door opens. In walks Majors. His hair is slightly longer and he's sporting a mustache.

He's carrying the mail and looks through it.

NASA symbol.

He looks at the envelope for a long moment and sets it down on the table. He pauses and goes to the fridge, pulling out a beer.

He cracks it open and takes a long slug.

He sits down at the table, gingerly.

He takes the envelope in hand and tears off one end, sliding the contents out. As he unfolds it and skims the page, his eyes center on one phrase.

YOU HAVE BEEN CHOSEN.

He looks up at the ceiling, the small nooks and crannies of the stucco work sticking out like peaks and valleys on the moon.

INT. ORIENTATION ROOM

Majors walks into a room, carrying a duffel bag with 20 other people all milling around. There is a podium and an array of chairs.

One of the young men (SEDARSKY) catches eyes with him and smiles. The man walks over.

MAJORS

Heyyy, Sedarsky. How are you man?

Sedarsky is built. His handshake is stiff. His voice is strangely high.

SEDARSKY

Oh, you know. Staying above the weather. Waddya say?

Majors is looking around the room.

MAJORS

Right.. Right.. Say, where's the
uh..

His eyes lock onto someone sitting in one of the chairs. That someone is slightly hunched over wearing khaki pants and leather shoes.

SEDARSKY

Hey this is crazy right?

Majors grins.

MAJORS

I'll be right back okay man?

He pats Sedarsky on the back and walks towards the nail biter.

MAJORS

Now how did an asshole like you,
get invited to a party like this?

He grins.

Mitchell grins.

Majors sits beside him, patting him on the chest.

MAJORS

This is the easy part. I heard this
part of the process is a cakewalk.

He winks at Mitchell. He is chewing gum.

INT. SWIMMING POOL

Majors and Mitchell stand on the edge of a pool. They are both wearing bulky space suits, and sneakers. Majors looks excited. Mitchell is scowling. A whistle is blown.

MAJORS

Race ya.

They jump in.

They swim laps wearing the gear. Majors notices that Mitchell is struggling and slows down to match his pace.

INT. CLASS ROOM

Majors and Mitchell sit side by side writing notes in a notebook.

Majors looks over and jokingly steals a glance at what Mitchell is writing. Mitchell smiles and jokingly hides his work.

INT. POLYNESIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Majors has a date. He walks into the restaurant arm in arm with his date, a sexy, pencil thin brunette. They talk to the hostess for a second and spot Mitchell and Sedarsky at a table. They wave and go over.

Mitchell is with a blonde, one of the local girls that they hit on the first night here. Sedarsky is with the other.

Two busboys come over and pull a table together with theirs and set it quickly. The two sit down.

MAJORS

Gentlemen. Ladies. May I introduce
miss Daniella Martinique.

Mitchell looks happy.

MITCHELL

Scott, you remember April and
Valerie, right?

Majors nods. He winks slyly at Valerie when no one is looking.

MAJORS

Ladies.

MAJORS V/O

That was the happiest I ever saw
him. There.. With her.

They are all smiling.

INT. FLIGHT SIM TRAINING

Majors is wearing headgear and sitting in a small cubicle with a monitor in front of him. He is piloting a simulated shuttle through maneuvers. He is very skillful.

INT. FLIGHT SIM TRAINING

Mitchell is doing the same only not as skillfully. An instructor is standing next to him at all times looking tense.

INT. CLASS ROOM

Majors and Mitchell are sitting in the class room taking notes. Majors writes something on his notebook and holds it out for Mitchell to see.

R4 C3

Mitchell looks confused. Then he counts down four rows with his eyes and over three columns. One of the beautiful female cadets. She's looking right at Majors.

He grins.

INT. JET SET BAR AND GRILL

They are having dinner. This time Majors has the beautiful cadet on his arm. Mitchell has April, Sedarsky has Valerie.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Majors is pouring wine, the female cadet is quizzing him with flashcards.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Mitchell is tense, sitting on the edge of the bed. April is drinking a glass of wine and yelling at him.

INT. CLASS ROOM

Majors struts in, very confident. He sits down next to Mitchell, who looks like hell. Messed hair, he looks like he hasn't slept a wink.

MAJORS

You look like you haven't slept a
wink, pal.

Mitchell just gives him a look.

MAJORS

Well, cheer up, after these finals,
we're home free.

EXT. NASA FACILITY

Mitchell sits on a bench outside the main doors of the building. He is holding a piece of paper.

Majors comes out, also holding a piece of paper. He sits next to Mitchell.

MITCHELL

Six years?

Majors hangs his head.

MITCHELL

I mean, really? The backlog is six
years long to get into space. Of
course, that's for an engineer.
What'd you get mister pilot, sir?

MAJORS

It doesn't say anywhere on here how
long it's gonna take. You know
that.

Mitchell crumples his paper and tosses it at a trashcan. He misses.

MITCHELL

After that session today, I'm going to go get drunk. Care to join me?

Majors grins.

MAJORS

Pope shit in the woods?

MAJORS V/O

I didn't see him for another three years.

INT. SUNNY DAY REST HOME

Jackson sits, legs crossed, listening attentively.

JACKSON

Why not?

MAJORS

Well, I was a pilot. They sent me down the pilot line. I did all sorts of..

(under his breathe)

Top secret shit.

EXT. GERMAN AIRFIELD

Majors is signing a form on a clipboard. He is standing in front of several German soldiers. After signing, he leads them around to the rear of the plane.

German soldiers are unloading a pallet of Pampers.

INT. SUNNY DAY REST HOME

Majors eases back in the chair, looking around.

The boy smiles.

MAJORS

Then, I got a call.

INT. MAJORS APARTMENT

Majors walks in carrying two bags of groceries and keys.

The phone rings.

He looks at it for a ring or two.

INT. NASA TRAINING FACILITY

Three men stand in a circle talking. They are all wearing blue jumpsuits. One of them is Majors.

Mitchell walks up, also wearing a blue jumpsuit.

Majors sees him and grins.

MAJORS

Josh!

Majors shakes his hand. Mitchell looks confused.

MAJORS

Three years, right buddy? And they said it would take eight. Hah.

He leads Mitchell over to the rest of the group.

Sedarsky steps up.

MAJORS

You know this guy.

SEDARSKY

Scott, how ya doin?

MITCHELL

Hey Dan. Great to see you again.

The final man is talking to a technician in a white lab coat.

MAJORS

And that guy over there is the Colonel. Jim Jeffries... You've probably seen him on tv.

Majors winks. Mitchell pulls him aside.

MITCHELL

How did this happen?

Majors grins.

MAJORS

I thought you read the letter. They got a satellite, needs fixing. Jeffries requested me, and I requested you.

Majors claps him on the back.

MAJORS

Hope you're ready for an adventure.

EXT. EARTH FROM SPACE

The planet looms below. Oceans of blue and plumes of white mingle together in a slow spin.

A satellite floats in space. Floating next to it is a space shuttle, sleek in design.

An astronaut (Sedarsky) is tethered to the shuttle, but working on the satellite.

MAJORS

How's it looking, Dan?

Sedarsky is tightening an apparatus with a wrench on the satellite.

SEDARSKY

Scott was right. Looks like one of the auto-gyros fell out of sync. Resetting it now.

MAJORS

Roger that.

He turns to Mitchell, who is looking at schematics on the computer. He gives Mitchell a thumbs up and a grin. He is chewing gum.

MAJORS

Ahh..ok Dan, get that finished up and come on back. We'll work on the thermal covers tomorrow.

Mitchell looks pleased.

MAJORS V/O

Being out there in space was like being in a dream. This was our moment. All three of us had finally done what we set out to do. To make it to space.

INT. SUNNY DAY REST HOME

Jackson scowls.

JACKSON

That's it? I thought you said he was some kind of superhero. What a gyp.

MAJORS

Shut up and listen.

INT. BARROOM - NIGHT

A packed bar. Majors is playing pool and being loud.

MAJORS V/O

So we went back home. I went back to flying diapers from here to Khatmandu, Mitchell went back to engineering and Sedarsky went back to teaching.

Majors takes a shot for the 8-ball. Misses. Laughs it off.

One of his buddies pats him on the back.

BUDDY

I think you better stick to flying,
pal. Pool just isn't your game.

Suddenly, a young lady runs over.

PAM

Hey Scott, they're talking about
you on the news.

Majors grins.

MAJORS

One of my many accomplishments to
further mankind, no doubt.

He moves closer to the television propped on a ledge near the
ceiling.

TELEVISION

There is a picture of Majors on the tv, smiling in his orange
space suit.

MALE NEWSCASTER

..planned Mars mission for some
time now. Commander Scott Majors
topping that list, as confirmed
today.

Majors smiles and stares at the screen. He's chewing gum.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE BAR

Majors staggers out of the bar holding a cell phone to his
ear. He's holding his hand to his other ear because it's
noisy.

MAJORS

Colonel? Yes, sir, I just saw. Oh,
that's fine sir...

(MORE)

MAJORS (cont'd)

Yes, of course, it would be an honor. What's that? Could you speak up sir? Oh..haha.. Right. Tomorrow? Yes Colonel. See you then.

He hangs up, grinning. As he turns to go back into the bar, his phone rings. He checks the ID. Josh Mitchell. He smiles and answers.

MAJORS

Dr. Mitchell, how are you? Haha! I just found out myself. I know.. I know.. Makes no sense to me either... Thanks man, it's great to talk to you. How's everyth.. Oh ok man, I'll call you later then. Thanks for the call.

He hangs up, staring at the phone for a few moments. He has a worried look on his face. It quickly turns into a grin.

He jumps up the steps to the bar and flings the doors open.

MAJORS

(shouting)

I COME IN PEACE!

MAJORS V/O

They were planning that Mars bullshit for near twenty years. They could never figure out how to keep a man alive in space for the nine months it would take to get there... but Ozaki did.

JACKSON V/O

Ozaki?

INT. DENTIST OFFICE

A waiting room, full of people. Some look in pain, some scared, many nervous.

Majors sits at the back next to one skittish fellow, who keeps fidgeting.

Majors is reading Time magazine and as he finishes an article he sets the magazine on the table. On the cover is a small japanese man standing alongside several large tanks full of pink liquid. He is smiling. On the cover it says:

THE SCIENCE OF TODAY AND TOMORROW AN INTERVIEW WITH TAMIRO OZAKI.

Majors leans over to the man sitting next to him.

MAJORS

Waddya think they're gonna do to us?

The inner door to the room opens. On it is a sign reading HERBERT L. GREIN DDS ORAL/DENTAL. A nurse steps out holding a clipboard.

INT: NASA TRAINING FACILITY

Three men stand in front of a training instructor wearing NASA training jumpsuits. The names embroidered on each are MAJORS, SEDARSKY, JAMESON. Jameson is an older astronaut, mid 40's.

Majors jokes with Jeffries.

MAJORS

Going along on this one, boss?

JEFFRIES

Nope. I'm just here to make sure you assholes listen this this guy.

He claps the shoulder of the INSTRUCTOR.

INSTRUCTOR 1

Okay. Today, gentlemen, you will begin undergoing hypersleep training.

(MORE)

INSTRUCTOR 1 (cont'd)

You will each be put through a series of tests which will help us to calibrate the equipment levels to your bodies specific needs.

INSTRUCTOR 1

Since you'll be asleep for the majority of your journey to Mars, your body will need to be acclimated to survive in a liquid environment for six months.

The men all look sheepishly at each other.

INSTRUCTOR 1

Additionally, during this sleep phase, you will also need nourishment. That will be taken care of via feeding tubes, each set to your specific nutritional needs.

Majors raises his hand.

The Instructor stares at him.

INSTRUCTOR 1

Yes captain?

MAJORS

I prefer a large lunch to a large dinner... sir.

JEFFRIES

Stow it captain.

The INSTRUCTOR looks slightly annoyed, but resumes his explanation.

INSTRUCTOR 1

You will also need exercise during this sleep phase, so that your muscles don't atrophy, and your bones don't start to lose density.

(MORE)

INSTRUCTOR 1 (cont'd)

We have, therefore, borrowed some technological advancements from our friends in the Chinese space agency.

The INSTRUCTOR leads them around the corner and there is a large, man sized tube, filled with a pinkish liquid.

Inside the tube is a man, testing the apparatus. He is naked and his legs are strapped to a cycling workout machine. His legs are held on all sides by straps as well as his feet. The machine moves them in a cycling motion.

Tubes are going into and over his nose and mouth, encompassing both is a breathing apparatus not unlike an anaesthetic device. He has small goggles over his eyes, but as the men pass in front of him, he sees them and waves, smiling a little behind the mask.

The three men suddenly all have a sour look on their faces.

INSTRUCTOR 1

Gentlemen, please take note, as this will be you for nine months.

The five now have an even more sour look on their faces.

INSTRUCTOR 1

The device attached to this trainee's nose and mouth not only supplies oxygen, but as well the necessary hibernation supplement.

JAMESON

Which is what exactly?

MAJORS

Good question doc.

INSTRUCTOR 1

The mixture is a cocktail of twenty five percent hypromazine, twenty eight percent neurotin, and forty seven percent oxygen.

MAJORS
hypromazine?

INSTRUCTOR 1
The hypromazine acts as a counter
to the neurotin, sending impulses
to the brain that will register as
thoughts or images embedded deep
within your psyche.

Majors looks slightly lost.

INSTRUCTOR 1
You will perceive them as...
dreams. This will serve as an
artificial replacement for REM
sleep.

He walks to the liquid filled chamber and points to a tube
connected to the man's pelvis.

INSTRUCTOR 1
Two tubes for waste will also be
attached, fore and aft.

MAJORS
Sounds like a hot Saturday night
doc.

INSTRUCTOR 1
When you reach your destination,
approximately three hundred
thousand miles outside of orbit of
the planet Mars, the on-board
computer will begin the awakening
cycle. It should take your bodies
no longer than ten hours to
readjust and for your vision to
fully return.

MITCHELL
Are you telling me... we're not
going to be able to see for a day?

INSTRUCTOR 1

The post-sleep reaction is different in everyone, but yes we do expect a short adjustment period.

He leads them to the shower area and sweeps his hand out to indicate that they are to get showered and ready.

INSTRUCTOR 1

Please gentlemen... Get undressed, shower, and return here naked.

SEDARSKY

Naked?

INSTRUCTOR 1

Naked.

JAMESON

Naked?

INSTRUCTOR 1

Naked.

Majors starts to take off his shoes, his shirt. He smiles.

MAJORS

Now, don't get jealous fellas. I know it's cold in here.

He grins. He's chewing gum.

MAJORS V/O

Two years we trained for that mission.

INT. SWIMMING POOL

Majors is inside a space suit, submerged in a tank of water, working on fixing the side of a submerged shuttle.

INT. NASA TRAINING FACILITY

The three (Majors, Sedarsky, Jameson) are inside a shuttle simulator running tests. They look very frantic, but contained.

MAJORS V/O
huge success.

EXT. MARS

Majors and Sedarsky are on Mars. They are setting up a tracking station along a row of other tracking stations.

EXT. EARTH

The shuttle is re-entering the earth's atmosphere.

EXT. THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE

It is the New York Thanksgiving Day parade. Giant balloon characters float by, people are everywhere. Majors sits atop a convertible, smiling and waving as it rolls through the city streets.

MAJORS V/O
I couldn't take a shit without
having to sign an autograph.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

Majors walks casually into the men's bathroom at a swanky hotel. He is immediately followed in by a nervous looking young man who is carrying a pen and a picture of Majors.

MAJORS V/O
In all that time, I never once
heard from Josh.

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT

Majors knocks on the front door. It opens and there is Josh Mitchell, a look of confusion plastered on his face. It quickly gives way to a grin.

Majors holds up a bottle of liquid laxative, and a copy of the Right Stuff on Blue Ray.

Mitchell scowls.

MITCHELL

Blue Ray? I didn't know anyone still used those. I'll have to dig my player out of the closet.

They go in and the door shuts.

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT

Majors sits on the couch amidst a pile of dirty clothes. The place is very untidy. There are dirty dishes on the coffee table and clothes everywhere.

He looks around suspiciously.

Mitchell enters the room carrying two glasses and a half empty bottle of cheap bourbon. He sets them on the table and clears the clothes off the couch.

MITCHELL

Sorry, maid's day off.

Mitchell already seems drunk.

MAJORS

Where's Audrey?

Mitchell pours the drinks.

MITCHELL

She left me. For an Air Force man, no less. Guess she knows a good thing when she sees it.

He raises his glass.

MITCHELL

To being single, seeing double, and
sleeping triple.

Majors raises his glass.

MAJORS

To alchohol.. the cause of, and
solution to all the world's
problems.

He takes a large gulp of the drink.

MAJORS

I thought you two were working it
out.

Mitchell chuckles, it's a dark, twisted chuckle that doesn't
suit him.

MITCHELL

She...

He stands, gyrating his hips.

MITCHELL

...woorked it out all right. Nah,
it's fine man. I hardly notice that
she's gone.

He's slurring. He takes another gulping drink.

MITCHELL

`sides. I've been getting a lot
more work done.

Majors sets his drink down.

MAJORS

Maybe you better ease back on the
throttle there buckaroo.

Mitchell stands at attention, saluting Majors.

MITCHELL

Yes, sir! Captain, sir!

Majors doesn't look amused.

MITCHELL

Hey, what's it like to be famous? I bet everyone wants your autograph. Have you met the president? What's *she* like?

Majors stands and picks up his coat.

MAJORS

Hey, buddy, I just remembered a meeting I gotta make. Let's do this next week or something.

Mitchell picks up his glass again, slurping more bourbon down.

MITCHELL

Oh sure... Anything for you Scott. I mean Captain Majors, sir.

He salutes again and falls onto the couch, knocking over the end table, passing out instantly.

Majors manages a half grin and walks out the door. He stands outside the door for a long moment, eyes closed. He then turns and storms back into Josh's apartment, grabbing Josh by the lapels and dragging him into the bathroom.

MAJORS

Wake up!

He slaps Josh hard in the face.

MAJORS

Wake up, goddamn you!

Majors, turns on the water in the shower and shoves Josh in, fully clothed. As soon as the water hits him, Josh is awake. He sputters and cowers in the corner.

MAJORS

Look asshole, most people never get to BE an astronaut, and you're gonna show it some god damned respect!

He slaps Josh in the face again.

Mitchell stares at him, his eyes full of fear. Majors stares back, his eyes full of rage.

Mitchell bursts out laughing, and Majors follows suit. He tackles Josh in the shower and they roll around, fake fighting in the water.

MAJORS V/O

Then they found that damned planet.

JACKSON

What planet?

INT. MAJORS APARTMENT

Majors is making a sandwich, the tv is on. A local news show starts with it's headline banner.

FEMALE NEWSCASTER

Details are sketchy at this point, but word from the Lerner Space Telescope has been confirmed. We have a new heavenly body in our solar system..

A graphic appears on screen showing the solar system. A small orb is blinking between Mars and Jupiter.

Majors drops his sandwich.

INT. DELICATESSEN

Majors sits in a booth at a deli. A waitress walks up and sets down a plated sandwich in front of him.

MAJORS

Thanks doll.

A man sits down next to him. It's Jeffries.

Majors looks up, mid bite.

MAJORS

Oh, hey Jim.

(chewing)

Nou wanna mite?

Jeffries puts up a hand, indicating, no.

MAJORS

So... What's the word boss? You didn't get me down here to NOT have a bite of my sandwich, did ya?

Jeffries looks out the window as he talks.

JEFFRIES

We've known about it for two years.

Majors stops chewing.

MAJORS

Known abouf whaf?

JEFFRIES

Planet X... Our boys found it two years ago, when you were on Mars. No one can understand where it came from, one day it's not out there...

He folds his hands on the table.

JEFFRIES

...and one day it is. We kept it a secret as long as we could, but that stupid kid found it last week with his dad's telescope, and now..

He looks Majors right in the eye.

JEFFRIES

We're going up.

Majors puts down the sandwich.

MAJORS

We?

JEFFRIES

I'm going along on this one. Pick a crew. Get back to me. Keep it quiet.

He leaves.

Majors shrugs and takes a bite of his sandwich.

EXT. NASA PRESS CONFERENCE

There is a large crowd which is gathered full of reporters, photographers and members of the space agency. A podium is set up on a stage and a press conference is about to begin. Among the crowd are five astronauts all dressed in the same NASA jumpsuits.

People shake their hands as they make their way to the stage, and one by one take their seats behind the podium.

As soon as they are all seated, a NASA ADMINISTRATOR walks up to the stage and steps behind the podium. With his hands he makes a gesture to the crowd to "settle down". After a few moments of bustle, the crowd settles. Camera flashes continue to pop, but all eyes and ears are on the stage.

The administrator leans into the thick gaggle of microphones anchored atop the podium and begins to speak.

ADMINISTRATOR

Thank you all for coming...

He pauses.

ADMINISTRATOR

Today we celebrate humankind's ascent from casual observer in this vast universe to vigilant keeper of our own destiny.

He sweeps his hand behind him toward the five men. They are SCOTT MAJORS, JOSH MITCHELL, ROGER JAMESON, AUDREY MICHELIN, and JIM JEFFRIES.

ADMINISTRATOR

Behind me on this stage are five of the finest individuals in the world...

He continues his grandiose speech.

Majors leans over to Mitchell, a cheesy grin on his face.

MAJORS

I helped him write this.

Mitchell smiles.

ADMINISTRATOR

Where they are going is uncharted space. What they hope to achieve is unprecedented.

The crowd chatters a little. The administrator "settles them" down again with a hand gesture.

ADMINISTRATOR

The planet, commonly referred to as Planet X, was discovered in April of last year. The orbital axis of the planet has baffled scientists
...

He continues.

A man in a white lab coat rushes up behind the stage, and whispers something in the ear of Jeffries. Jeffries nods and whispers something back.

Majors notices this and turns to Mitchell.

MAJORS

(whispering)

Now, what do you think that was about?

MITCHELL

Maybe Jeffries forgot to get his parking validated.

Majors laughs.

He sweeps his hand toward the astronauts again.

ADMINISTRATOR

These five men, with the help of our Andromeda 5 spacecraft, will attempt to bridge the gulf of over three hundred million miles and land on the surface of planet x.

He reaches under the podium and pulls out a folder with the NASA insignia on the cover.

He holds it up.

ADMINISTRATOR

Each of you here today should have received a press packet. Inside you will find all the mission details.

He puts the packet back underneath the podium.

ADMINISTRATOR

Having said that, I would like to introduce to the world the newest and brightest our space agency has to offer. The Andromeda 5 astronauts!

He begins clapping and steps to the side of the stage.

Camera flashes are popping as a microphone descends to meet the administrator.

ADMINISTRATOR

On the end, Roger Jameson! Medical officer and mission control.

Jameson lifts his hand, grinning, and waves to the press corps.

The ADMINISTRATOR claps after saying each man's name, and a round of snapping camera flash and frenzied reporters accompanies each name as well.

ADMINISTRATOR

Joshua Mitchell! Chief science and engineering officer!

Mitchell grins sheepishly and raises his hand, meekly waving at the crowd.

ADMINISTRATOR

Captain Scott Majors! Copilot and aeronautics engineer!

Majors, wearing sunglasses, grins from ear to ear. He has a toothpick in his mouth and raises both his hands with two thumbs up.

ADMINISTRATOR

On loan to us from the French government and l'Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales, our science and payload officer. Andrea Michelin! Bienvenu!

Michelin smiles warmly with a laugh and claps, pumping her fists over her head. She is average height, average build, she has bags under her eyes.

ADMINISTRATOR

And last.. But certainly not least.. twenty years in the air force, two time recipient of the silver cross, three trips to the moon...

(MORE)

ADMINISTRATOR (cont'd)

A true American, Commander of this mission, and a very good friend of mine, mister Jim Jeffries!

The ADMINISTRATOR claps more fervently for Jeffries, they are obviously old friends.

Jeffries simply tips his cap to the reporters. He looks like a general. Sunglasses on, very sure of himself, but without looking cocky.

ADMINISTRATOR

These, ladies and gentlemen, are your Andromeda five!

A ferocious round of clapping. The five stand and hold hands together over their heads.

Michelin laughs and the camera flashes pop dizzyingly all around.

ADMINISTRATOR

Now ladies and gentlemen, we must conclude this press conference so that we can get these astronauts back into their training schedule.

ADMINISTRATOR

Thank you all for coming today.

EXT. NASA TRAINING YARD

Mitchell is tinkering with a lander shuttlecraft frame outside of an aircraft hanger. He tightens few bolts, puts a casing over the front of the part he's working on and steps back.

He shouts into the hanger.

MITCHELL

I think we're ready here, Scott.

Majors emerges talking to Michelin.

MAJORS

Right, right. We'll work on that next.

He turns to Mitchell.

MAJORS

Allright, let's see if we've got this vertical thrust problem locked down.

He jumps into the pilot's seat of the spider-like metal frame.

Mitchell scowls.

MITCHELL

Don't you want to put the rest of the panels back on first?

Majors straps on his helmet with a shrug.

MAJORS

I don't care if she's pretty, I just wanna know if she'll fly. Come on.

Mitchell sighs and grabs a helmet. He straps in.

Majors fires up the thrusters and checks his surroundings.

MAJORS

Deck is clear, we are go for vertical thrust test number... where are we?

MITCHELL

Number 36.

MAJORS

Vertical thrust test number 36.

He powers up the thrusters. The craft lifts off slowly, hovering a few feet from the ground.

Majors maneuvers it left a few feet, and then right.

MAJORS

Lets take her for a spin.

He throttles up and the craft raises quickly into the air.

Mitchell looks over the side to see the hanger quickly growing smaller beneath them.

MITCHELL

Uhh.. Sure you wanna do this?

MAJORS

Hey, we're gonna have to depend on this thing out in space.

He guns the throttle and moves the craft forward.

Mitchell looks behind them.

MITCHELL

Aft thrusters, working a-ok.

Majors guns it again and the craft takes off at a very rapid speed.

Mitchell looks over the side again. There are buildings and a lot of desert passing by them very quickly. The wind sheers off of their helmets.

MAJORS

All right, looking good.

He turns the craft around and heads back.

MITCHELL

Lander 2 returning to base.

Suddenly there is a loud grinding sound, and then the sound of metal breaking. Then an even louder sound of grinding metal as smoke starts to pour out one side of the thruster bank.

Majors quickly tries to throttle down. He can't, it's stuck.

MAJORS

Got a sticky valve on number six.

The craft lurches to one side and Mitchell is knocked against the wall of the craft. The desert below him is still moving very, very quickly.

Another loud bang and the ship tilts sideways, careening out of control. In seconds they will crash.

MITCHELL

Scott! Eject!

Majors is pulling with both hands on the steering mechanism.

MAJORS

I can hold it.

Mitchell is staring at him.

The ground is coming up fast.

MITCHELL

Scott.

Majors looks at him. There is honesty and love in Mitchell's eyes. He smiles.

MITCHELL

Thanks.

Mitchell pulls Major's ejection handle.

Majors is suddenly skyward, and as his parachute opens, he watches the craft spin into the desert floor, exploding on impact.

MAJORS

Nooo!

EXT. FUNERAL - AFTERNOON

It is raining at the cemetery. A couple of dozen people are gathered around the casket. One of them is Majors.

As the ceremony ends, they all disperse.

Majors is heading out of the gate when a hand pulls against his shoulder. It's Sedarsky.

Sedarsky extends his hand.

SEDARSKY

Hey Scott, I'm sorry. I know you
and Josh were close.

Majors folds up his umbrella, letting the rain fall all over him. He's quickly drenched.

He walks to the door of his car, a convertible with the top down, which is now covered with water.

MAJORS

Don't fuck this up, Sedarsky. You
got a golden ticket.

He slides onto the wet seat, starts the car, and quickly zips out of sight.

EXT. NASA LAUNCH PAD

The five astronauts walk slowly down the gangway towards the cockpit. They are wearing full gear and helmets.

MAJORS V/O

We all missed him. I wasn't the
only one. We had all worked with
him, gone through the training
together. Now there was a void.

Their faces are serious as they pass, each one, into the waiting spacecraft. The door is shut and the clamps lock behind them.

MAJORS V/O

But we had a job to do.

EXT. NASA LAUNCH PAD

The ship blasts off, gargantuan smoke plumes trailing it from the launch pad. The sky is lit up like an atom bomb as the ship crawls into the heavens.

INT: ANDROMEDA COCKPIT

MAJORS

Whoooo! Boy, now that is what I call horsepower. Capcom, we have successful ignition of the ion boosters. We are go for exit.

CANARIES

Roger that, Andromeda. Go is confirmed. How's she feeling, Scott?

MAJORS

Like a virgin on prom night.

INT: CANARY ISLAND CAPCOM

The capcom communicator puts his hand over the mic and winces at that last comment.

INT: ANDROMEDA COCKPIT

Jeffries leans over and gives Majors a stern look.

CANARIES

Andromeda, please say again. Last transmission was garbled.

MAJORS

Uhh.. Capcom, Andromeda. Ship is good, she's looking good.

CANARIES

Roger that Andromeda. You are go for auto-set sequencing.

MAJORS
Auto-set is go. Roger.

INT: ANDROMEDA COCKPIT

Majors locks in the controls and turns to the rest of the crew.

MAJORS
That's it. Primary auto controls
are locked in. We're ready for the
tubes.

JAMESON
So, we're really going to do this
then eh?

Everyone looks quizzically at him.

JAMESON
I just figured someone should say
it.

He takes off his shirt, and then begins to take off his pants. He notices them watching him.

JAMESON
Well, any of you gentlemen care to
join me for a seventeen month
cocktail?

They look at each other and begin to get undressed.

Jameson helps Majors into the apparatus and straps him into the mechanism.

MAJORS
See you on the other side, Rog.

Jameson smiles.

The lid closes and the chamber begins to fill with a pinkish liquid.

Jameson takes one last look around and steps to his chamber. After attaching all the tubes and wires, he puts on his goggles, takes a deep breath and pushes the switch controlling the lid.

The lid comes down and his chamber too begins to fill with liquid.

As soon as it is filled, a green light comes on in the cockpit and the ship powers up for initial thrust.

EXT: ANDROMEDA

As the ship exerts it's thrust, it barrels off into space toward it's destination.

INT: NASA CONTROL ROOM

The giant display screens are showing the trajectory of the craft.

A mission controller talks to the ADMINISTRATOR.

MISSION CONTROLLER 3

We have them on satellite tracking
sir. Everything looks good.

ADMINISTRATOR

Good. Keep me posted. I'll be in a
press conference for the next
fifteen minutes.

INT: ANDROMEDA HYPERSLEEP CHAMBER

The five are in their hypersleep chambers. There is a silent coldness in the abyss of space, permeated only by the eerie glow of the pink liquid and the men in the tubes.

They are unaware of anything but the dreams and visions going through their heads.

INT. JEFFRIES DREAM

Jeffries, just as he is now, walks down a long hallway in a school filled with kids. They are milling around just as kids do before class.

The bell rings

DING

The kids disperse, rushing into classrooms and emptying out the hallway.

Jeffries walks to one of the classroom doors and opens it.

The TEACHER is in her seat, and as he opens the door she stares at him.

TEACHER

James, take your seat please.

He walks in and sits in the front, center seat.

The teacher begins to walk around, setting a test on each desktop.

Jeffries gets his and looks around at the others. They have all started doing the test. He looks down at his desk, he has no pencil.

He raises his hand. The teacher sits at her desk, taking no notice of him. He waves his hand frantically trying to get her attention.

INT. MICHELIN'S DREAM

Michelin is outside a house, walking on the grass. She is wearing a sheer white nightgown and looking up at the stars. She hears laughter.

She approaches one of the windows of the house and peers in. There is a man in bed with a woman. It's her husband, but that's not her.

They frolic on the bed, tickling each other and kissing.
Their shirts are off.

At either side of the bed are end tables. On the tables are
framed photos of Michelin and her husband, hugging, on the
beach.

She knocks on the window, but there's no response.

MICHELIN

Rene? Rene!? Rene!

She shouts, but he doesn't hear her.

INT. JAMESON'S DREAM

Jameson is falling. The wind rushes by and far below him is
the earth. He's wearing a surgical mask.

As he falls through the atmosphere, surgical tables and
patients float to within his grasp, and then are ripped away,
flying upwards before he can begin to operate.

JAMESON

Goddammit I need suction!

A nurse floats over, also falling in conjunction with
Jameson.

JAMESON

Nurse, fix my mask.

The nurse moves around behind him as they fall, she tightens
his surgical mask.

He puts on surgical gloves and tries to grab an instrument
with which to operate. The table flies up and away before he
can grab one.

INT. SEDARSKY'S DREAM

Sedarsky is on an escalator going down. As he approaches the
bottom he sees a small boy start to walk up on his escalator.
The boy has Sedarsky's head, but the body of a boy.

Sedarsky turns and starts to quickly walk back up, but the escalator is going down so he neither gains nor loses ground. The boy is walking up as well so they are always equidistant from each other.

Sedarsky starts to run, the boy starts to run.

Sedarsky looks up. At the top of the escalator is his wife.

MRS SEDARSKY

Daniel.

INT. MAJORS DREAM

Majors is at a college party. He's got a drink in his hand and he's cornered a pretty girl, talking to her.

She's smiling, but it suddenly turns into a frown and her face reflects shock.

Majors opens his mouth to say something and one of his teeth falls out.

He cringes with a yelp and continues to talk, more teeth falling out as he clamors to pick them up off the floor.

The girl backs away.

He tries to explain, but more teeth fall out until his mouth is almost empty.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

The ship moves through space. In the distance is a planet, at this point, the size of a quarter. Pink in hue, it contrasts deeply against the absolute black of space and the reflective steel of the Andromeda.

The burn engines go silent, the ship begins an inertial coast toward planet x.

INT. ANDROMEDA COCKPIT

The ship is silent. Suddenly, the cockpit lights up with a thousand lights, some blinking erroneously, some solid. It's very serene and ambient.

INT. ANDROMEDA HYPERSLEEP CHAMBER

A green light begins to blink on the wall of the hibernation chamber.

The liquid in Majors' tube bubbles and starts to recede. As it's sucked completely out of the tube, the tube door releases and a slight variant of pressure causes a hiss as the tube door raises mechanically.

Majors' eyes flicker, blinking. His breath is raspy and coarse behind the rubber mask like apparatus.

His hand shaking, he pulls the mask away from his face, and staggers out into the chamber.

He can only see vague shapes and hears a low whoosh as the liquid begins to recede in the other tubes.

INT. ANDROMEDA COCKPIT

Majors and Jeffries are working in the cockpit.

JEFFRIES

How's our telemetry?

MAJORS

ETA eighteen hours to planet x.

He hits a button.

JEFFRIES

Doc, how's it going back there?

INT. ANDROMEDA HYPERSLEEP CHAMBER

Jameson is putting eyedrops in the eyes of the remaining crew members.

He picks his head up as Jeffries calls to him over the intercom.

JEFFRIES

How we doin Doc?

JAMESON

Looking good, everyone's awake.

JEFFRIES

All right, great. Bring em up here when you're finished, ok?

JAMESON

Roger that, Jim.

INT. ANDROMEDA COCKPIT

As the remaining crew members stagger into the cockpit (Sedarsky, Jameson, Michelin) they are greeted with a sight of strange wonder.

Planet x looms out before them through the window of the ship. It has a pink hue and there seem to be clouds covering certain areas of it.

SEDARSKY

Wow.

MICHELIN

Very beautiful.

JAMESON

Any contact with Houston yet?

Jeffries turns to speak to him.

JEFFRIES

Not yet. Could be that the mars relay is out.

He stands slowly, moving to one side of the cockpit.

JEFFRIES

Lets launch the satelite package,
see if we can't pick up something
on it. Sedarsky, take a look at
this.

Jeffries pulls up a computer screen.

SEDARSKY

The radio relay? Didn't you just
say..

JEFFRIES

Right, we've got nothing on audio.

He taps the screen.

JEFFRIES

This is visual. These aren't
sounds. They're..

Sedarsky's eyes open wide.

SEDARSKY

...electronic pulses.

Jameson looks confused.

JAMESON

What are you saying?

SEDARSKY

Whoa.

Sedarsky slides into the seat in front of the terminal and
pulls up a graphic of the pulses. It looks like this:

...---...

He falls back into the seat.

SEDARSKY

You have to be kidding me.

JEFFRIES

That's as real as you and me... And
it's coming from down there.

He points a finger at the planet through the windshield.

Michelin now looks confused.

MICHELIN

What does it mean?

Sedarsky pulls up a data file containing the morse code language. He skims to the letter "S". He brings up the full decoded text of the pulses onscreen.

"S.O.S"

SEDARSKY

As in "help".. As in "need
rescue".. As in...

He turns to Jeffries.

SEDARSKY

Someone or some *thing* is down
there.

They all look out the window at the planet as the ship continues it's slow glide toward it.

INT. ANDROMEDA KITCHEN

Majors enters the kitchen area. Michelin is already there, eating something brown from a rations pack.

MAJORS

Mmm mmm mmm.. I haven't eaten food
for nine months, and I still can't
stand this shit.

Michelin looks distracted.

MICHELIN

What do you think it could be?

Majors looks contemplative.

MAJORS

Well, none of us have really eaten
for..

MICHELIN

No, I mean *down there*.

Majors shrugs, pulling a rations container from the cabinet.

MAJORS

Well.. It could be anything. I mean
it could be one of the thousands of
satellite's we've got roaming out
in space. Maybe it crashed here and
the locator beacon is
malfunctioning or something...
Could be a glitch in the radio
tower on Andromeda.

He opens the food packet and gets a spoon from a magnetic
rack above the countertop.

MAJORS

Anyway, we'll figure it out
tomorrow. We've got a lot of prep
to do today for the lander.

He takes a bite.

MAJORS

Gotta make sure she survived the
trip.

He chews.

EXT. ANDROMEDA SHUTTLE

The shuttle is descending through the lower atmosphere.
Majors and Michelin are at the helm.

MAJORS

We're six minutes out. Target is
beacon source site.

A voice comes through his headset.

JEFFRIES

Roger.

The shuttle continues descending. It starts to hit some
turbulence and the craft shakes.

MAJORS

Going through a rough spot. Wind
sheer. Means it's got some kind of
atmosphere.

Out the windshield the planet takes up the whole view. Pink
in color, with dunes and strange rock formations jutting up.
The rock formations start out small at the base and get larger
as they go up, plateauing at the top with a flat, wide based
surface.

As they crest the top of a ridge, the view looks down into a
huge, vast crater.

On the ridge to the right there is something metallic shining
back.

MAJORS

We have visual on target.
Descending.

As they get closer the object comes into full view. It's a
shuttlecraft, nosefirst, half buried in dirt.

Majors and Michelin look at each other with wide eyes.

MAJORS

Uhhh.. We have what appears to
be...uhh. You guys aren't gonna
believe this.

He clears his throat.

MAJORS

Jim, we have what appears to be a shuttlecraft lander. Looks to have..uhh.. Crashed into the side of this large crater.

The com goes silent for a moment.

JEFFRIES

Say again. Not sure I got that last.

MAJORS

It's a shuttle Jim. One of ours.

EXT. PLANET X

The shuttle has landed. Majors and Michelin are gearing up to go outside.

Majors continues to talk to the Andromeda via headset.

MAJORS

Ok, thanks Jim. Exiting now.

The rear hatch of the shuttle slides up and opens. A green flashing light is on over the hatch opening.

Majors steps out. His booted foot hits the ground and kicks up a puff of pink dirt.

MAJORS

We've got gravity here, Jim.
Partial, but...

He turns to Michelin.

MAJORS

..watch your step, it slopes off a few feet down.

They slowly make their way toward the crashed shuttle. As they get close they can see a symbol of some kind beneath the dirt.

Majors wipes the dirt away.

MAJORS

Jim, what the hell am I lookin at?

INT. ANDROMEDA COCKPIT

Jeffries, Jameson, and Sedarsky stare at a video monitor with a feed from Majors helmet cam.

They see him wipe the dirt away. There is a NASA symbol underneath.

JEFFRIES

Uhh.. Jesus. Your guess is as good as mine, Scott.

EXT. PLANET X

Majors stares at the symbol for a long time.

He turns and puts his helmet close to the hull.

He knocks on the metal craft two times, and listens. Nothing.

MAJORS

Windshield is buried in dirt. Zero visibility inside the craft.

He turns to Michelin.

MAJORS

Let's take a look around back.

They move to the rear of the shuttle.

MAJORS

Rear hatch looks intact.
Jim..uhh..I'm gonna open her up.
This is nuts.

JEFFRIES

Roger that. Be careful.

Majors rubs his gloved fingers together.

MAJORS

Andrea, stand away in case the
shuttle's pressurized.

He turns the hatch release lever. A green light turns on over the hatch, flashing and swirling just as on their shuttle.

Gas begins venting from the seals around the frame of the hatch.

With a loud clunk and a hiss the door slides out and up.

For a few seconds there is only darkness.

Majors squints into the dark craft. A few rays of sunlight fall into the craft from the space above the windshield.

Something is moving.

Majors eyes go wide.

MAJORS

Shit! We've got movement!

Majors moves in. As his eyes adjust, his hands start to shake.

He stumbles, falling to one knee for a moment before regaining his balance.

There, in the shuttle, is a man struggling to get a helmet on. He's pounding at the clamps to seal the helmet. A small trickle of gas is venting around the rim of the helmet. He passes out.

As Majors gets over him, he can see the face inside the helmet.

It is a man with wild brown hair and a wild brown beard. He is wearing a standard NASA space suit. It's hard to tell because he looks so different, but Majors knows immediately who he is.

MAJORS

My God.

INT. ANDROMEDA MEDICAL BAY

The crew races down the hallway of the Andromeda, they are carrying the man in a very hurried and frantic manner.

Majors is shouting.

MAJORS

What the fuck is going on Jim?!

Jeffries shoots him a scowl and looks down at the man. His space suit has been removed and all he has on now is a very dirty blue flight suit.

The name embroidered on it is MITCHELL.

INT. ADROMEDA MEDICAL BAY - LATER

Mitchell is coming around. His vision is foggy, he sees only blurred shades of light and dark at first, and voices.

MAJORS

Did you see the other body we brought up with him? What the hell does that mean? I think I'm losin' my mind.

JEFFRIES

I saw it. What would you like me to say? I don't have any answers either.

Mitchell's eyes flutter. His vision starts to focus.

JAMESON

He's coming around, Jim.

There are faces above and all around him.

JEFFRIES

Can you hear me?

Mitchell tries to speak, but his words are slurred.

MITCHELL

Mmmm.. Where am I?

Jameson and Jeffries look at each other seriously.

JEFFRIES

You're on board the Andromeda.

Mitchell grips his skull.

MITCHELL

The Andromeda? Uhhhnn...What's wrong with my head?

JAMESON

Your helmet had a small leak uhh..
Josh. You've got decompression
sickness. I'm frankly surprised
you're alive. Well... you know...
more than I already was.

Mitchell sits up, blinking his eyes. He is in a medical bay, on a cot. Majors is standing off to one side looking slightly perturbed.

Mitchell sees fleeting images of the shuttle crashing on the planet x.

He sees himself talking to a dead body in the crashed shuttle.

His hands begin to shake.

MITCHELL

You! You're dead! You're all dead!

The others look at each other quizzically.

JAMESON

Take it easy, Josh. Don't over
exert yourself. You've got some
healing to do.

Mitchell's eyes are wide now. He has a look of panic.

MITCHELL

Where are they? Are they here?!
Where am I?

Jeffries puts his hand on Mitchell's shoulder.

JEFFRIES

We were hoping you could fill us
in.

Mitchell reaches up and pinches Jeffries on the arm.

Jeffries laughs.

JEFFRIES

Generally if you want to find out
if you're dreaming, you pinch
yourself, not the other guy.

Sedarsky kneels in front of Mitchell.

SEDARSKY

My god. Is that really you, Josh?

MITCHELL

Is it really me? Is it really *you*?

He tries to stand, collapsing back onto the cot.

MITCHELL

I've gone completely fucking crazy,
that's what it is. I'm still
sitting in that fucking tin can,
and I'm talking to a dead guy.

He presses his eyes against the palms of his hands.

MITCHELL

You're dead. You're all dead.

As he raises his head, he sees that they are not dead. Very
much alive and still standing in front of him.

JEFFRIES

We're not dead, Josh, but... Uhh..

He seems to be stumbling over what to say.

MAJORS

Just tell him already.

Jeffries shoots Majors a biting look, like "why don't you shut the fuck up".

MITCHELL

Tell me what?

INT. ANDROMEDA STORAGE AREA

The six of them are standing around a table with a body laid out. The body is wearing a blue jumpsuit that says MAJORS. They watch Mitchell as he talks, his eyes wild and full of fear.

MITCHELL

They sent us out there to try and get a fix on what the Antarins were doing.

MITCHELL FLASHBACK

EXT. EARTH 1942

Black and white 1947 footage, grainy, of a saucer like craft, floating slowly through the sky being bomarded with anti aircraft shots. It has ten or so large spot lights trained on it as it moves through the clouds.

MAJORS V/O

He told us how, on his earth, about a hundred years ago or so, an alien craft was spotted over Los Angeles and the military tried to bring it down with force. Didn't work. Government covered it up, said it was a weather balloon.

EXT. EARTH 1947

A saucer craft buried half in clay and dirt where it has crashed.

MAJORS V/O

A few years later an Antarin scout ship crashed in the desert near Roswell, New Mexico. Know where that is?

JACKSON V/O

No.

MAJORS V/O

Anyway, according to Mitchell, the official government press release was another weather balloon. He said that the U.S. Government was in contact with the aliens from that day forward.

EXT. MILITARY BASE HANGER

A team of military personnel stands in a hanger.

In front of them saucer sits perched atop three thin legs. A ramp descends and as it does a thin limbed humanoid creature with a large head emerges from the craft.

MAJORS V/O

The US Military came to an agreement with them then that allowed the Antarins to come and take specimens from earth whenever they wanted to.. In exchange earth's military got some of their technology.

(MORE)

MAJORS V/O (cont'd)

Most of which they released periodically into the world as some new technological breakthrough discovered by a fictitious scientist that they made up.

INT. MILITARY BRIEFING ROOM

A General stands looking at a bound, several page document. He is frowning.

MAJORS V/O

I guess at some point years later, these Generals figured out that what the Antarins were doing wasn't studying us for educational purposes...

INT. ANTARIN SHIP

A human male is strapped to a table as several Antarins examine his arm, holding it up. One of them sprays something on it and the arm begins to bubble.

The human begins to scream.

MAJORS V/O

...but to design a weapon. A biological weapon.

JACKSON V/O

What's a biological weapon?

MAJORS V/O

It's a weapon that affects only living organisms. Like how pesticide kills bugs on plants, but doesn't hurt the plants, and that's exactly what the Antarins were trying to do. The Antarins considered us bugs.

INT. PENTAGON BRIEFING ROOM

Several Generals and suited men sit around a large circular table.

One of the Generals is shaking his head.

MAJORS V/O

So the government cut off all communication with the Antarins. Anytime one of their little saucer ships came to visit, the military had orders to shoot on sight.

EXT. THE SKY OVER EARTH

An F-22 is moving fast through the clouds.

Through the windshield a saucer like ship comes into view.

Quickly, the pilot engages the craft and launches a missile at it. It disappears, blinking out of existence before the missile can hit it.

MAJORS V/O

So a message comes down the line that our long range Mars sensors are picking up some kind of electromagnetic activity on one of the moons of Jupiter.

JACKSON V/O

Planet x?

MAJORS V/O

Exactly right! You sure you haven't heard this story before? We know that they tried to mine *our* moon for this stuff called Tyledium. Tyledium is what makes their ships able to skip around in space.. Don't ask me how it works.

JACKSON V/O

Ok.

MAJORS V/O

So anyway, they send out the other Mitchell and the other me and the other.. Um ..others.. to check it out and see what's going on.

EXT. NASA LAUNCH PAD

The Andromeda launches from the pad, blasting into the clear blue sky.

EXT. OUTER SPACE

The Andromeda moves through space.

The crew is in their hypersleep tubes.

MAJORS V/O

But something went wrong on the way. Micro meteor or something damaged one of the boosters...

INT: ANDROMEDA HYPERSLEEP CHAMBER

Mitchell is awake. He hears shouting all around, but it's through a haze. He's still in the liquid and it's filtering the sound as water would.

He can't see, but the color red keeps flashing in front of his vision.

Suddenly there is a massive jolt and the ship heaves to one side.

The lid to Mitchell's tube opens spilling him out into the room, along with all of the fluid in the tube. There is no gravity so Mitchell floats in the air of the room surrounded by the liquid.

Now the shouting is more apparent.

MAJORS

That's what I'm trying to tell you
Jim... 4 and 5 are offline and
number 6 won't shut down.

JEFFRIES

Where the hell are we?

MAJORS

I can barely see my hand in front
of my face.. Jim check our
telemetry!

Jameson makes his way to the cockpit, floating and holding
onto the seats to keep himself steady.

JAMESON

Would someone care to tell me what
the hell is going on?

Again the hull of the ship moans and creaks as the bulk heads
start to buckle.

JEFFRIES

Artificial gravity is out. We're
losing her Roger, we're losing the
ship.

Just then another jolt rocks the ship, red lights flash all
over the instrument panel.

Jeffries takes a moment.. Then...

JEFFRIES

Josh, get everyone on board the
shuttle, it's the best chance we've
got at this point.

EXT: ANDROMEDA

The ship continues to plummet into the atmosphere, small
pieces of it breaking off.

Heat is starting to affect the shielding. The underside of the ship begins to give off an orange glow.

INT: ANDROMEDA HYPERSLEEP CHAMBER

Majors makes his way floating through the ship to the rear launch bay where the shuttle is.

He rubs the blur from his eyes slightly and is able to find the rear hatch release for the shuttle.

A green light blinks on as the hatch opens. Majors pulls himself inside and, with great effort, makes his way to the cockpit of the shuttle.

He flips a few switches and the shuttle comes to life. The dashboard lights come on.

MITCHELL

Roger?! Roger, you there?

JAMESON

I'm here Josh.

He hears Mitchell's voice and pushes himself towards it.

Their arms bump and they grab onto each others hands.

MITCHELL

Where's Andrea?

JAMESON

Still in her tube, I think. Andrea?
Andrea? Are you there?

No answer. Michelin is still in her tube.

MITCHELL

Dammit! Roger, get to the shuttle,
I'll get Andrea!

He begins to move toward Michelin's tube, but feels a hand on his shoulder. It's Jameson.

JAMESON

No Josh. I'll get her. Get on the shuttle.

MITCHELL

Are you sure?

JAMESON

Yes.. Go!

The ship groans and creaks, louder than before. With one tremendous jolt, one of the engines breaks off and flies into space.

Mitchell reaches the shuttle hatch and turns, all he sees is a vague blur of the rest of the interior of the ship.

MITCHELL

Rog, how's it coming?

JAMESON

Something's stuck with Andrea's tube, I can't get it open!

Majors turns.

MAJORS

Mitchell get the fuck in here! We gotta...

Just then another piece of the ship breaks loose, spiralling over the top of the ship and in the process smashing a small hole in the side of the ship near the cockpit.

Gases begin venting.

JEFFRIES

We've got a hull breach! Everyone get to the shuttle... Everyone get to the shuttle.

Suddenly, the glass begins to crack on the windows.

Jeffries pushes a button to talk directly to the shuttle through the comm.

JEFFRIES

Scott, get out of here, now!

MAJORS

We're not leaving you Jim!

JEFFRIES

That's an order captain! Get out
of..

One of the windows blows out, sucking Jeffries out into space. Jameson follows only seconds after. Michelin is still stuck in her tube.

INT: SHUTTLE

MAJORS

Oh shit! Jim! Fuck! Mitchell, get
in here!

MITCHELL

Roger, we've got to get out of
here! Like now!

No answer.

MITCHELL

Roger?

He starts out the hatch, but is pulled back in by Majors.

MAJORS

They're gone! They're all gone!
We've gotta get the fuck outta
here!

He pulls an extremely combative Mitchell back inside and pushing a button, the hatch comes down and shuts.

MITCHELL

They're not dead, goddammit!
They're right there!

Majors is flipping switches and turning on the engines of the shuttle.

MAJORS

They're gone goddammit! Jim and Roger are gone, and Andrea is stuck in that fucking tube! We've gotta get the fuck..

The rear hatch of the Andromeda begins to open with flashing lights and an air siren.

MAJORS

...Outta here!

As the bay doors open, the curve of the planet is visible outside the ship. Flames and debris shoot past the opening.

Mitchell turns and stares at the bright opening, debris now flying into the huge hole.

MAJORS

Strap in!

Mitchell uses his hands to find the seat and pulls himself down into it. He yanks the safety harness around him and straps in.

Majors releases the docking clamps and the ship begins to hover. The jolting is momentarily relieved.

MAJORS

Hold on to something, this could get ugly.

The ship is turning and the opening is showing that the rear of the ship is leaning out into space gradually.

MAJORS

Three..Two...One..

He pushes the throttle all the way forward and the ship thrusts towards the opening.

The shuttle bangs against the bulkhead. It's stuck.

MAJORS

Shit!.. Ok..

Majors reverses the engines and pulls it back before trying again.

MAJORS

Dammit! Come on baby girl...

He throttles up again and boosts forward, harder than before.

The shuttle scrapes against the bulk head again, but this time manages to squeeze through the opening, tearing off a piece of one of the boosters as it does.

The second that it breaks free of the ship, the ride is much less bumpy, but they are still falling through the atmosphere.

MAJORS

Mitchell, you still with me?

Mitchell's hands are clamped to the seat in a death like grip.

MITCHELL

I'm here Scott.

As the shuttle turns into the descent, nose first, they are greeted with a view of the Andromeda out the side window.

The ship is breaking up quickly, flames shooting all around it as it disintegrates, falling through the atmosphere.

MAJORS

Jesus.

Lights flash and sirens wail in the shuttle cockpit.

MAJORS

Come on baby, hold it together..

The shuttle falls, gaining speed, as the Andromeda falls away to the left of them burning up.

Mitchell's vision is beginning to return and he can now see faint images inside the cockpit.

Majors is doing his best to compensate for the blown out booster, but it's still an incredibly bumpy ride.

MAJORS

Josh, how well can you see?

Mitchell holds his hand in front of his face. There are five vague fingers.

MITCHELL

Not good, but getting better.

MAJORS

Get up here, just in case.

Mitchell unstraps himself and cautiously pulls himself to the front co-pilot seat. Strapping himself in again.

Out the windshield, over the horizon, a blue light flashes, emitting a rippling wave of light that washes over the planet and the shuttle in seconds.

Majors and Mitchell look at each other.

MITCHELL

Did you just see that?

MAJORS

No, and neither did you. Hold on to something!

BANG! Something snaps off the side of the shuttle, sending it into a sideways drift.

Sirens and lights are going off everywhere. All Mitchell sees is a swirling mass of flashing colors. He blacks out.

INT: SHUTTLE COCKPIT

Mitchell begins to regain consciousness. He is strapped to the seat and his head bobs as he comes to.

As he lifts his head, his vision starts to come into focus.

In front of him is the dashboard, and beyond that, out the windshield is dirt. The front end of the shuttle is buried in dirt. Through the top edge of the windshield he can see the sky. It has a pinkish hue and there are oddly shaped clouds drifting curiously by.

His helmet has a substantial crack in it and he has a large gash on his forehead and blood is streaming out.

He tries to turn, but the safety harness is preventing it.

He reaches down and manages to press the release button, the strap retracting as he falls out of the seat.

That's when he sees Majors.

Majors body is slumped over the steering column.

Mitchell slowly reaches out to him, pulling Majors body back from the dash.

He is met with a gruesome sight. Majors is dead. The steering column for the shuttle having crushed into his chest with the impact of the shuttle crash. Blood dripping from his white space suit.

Mitchell just stares at the sight for a long moment, in shock, breathing hard.

He scrambles backwards to the wall of the shuttle and sinks to his knees. His face is a blank mask of shock.

END MITCHELL FLASHBACK

INT. ANDROMEDA STORAGE AREA

MITCHELL

I don't know how long I was down there... Days? Weeks?

MAJORS

Aliens? You're talking about fucking aliens right?

He stands, throwing up his arms.

MITCHELL

Antarins.

Sedarsky looks like he's about to pass out.

SEDARSKY

Whoa.

Michelin's eyes are about to bug out of her head.

MICHELIN

Aliens? Like E.T.? Are you talking
about real aliens?

Mitchell nods.

JAMESON

And they're on the other side of
this planet, right now, mining
for.. What was it again?

MITCHELL

Tyledium.

MAJORS

Well, now I've heard it all.. Two
dead guys on planet x and now alien
miners.

Jeffries straightens in his seat.

JEFFRIES

Scott.

MAJORS

Yea?

JEFFRIES

Sit down. Shut up.

Majors sits, a look of resignation on his face.

MITCHELL

It's all true.

JAMESON

So you're saying..

He takes a breath.

JAMESON

.. I'm sorry, what are you saying?
That there's an alien plot to
destroy earth, but it's in another
dimension, and now they're going to
come into our dimension to try and
destroy earth *here*?

Mitchell nods.

MITCHELL

They already are.

Majors stands and walks out of the room.

INT. ANDROMEDA KITCHEN

Majors is watching a television monitor as he eats. On it is a grainy video displaying the inside of the crashed shuttle below. It appears to be of Mitchell walking around and talking to himself. On the ground beside him is the body of Majors.

Mitchell enters the room.

MAJORS

Guess even dead guys need to eat,
huh?

MITCHELL

I'm dead and yet here I am, talking
to you. You're dead and yet here
you are, talking to me. Maybe we're
all dead.. Maybe this is heaven.

Majors laughs.

MAJORS

This aint heaven. Closer to hell,
but i doubt even the food in hell
is *this* bad.

Mitchell yawns and gets a glass of water.

MITCHELL

Can I ask you something?

MAJORS

Shoot.

MITCHELL

How did I..uhh.. How did I die?

Majors also gets a glass of water.

He takes a drink and answers.

MAJORS

Training accident.

MITCHELL

Training accident.

Majors glances at Mitchell.

MAJORS

You sure you wanna hear this?

MITCHELL

I'm sure.

Majors sighs.

MAJORS

We were up in the new Lander, and
the valve on the number 6 booster
got stuck.

He takes another bite of his food and continues.

MAJORS

The Lander went in, I tried to pull it out but there wasn't enough time. You pulled my ejection seat and you crashed. You saved my life.

Mitchell just stares off into space.

MAJORS

At least that's what the inquiry said. That was a real bad day.

MITCHELL

...and Adrienne... How did she take it?

MAJORS

Who's Adrienne?

Mitchell turns and stares at Majors. His gaze could pierce steel.

MAJORS

My wife, Adrienne. Adrienne Mitchell. What do you mean 'Who's Adrienne?'

Majors stops mid chew and quizzically stares back at Mitchell.

MAJORS

I think you need some more sleep, man.

Majors gets up to leave. Mitchell grabs his arm.

MITCHELL

Scott, wait... Are you saying that I'm not married to my wife? Are you saying I'm not married to Adrienne?

MAJORS

I'm saying that the Josh Mitchell I knew wasn't married at all.

(MORE)

MAJORS (cont'd)

He was a lonely alcoholic nerd that was married to only two things in this world... Going into space.. and the bottle. Go see the doc and get some sleep.

Majors walks out of the room, leaving Mitchell alone with the, still playing, video on the monitor.

He glances at it nervously.

INT. HALLWAY

Mitchell is walking through the hallway. He hears voices coming from one of the storage closets.

He slows his walk and moves towards the door, tilting his head to listen.

JAMESON

No, I just didn't want to say it in front of the others.

JEFFRIES

What do you want me to do about it?

JAMESON

What *can* we do? We've got five tubes, and now we have six bodies. You do the math.

JEFFRIES

Well, we'll figure it out, for now let's just set up these tracking...

A voice comes over the intercom throughout the ship.

MAJORS

Uhhh... guys.. I think you better get up here.

Mitchell turns and hustles toward the cockpit.

INT. ANDROMEDA COCKPIT

The six crew members are looking out the windshield. In front of them, hanging in space are ten saucer like craft.

Majors laughs and falls into a seat.

MAJORS

Hah! Great... just great.

Suddenly the computer starts generating strange symbols on it. It looks like writing.

Mitchell points at it.

MITCHELL

That's Antarin. It says 'MEET ON SURFACE'.

The all turn and stare at Mitchell.

MITCHELL

What? I took Antarin in college as a second language.

MAJORS

What...

He opens his mouth to say more.

MAJORS

Nevermind. I don't wanna know.

JEFFRIES

So what do they want?

Mitchell looks him in the eye.

MITCHELL

They want to destroy us.

MICHELIN

Then why have a meeting? Why don't they just destroy us right here?

MITCHELL

Because they don't know about me. They don't know what I just told you. I think somehow they created this dimensional rip intentionally to come into your time frame and do the same thing they tried to do in mine. I'd advise you *not* to go down there.

Sedarsky steps up.

SEDARSKY

Something I don't understand. If they're so technologically advanced, then they must have weapons of *some* kind, right?

MITCHELL

They have a sort of short range laser weapon on their ships that's very effective in space, but doesn't work in earth's atmosphere.

JAMESON

That's why they needed a biological weapon.

MITCHELL

Right.

Majors presses his head to his hand.

MAJORS

Christ. Now we've got alien miners with laser guns.

Jeffries stands.

JEFFRIES

Scott. Stop whining and go get the shuttle ready to launch.

He turns and points a finger at Mitchell.

JEFFRIES

Josh, you go with him. Then get ready, we're going to need you down there.

Mitchell shakes his head.

MITCHELL

I'll go down with you, but I can't talk to them.

JEFFRIES

Why not.

MITCHELL

The Antarins communicate telepathically. If I go out there, they'll know instantly who I am and what I've told you. It's better if I stay on the shuttle and monitor the meeting.

JAMESON

Telepathy? Amazing. Why didn't they communicate that way just now?

MITCHELL

It only works within line of sight. You have to be physically standing in front of them.

Majors laughs and walks out of the room shaking his head.

INT. SHUTTLE BAY

Majors is in the shuttle cockpit checking over the oxygen and fuel levels.

Mitchell enters, knocking on the hull.

MITCHELL

Knock Knock.

Majors turns.

MAJORS

What's up Buck Rogers. Run out of a captive audience?

MITCHELL

Look, Scott, I know you think it's all bullshit. I just wanted to tell you to be careful down there. The Antarins are manipulative. They'll make you see what they want you to see.

Majors continues to check the gauges.

MAJORS

Is that right.

MITCHELL

They'll make you see them as friends. Not visually, but you'll feel it. I know that doesn't make any sense right now...

He puts his hand on Majors arm.

Majors looks him in the face.

MITCHELL

Trust me.

MAJORS

Well, if I don't come back, you'll know you were right.

Mitchell sits down in one of the seats.

MITCHELL

I can't believe I'm never going to see her again.

MAJORS

See who?.. Oh... Well, maybe you'll make it back to her man. The shit I've heard today.. Anything's possible.

MITCHELL

I guess it would have been almost two years ago, now, but I can still remember our last night together. Is that weird?

MAJORS

Not at all.

INT. MITCHELL'S APARTMENT

The tv is on and Mitchell and Adrienne are watching the news. It is of course footage from the press conference. Mitchell's wife ADRIENNE, a beautiful 30-something blonde with a perfect slim body, watches while eating a bowl of ice cream. She is his perfect match. Same height as him, blonde. They have about the same temperment, build, sense of humor, slightly nerdy, and clearly in love with him.

ADRIENNE

I thought you said you weren't going up until August?

Mitchell is in the kitchen, getting himself some ice cream. He shouts to her in answer.

MITCHELL

The powers that be decided to push the schedule.

ADRIENNE

Is that enough time?

MITCHELL

I guess it's going to have to be honey. Remember...

He walks in and sits next to her.

MITCHELL

...I'm just the science guy. The mission can fly without me.

She slaps him on the arm.

ADRIENNE

Don't say things like that. Without you, no one would *learn* anything from the mission at all.

MITCHELL

..except how to get there and back again.

ADRIENNE

Shut up. I'm going to miss you enough, ya know. You don't have to rub it in.

He smiles and elbows her lovingly. She elbows him back. They elbow back and forth a couple of times until he sets his bowl on the table and grabs her, kissing and tickling her hard until she giggles, setting her bowl on the table as well.

They make-out and laugh, and start to strip each other frantically as the ice cream melts in the bowls on the table.

On the tv is a reporter.

TV REPORTER

There you have it. Five men and a three hundred million mile mission. The world waits for the unveiling of NASA's brand new hundred billion dollar spacecraft, the Andromeda.

EXT. PLANET X

The shuttle is on the surface. Michelin, Jeffries, and Majors exit the craft wearing space suits.

Mitchell lurks behind in the shadows of the cockpit, monitoring through an external camera the goings on.

Suddenly one of the saucer craft appears out of nowhere, hovering a few dozen feet over the ground. It lands quickly on three spindly looking legs, a hole materializing in the side and a ramp which extends to the ground.

As the three earthlings watch, three of the alien race emerge from the craft.

They are what are typically referred to as "gray" aliens. Bulbous heads, slender limbs, large black eyes. Small mouths which never move.

They move very fluidly, almost hypnotically as they walk toward the astronauts. Their skin looks smooth and reflective.

INT. SHUTTLE CRAFT

Mitchell is watching the monitor, he has on a headset inside his helmet.

Sedarsky calls to him from the Andromeda.

SEDARSKY

Hey, Josh, you there?

MITCHELL

Yea, I'm here.

SEDARSKY

Hey, why don't they need a suit?
Those things? How can they breathe
down there?

MITCHELL

That *is* the suit. Everything you're
looking at, everything we see here,
is the suit. You don't want to see
what they look like underneath,
believe me.

SEDARSKY

Whoa.

EXT. PLANET X

The three astronauts and the three Antarins are now facing each other. No words are spoken.

The faces of the astronauts keep changing, reflecting whatever is being broadcast into their heads.

Michelin smiles, biting her lip.

Jeffries laughs, long and hard. He is grinning from ear to ear.

JACKSON V/O

What did they say to you?

MAJORS V/O

Well...

The look on Majors face is one of joy as well. A tear rolls down his cheek inside the suit.

MAJORS V/O

They said "This is the beginning."
At least that's what I heard in my head, but it wasn't the words so much as the feeling that I got when they said it.

Suddenly, Majors catches sight of Mitchell sneaking out of the shuttle. The aliens' telepathic spell is broken.

Mitchell makes a straight Bee-line for the alien saucer.

He runs up the ramp and a few seconds later, the ramp slides up and the hole in the hull closes up. The three legs slide back inside the craft before anyone can move.

All six visitors on the planet's surface stand and watch as the craft lifts a few feet into the air and disappears, blinking out of view.

JEFFRIES

Everyone back to the shuttle, now!

The Antarins watch quietly, not moving, as the astronauts quickly get back inside the shuttle and close the hatch.

INT. SHUTTLE CRAFT

JEFFRIES

Scott, get us out of here.

MAJORS

Sure thing boss.

EXT. PLANET X

As the shuttle lifts off, thrusting into space, leaving the Antarins standing on the surface of the planet, another saucer craft appears on the surface, landing in front of the Antarins.

INT. ANDROMEDA SHUTTLE BAY

The shuttle has just docked and the hatch opens.

The three astronauts step back into the Andromeda removing their helmets.

JEFFRIES

What the hell was that?

MAJORS

Aw c'mon dad, Josh just borrowed the car for a few minutes, he'll be back before you need it to go to work.

Jeffries lunges at Majors, grabbing a handful of his flight suit and attempting to punch him. The rest of the crew gets in the way first though and pulls them apart.

JEFFRIES

I'm sick of your fucking jokes, Scott. I think next time I hear one, I'm going to supply the punchline myself.

Michelin falls to her knees, sobbing, unexplainably.

Jameson is in front of her immediately. He has a penlight and is examining her eyes.

JAMESON

Okay, everybody just needs to relax. I don't know what they did to you down there, but there's some psychological damage going on. The three of you come with me.

He indicates the three that went to the surface.

INT. ANDROMEDA MEDICAL BAY

The three sit as Jameson types something into the computer. He turns the monitor so they can all see.

JAMESON

Is anyone feeling particularly euphoric?

The three look at each other. They all meekly raise their hands slightly.

JAMESON

I'm not surprised. Heart rates elevated, unusual brain wave activity. It's like you took a hallucinogenic. It will pass and when it does, you're going to crash hard. I recommend you try to get some sleep.. God knows we could all use a little.

INT. ANDROMEDA SLEEPING QUARTERS

Majors lies in his bed, a small cramped space with a curtain. He lies with his eyes closed and arms crossed in front of him. He looks alternately peaceful and anxious.

JACKSON V/O

What was it like?

MAJORS V/O

It was beautiful... and horrible.
It was like a waking dream. It
wasn't so much words, as visions.

INSERT

EXT: ANTARIN HOME WORLD

A beautiful planet, blue and green with pink clouds floating
by.

The cityscapes are dazzling. The buildings all white and
smooth with no corners or edges. Like a city built by Apple
Inc.

Saucers fly here and there. Two moons are visible in the sky
overhead.

MAJORS V/O

Images of their home world, their
lives, their feelings. Very
intense.

INT. ANDROMEDA COCKPIT

Sedarsky is reading a book and sitting in the pilot's chair.
The book is Rendezvous at Rama.

Suddenly an image appears on the camera monitor. It's very
grainy and the feed keeps cutting out. What is seen is the
inside of an Antarin scout saucer. It is dazzling and clean.

MITCHELL

Andromeda, do you read?

INT. ANDROMEDA HALLWAY

The five walk quickly down the hallway.

JEFFRIES

My head is killing me.

MAJORS

You're not the only one.

Majors rubs his forehead.

Jeffries turns to Sedarsky.

JEFFRIES

So, what did he say?

SEDARSKY

He just said "Get the others".

INT. ANDROMEDA COCKPIT

The five are gathered around the monitor. Mitchell's cam is pointed out the windshield at a huge, white, dome jutting out of the surface of the planet.

JEFFRIES

What are we looking at?

MITCHELL

The dome. Can you see it?

JEFFRIES

Barely. What about it?

As they watch, a large cylinder pushes out from the center of the dome, extending out several meters before pushing back in. As it touches back in again, a tremendous pulse of blue light surges out all around from the dome.

The blue light wave travels outward and washes over Mitchell's scout ship.

Seconds later the wave washes over the whole planet, just beneath the Andromeda.

On the monitor a handful of small saucer craft have appeared, hovering over the dome. The blue energy pulses around the ships for a moment or two before dissipating.

Mitchell turns the helmet cam to face himself, clearly he's not wearing a space suit anymore either, only his blue flight suit.

MITCHELL

That's how they got here. That's how *I* got here. The dome. It opens up some kind of gateway between..

Jeffries pounds the console with his fist.

JEFFRIES

Dammit Mitchell, I want you back here, NOW.

Mitchell shakes his head.

MITCHELL

I'll get back to ya.

The monitor goes blank.

Suddenly, a light flashes on the cockpit dashboard.

Out the window they see the shuttle launching from the ship. It powers up and speeds off toward the far side of the planet.

Jeffries looks around at everyone.

He grabs the com and pushes the talk button.

JEFFRIES

Scott, what the hell are you doing?

No answer.

JEFFRIES

Majors, return to the ship immediately. We don't have time to...

An image springs up on the monitor. It's Majors.

He simply salutes the camera. He's smiling and chewing gum.

The monitor goes blank.

Jeffries clenches his teeth.

INT. ANDROMEDA COCKPIT

Sedarsky sits in the cockpit.

Jeffries enters the room.

JEFFRIES
Any luck with Houston?

SEDARSKY
Nope.

Jeffries sighs. He starts to pace.

JEFFRIES
Ok. Any word from Majors or
Mitchell?

SEDARSKY
Nope.

JEFFRIES
Goddammit, we're sitting up here
with our pants around our ankles
waiting to be spanked.

Sedarsky shoots him a puzzled look.

JEFFRIES
Keep trying. I'll be in medical.

He leaves in a huff.

Sedarsky shrugs and turns back to the com.

INT. SHUTTLE CRAFT

Majors is skimming the peaks and valleys of the planet in the shuttle craft. Up ahead, he sees a lone saucer, hovering on his side of one of the peaks.

A face appears on his monitor. It's Mitchell. He's smiling behind his beard.

MITCHELL

Aloha.

Majors pulls the shuttle along side the saucer.

MAJORS

I bet you're wondering why I brought you all here today.

Mitchell grins wider.

MAJORS

So... what's up?

Mitchell on the monitor darts his eyes forward.

Majors looks between the peaks and seeing nothing, edges the shuttle forward slightly. The dome appears between the peaks and below them. It is pure white but the cylinder slowly moving in and out is a highly reflective metal and glints in the sunlight.

There are approximately a dozen saucers flying around above it.

MITCHELL

Scott, we have to destroy that thing.

MAJORS

I know this is going to sound weird to you, but Jeffries is right. We have no *reason* to destroy it. This is our first contact with an alien life form, and you want to turn us all into intergalactic bullies before we even invite em over for a barbecue. Come on back and we'll...

Mitchell suddenly becomes very agitated.

MITCHELL

Arghh.. Look, I know none of this makes sense. I *know* I sound insane, but I'm not.

He looks directly into the camera.

MITCHELL

They are here to destroy us all.

He closes his eyes for a moment, still speaking.

MITCHELL

You *have* to trust me.

He opens his eyes. His eyes relax.

MITCHELL

Please.

Majors twists in his seat.

He sighs long and hard, scratching his forehead.

MAJORS

Let's say I *do* believe you. What's the plan, stan?

Mitchell grins.

MITCHELL

You ever play chess?

INT. ANDROMEDA COCKPIT

Sedarsky is still reading his book. He has his legs kicked up on the dashboard, relaxing.

Out the windshield, unbeknownst to him is a space battle of epic proportion.

A scout saucer is hauling ass directly at the Andromeda, from the far side of the planet. It is being followed by two dozen other saucers, all taking laser shots at the craft, some connecting, some not.

A face is on the monitor, but Sedarsky doesn't notice it. It phases in and out with static. It is Mitchell, screaming something.

INT. ANDROMEDA HALLWAY

Jeffries walks into the cockpit.

JEFFRIES

You know, what if we try and reach
Houston with the...

He looks out the windshield.

JEFFRIES

Jesus Harold Christ.

He sees the monitor, and presses a button on the com. The speakers in the room turn on, broadcasting Mitchell's fiery sermon.

MITCHELL

Jove! Jupiter, chief of the
Olympian gods! Son of Cronos or
Saturnus! He is father omnipotent,
father of gods, and king of men!
The lightning and the thunderbolt,
fashioned for him by Vulcan, are
his weapons. The eagle is his
messenger.

He is nearly foaming at the mouth as he cuts the ship sharply to the left, leading the squadron of attacking scout ships off into space, away from the Andromeda.

SEDARSKY

What the hell is he doing?

Mitchell is sweating profusely as he steers the ship, twisting and spiralling out into black space. The trailing ships are nearly upon him now.

MITCHELL

This shining vault on high which
all men call upon in prayer as
Jupiter.. Caught in a fierce
tempest, shall be hurled!

Suddenly the ship stops, spinning, as the other ships quickly
form a cloud around it, blasting away.

MITCHELL

(whispering)

Each on his rock...transfixed...

He winks into the camera.

He screams.

MITCHELL

THE SPORT AND PREY OF ROCKING
WHIRLWINDS!

Jeffries and Sedarsky watch the lone saucer explode through
the windshield. The explosion annihilates the other
surrounding saucers.

The shockwave shakes the Andromeda.

Jeffries and Sedarsky look at each other, their faces a
mixture of confusion and panic.

Jameson and Michelin run into the room.

JAMESON

What the hell just happened?

Sedarsky points out the windshield.

SEDARSKY

Look!

There is the lander shuttle, heading straight for the
Andromeda. Flying next to it is another lone saucer craft.

Majors face appears on the monitor. He is smiling and still
chewing his gum.

MAJORS

Gentlemen. Lady. The star of our show.

The monitor switches to Mitchell's cam. He's also smiling.

Jeffries picks up the com headset.

JEFFRIES

What in hell are you two doing?

Majors appears on the monitor again.

MAJORS

Just a little house keeping, boss. Josh can explain it better than I can.

The monitor switches to Mitchell.

MITCHELL

Well, it's simple really. The Antarins pilot most of their craft by remote, every ship's got one, and every ship can control every other ship.

The two craft approach the Andromeda. Majors guides the shuttle toward the docking bay.

MITCHELL

The toughest part was fixing *this* ship so that they couldn't get control. A little impromptu reverse engineering.

Jeffries sighs.

JEFFRIES

So what now?

MAJORS

Now we send in Mitchell's drone to destroy the dome, before they send out reinforcements.

Majors' shuttle enters the docking bay.

INT. MITCHELL'S SAUCER

Mitchell watches the bay doors close.

MITCHELL

Scott, I'm sorry, that's not going to happen.

Majors face appears on Mitchell's monitor, a translucent screen hovering in the air beside him.

MAJORS

Waddya talkin about?

MITCHELL

I lied. We don't have time to re-connect the remote pilot for this saucer, and besides that, the technology on the Andromeda is too primitive to link up to it anyway.

Majors looks furious.

MAJORS

Son of a bitch.

MITCHELL

Sorry boys and girls..

MAJORS

Josh..

Mitchell interrupts him.

MITCHELL

I can't go with you. Roger, tell him, you've got five tubes and now you've got six bodies.

INT. ANDROMEDA COCKPIT

Jeffries pounds the dashboard.

JEFFRIES

Mitchell, god damn it..

He scratches his head.

JEFFRIES

Come back on board, we'll figure
this out.

Mitchell is on the monitor, shaking his head.

MITCHELL

No time sir, besides...

He smiles.

MITCHELL

I don't work for you anymore.

Mitchell stands straight and salutes the Colonel.

MITCHELL

It's been a pleasure..

INT. ANDROMEDA SHUTTLE

Majors is still sitting in the shuttle craft watching
Mitchell's face on the monitor.

MITCHELL

Adios amigo.

INT. ANDROMEDA COCKPIT

They watch as the saucer turns and speeds off toward the far
side of the planet.

Majors races into the room.

MAJORS

Sedarsky, did we get the satellite
package off-loaded?

SEDARSKY

Yea, it's on the other side of the planet.

MAJORS

Link up to it. I want to see what's going down out there.

Sedarsky presses a few buttons and suddenly the monitor is filled with an awesome sight.

It is an overhead view, grainy and static filled, but plain to see what's going on. Mitchell's saucer is flying straight for the dome. Between him and the dome are a dozen of the other saucers on an intercept course.

As they make contact, a barrage of laser blasts is unleashed at Mitchell's ship. He weaves and spirals through the onslaught.

His ship is on fire as it barrels into the side of the dome.

MAJORS

Jesus

SEDARSKY

Christ

It punches a hole in the side of the dome and explodes, taking out a third of the dome with it.

The giant cylinder at the heart of the dome collapses inward, crushing the rest of the dome and leaving part of the inner structure exposed. The inner workings of the dome look almost alive, huge veins of tubing and electrical pulses ebb and send out massive electrical discharges.

Jeffries turns to the crew.

JEFFRIES

Scott, get us out of here.

Majors jumps into the pilot's chair and starts pressing buttons furiously.

The Andromeda thrusters fire up and it begins to leave orbit.

On the monitor, the dome is phasing in and out of existence. Blue waves of plasmic light pulse out from the smashed dome over the surface of the planet.

The dozen saucer ships that were trailing Mitchell are instantly incinerated.

On the monitor, the image is becoming more static filled and cuts out every few seconds. Where the dome once was is now a black swirling void with the surrounding surface of the planet being dragged into it.

Suddenly a blue wave emanates from the void. It washes over the entire planet.

The monitor goes blank.

INT. SUNNY DAY REST HOME

Majors leans forward, looking into Jackson's eyes.

MAJORS

By the time we got the ship turned around... It was gone.

JACKSON

What was gone?

MAJORS

The planet, Planet X, whatever you wanna call it. It just wasn't there anymore.

He leans back in the chair.

MAJORS

So.. We went home.

INT. ANDROMEDA HYPERSLEEP CHAMBER

The crew are naked and getting into the hypersleep chambers. They have somber looks on their faces that reflect some sadness.

Majors plugs himself into the tube, and the hatch begins to shut.

INT. SUNNY DAY REST HOME

MAJORS

When we got back, some government guys came and they confiscated all the video and audio recordings. Confiscated means took. They took it all. Told us to keep quiet about what had happened to us out there. The NASA boys whipped up some cover story and made us say that the mission was a failure.

JACKSON

And you didn't tell anyone?

MAJORS

Who would believe us?

JACKSON

Yea, but what about the..

Suddenly, Sarah rushes back into the retirement home, on her cellphone as usual.

SARAH

No, it's fine, I'll get Sam to do it. No, Lance is out of town.

She hangs up.

SARAH

Dad, thanks so much.

She grabs Jackson by the hand.

SARAH

I'm soo sorry that took so long.

Majors smiles.

MAJORS

You're here now, that's all that..

She interrupts him while straightening the part in Jackson's hair.

SARAH

I'm sorry Dad, but we can't stay,
I've got to pick up the dry
cleaning and do some..

She holds Jackson's face in her hand.

SARAH

Did you tell your grandfather thank
you for hanging out with you today?

The old man waves his hand.

MAJORS

It was my pleasure. Always is.

Sarah stands and starts to pull the boy toward the exit.

SARAH

We'll see you next week then right?

Majors winks.

MAJORS

It's a date.

He twirls the cane and resumes watching the cartoons on tv.

EXT. SUNNY DAY REST HOME PARKING LOT

Sarah and Jackson walk through the parking lot.

SARAH

Sorry about that, work stuff.

Jackson shrugs.

JACKSON

It's okay. I like his stories.

They stop in front of the car. Sarah fumbles around in her purse for the keys.

SARAH

Oh yea? Which one was it today?

JACKSON

It was about astronauts, and aliens, and some weird planet.

Sarah pushes the key into the door.

SARAH

Oh right. He used to talk about wanting to become an astronaut when I was a kid.

JACKSON

So he never was one?

SARAH

What, an astronaut?

She laughs.

SARAH

He was in the Air Force for a while, but that's about it.

She opens the door and they get in.

SARAH

No...I'm afraid your grandfather wasn't an astronaut.

Jackson turns and looks out the window.

SARAH

At least not in this lifetime.

She turns the key.

END