

MARSHINE

c.2015

SCREENPLAY BY

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FADE IN

Gold print on a black screen.
CLEAN ENERGY FUELS INDUSTRIAL EMPIRES IN SPACE.

Print fades as screen clarifies showing we are in space.

The camera zooms forward showing travel... In the distance we see Planet Earth grow from the size of a marble to dominate the screen. As we approach we see tiny bits of dust and debris littering the stratosphere. Upon closer inspection we realize that these are SPACE STATION FACTORIES. There are thousands. Collectively called STATIONONIA these factories produce CLEAN ENERGY, the greatest leap forward in technology since the steam engine.

We zoom in on the largest station. It is a city in space. Five wheels each a kilometer in diameter are mounted on a central axle. Tiny dots of light line the rims of the giant wheels. These are portals. Thousands of dish-shaped gadgets are mounted on the sidewalls of the huge rotating wheels. These SOLAR COLLECTORS are Mining Solar Power. Space Traffic and other signs of activity abound.

Zoom continues and targets a portal, which is 2 meters wide. A man is inside looking out. Our view goes thru the window and we meet ADAM CARNE.

INT. SPACE STATION OLYMPUS -Portal

ADAM is seen from over his shoulder gazing down to Earth. The Camera comes around and we see his face. He's in his 30's, handsome, with an intense expression. He is mesmerized by the view. The many other stations in sight and the volume of space traffic show that space is a busy place.

We become aware of the pedestrian traffic passing behind him. A tour group of fifty people led by a loud talking guide passes by. We hear...

TOUR GUIDE

The unique qualities of raw solar power and zero gravity can only be found in space. These are the essential elements needed to produce Clean Energy. That's why we've had this explosion of Space Station Factories. Our energy hungry world needs their products.

Adam turns and joins the throng.

They are in a broad pedestrian avenue similar to airports. The outer wall is lined with portals featuring fine views of Space, Earth and a myriad of Space-Stations and Ships. People are gathered together in staging areas according to their destinations. CARNE follows signs and a red line that mark his pathway to MARS.

The interior side of the avenue is flush with offices. Thousands of people go about their business. ADAM passes many government services, foreign consuls, and corporate desks including the stately headquarters of VENTOK INC. He finds his way to the passenger services counter for MARS.

EXT. SPACE STATION OLYMPUS.

We see that the station is slowly rotating, creating gravity by centrifugal force. Many transport ships are mated to the giant wheels of the station like stones caught in a tire's tread. We zoom in on one.

The ship is shaped like a blunt cigar. It's docked so that all cargo is loaded thru the roof. Only the pilots have windows. This is so the passengers won't get disoriented due to the rapid rotation necessary to produce 35% normal gravity while in transit.

INT. SPACE STATION OLYMPUS-

We witness ordinary exit procedures, customs, etc.

ADAM descends many stairs thru the floor and into the ship. The passenger cabin is spacious. The floor is curved in contour to the exterior of the ship, maximizing the effect of the artificial gravity. The spaces between the rows of seats allow the lounge chairs to spread out fully. Travelers must sleep in their seats, there are no private quarters.

People trudge in and take their places. CARNE is flanked by a plump woman with a friendly nature named JUDY and a gruff old man called GROUCHO whose sour cynicism is pervasive. When the ship is filled with 120 passengers they prepare to depart.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Ladies and gentlemen your attention please. Welcome to VENTOK transport Omega. Our voyage to MARS will take 61 days. We expect a pleasant journey.
Remember that we are in space. Unique conditions exist. The first issue we must deal with is gravity. We ask that you remain strapped to your seats whenever possible. Injuries can occur while people are in motion.

GROUCHO

When are we gonna eat? We spent all day in processing.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

Please be patient. Once we've achieved localized gravity we'll extinguish the Seat-belt sign and then serve dinner.

The Flt. Attendant drones on describing safety procedures.

GROUCHO

I always find this part amusing. If anything goes wrong we're all dead meat! Who the hell do they think they're kidding?

EXT. SPACE STATION OLYMPUS

The Vessel separates from station gently using centrifugal force to drift away.

Once clear pulsing jets ease the ship to speed as it begins to rotate. This is called RIFLING which creates local gravity and stabilizes flight. The ship zooms away...

INT. VENTOK OMEGA

The passengers have little to do during the long voyage. Often they engage in group discussions. These talks seem like AA meetings, people tell their life's story and explain their reasons for going to Mars.

JUDY

I simply got tired of being lonely. Most people are brain-washed by T.V. They think sexy women look like boys. I haven't looked like a boy since I hit puberty. I've heard that any woman on MARS can find a man, or a dozen if she wants.

GROUCHO

That's right lady. We appreciate our women for who they are. We don't discriminate against buxom ladies. You're going to be popular.

CARNE

What about you RON? What's your story?

He faces RON, a rugged hunk.

RON

I fought in the war. When I got home I was treated like dirt. My skills as a soldier don't qualify me for much else. Maybe if we'd won the war I'd be considered a hero. Instead all us vets are seen as bums who failed to do our duty. I got sick and tired of being looked down on by gutless wimps whose only talent is kissing ass.

GROUCHO

And what about you CARNE? What's your excuse?

CARNE

I taught history in high school. We were given guidelines that favored propaganda over the truth. When I refused to lie to my students I was fired and blacklisted. After years of crap jobs and unemployment I latched onto the Martian Habitation Project. MAHAP is dedicated to building the New World. That seems like work worth doing.

GROUCHO is a MARSMAN, a veteran miner of MARS. ADAM is shocked when GROUCHO tells him that the MARTIAN HABITATION PROJECT is a fraud.

GROUCHO

Listen to me kiddo. You're joining the PEACE CORP on MARS while we're at war back home over who owns the planet. MAHAP is an excuse to pump up the budget and sell the war to the public.

CARNE

That can't be right. Trillions have been spent since the Project began. They must expect a return on their investment.

GROUCHO

Face the facts. The MARTIAN HABITATION PROJECT is a joke. They call it MAHAP because it MAY HAPPEN or not. MARTIAN COLONIZATION is all about business. Industry is what drives MARTIAN development. The SPACE STATIONS need our resources to feed their factories.

CARNE

But what about the crisis at home?
We need a New World. Overpopulation
is the root cause of our endless
wars.

GROUCHO

War is good business boy. The wages
of war are staggering profits for
war mongers and their lackies. They
buy politicians wholesale who sell
propaganda to a foolish public that
can't face the truth. Your goal of
colonizing MARS is a dream. Guys
like you rumble in and grumble out.
You'll do your tour and go home,
bitching all the way.

By the time the trip is complete all the passengers know
each other on a first name basis. There was JOHN whose
government job was taken away just before he reached his
pension, DONNA whose husband ran off with his secretary,
FRANK got wiped out by the last depression, TONY was
desperate to get out of the ghetto, etc. Poverty, crime and
pollution had turned citizens into refugees driven to seek
better lives.

CARNE becomes friends with DOMINIC, a funny fat man who
could find the humor in a bad situation.

DOMINIC-

I was a bookie in Philly. A client
ran up a huge debt with one of my
employees. Our Boss told me to set
the loser up for a hit. I stalled.
The FEDS were all over me. The next
thing I knew a hit was put out on
me. When they blew up my house I
got the message. Now I'm on the
run. MARS is as far as you can go.

EXT. PLANET MARS

THEME FOR THE COMMON MAN

The Red Marble grows into a giant. Fine views with music.

We see MARSTAT, the sole SPACE STATION that orbits MARS.
From a distance it looks like a donut. Closer up the Twin
Wheels resemble a giant spool of wire. These Wheels have no
spokes. They are solid discs joined by a thick cylinder.

The central axle is a fly zone open to space at both ends. A
huge tunnel bridges the gap between the rings. That
zero-gravity zone is the essence of the SPACE-PORT. Traffic
enters at one end and exits the other.

The GATEWAY to MARS is a busy spaceport. Around the station
cargo trains are being assembled in orbit to be shipped to

Earth's Space Station Factories. Small 'Tug Boats' work the cargo into position. Our ship matches the station's rotation and enters the central hub.

Docking at MARSTAT is a tricky business, like parking inside a garage. Careful maneuvering in close quarters is required to secure a berth.

INT. SPACE SHIP OMEGA

In near zero gravity our people have no problems carrying their belongings. They descend stairs thru the floor and exit into the station.

INT. MARSTAT

Minimal procedures are involved with processing our people. MARSTAT does not comfort transients. They are checked off the ship, led down corridors to another post and checked into line. Shuttles await our passengers. None of them is at MARSTAT more than an hour.

EXT. MARSTAT IN SPACE

We see our shuttle, a bulky box with no aero-dynamic lines, leave MARSTAT. MARS grows large as we descend.

EXT. XANTHE- DAYLIGHT DIM SUNLIGHT CASTS AN ORANGE GLOW

As we approach and land we see the base. The prime domes are three geodesic spheres a klm. in diameter. They are surrounded by many huge buildings and smaller structures.

The shuttle eases down. It flies into a dome whose hatch opens like an observatory. Our shuttle lands half way up the height of the structure.

FROM THIS MOMENT ON THE CAMERA IS AWARE OF 38% GRAVITY. AT XANTHE DAYLIGHT IS WEAK. THE GRAY GLASS OF THE DOMES FILTER SUNLIGHT MAKING ALL DAYS DIM INSIDE THE DOMES. THEREFORE THE LIGHTS ARE ALWAYS ON. DAY AND NIGHT LOOK THE SAME.

The people disembark and go thru processing. Guides take charge, separate men from women (a 3x1 ratio) and lead the groups off in different directions.

INT. XANTHE SPACEPORT

The women are led to a conference room where they are interviewed by a panel of female counselors. These veteran women of XANTHE interview and advise them on social issues.

"Tell me sister, is the latch rusty or well oiled?"

"What I know is that you grab a man by his balls and his heart and soul will follow."

"Pink is every mans favorite color."

"How many men!?"

"What we can't have is Bitch Warfare."

This series of interviews are sexual interrogations.

We cast female comics to write and perform sexual humor. Roseanne, Whoopi, etc. 30 women recruits X 6 counselors equals lots of laughs for the audience. Stand-up PUSSY.

Subjects include hard facts-- Men are fools who must be handled. Women can be vicious, which is poison to XANTHE and must be guarded against. They are advised that being a woman draws attention at all times. They set the tone for society. It's important to project a proper image.

Among the tales told is a story about a Queen Bee who liked to see men fight over her. One man died, one went to jail and the Bitch was shunned for the rest of her tour.

Another is about a Bitch who who started a mob based on prostitution. She used men to force women to work for her. She was murdered.

The moral of the stories is that being a lady matters. You can be a Queen, but Ladies First.

INT. XANTHE-- THE BEEHIVE-

The men are led to the BEEHIVE. It is a canyon of long walls six stories high. The walls are slightly slanted and filled with niches known as HONEYCOMBS. These cells provide the only private space the recruits can call their own. They are 2X3 meters and pockmark the walls in a hexagon pattern. Catwalks and ladder rungs are the sole means of access.

The men get keys with different colored tags. CARNE gets L-11 Green, his new address. GRAVITY SHOTS as guys scramble up the walls. After stashing their goods the recruits reassemble. They are dismissed with instructions to seek out the celebrations going on NOW in honor of their arrival. This holiday is called TOUCHDOWN, a local tradition happening all over XANTHE.

INT. BELTWAY AVENUE

ADAM walks along the beltway avenue that encircles the dome. Trees and shrubs line both sides of the street. Residential and commercial properties give XANTHE the appearance of a small town from this perspective.

ADAM is drawn by the sounds of celebration to a saloon. Above the entrance is a large sign, a cartoon of a squid. Most of it's smaller tentacles are busy holding beers, drinks

cards, dice and darts. The grand pair are reaching for a girl.

INT. LENNY THE SQUIDS SALOON

ADAM enters and finds a WILD RAUCOUS PARTY. Women are dancing on table tops, a small stage, and on the crowded dancefloor. The QUEEN BEE factor becomes obvious. Before us is a table with one fat big breasted woman and eight men. Two of the men hold pitchers of beer. They blow the heads off the beer onto her white T-shirt making it transparent. The cold beer causes her nipples to pop, which gets hoots and applause from her entourage as she caresses herself.

At another table a woman is sitting on a man's lap being caressed by a second man while hungrily kissing a third.

On the dancefloor men are competing for women with whatever skills they can muster. Some scuffles break out.

ADAM sees an attractive woman dancing surrounded by men. He joins that crowd and dances his best attempting to gain her favor. He seems to be doing well, they make eye contact and she gives him an encouraging smile.

Then someone punches him in the back. ADAM turns to face a hostile stranger. He sees this GOON look to ADAM's main RIVAL at the dance contest. ADAM realizes that they are in cahoots, he is to be distracted while the other guy steals the girl. To reinforce that goal a SECOND GOON joins the first.

There's no way ADAM can win this fight alone. He looks to the crowd. TYRONE JACKSON is a big black guy who knows the score. He steps forward with his hands open, gesturing for peace.

After exchanging looks both GOONS attack the big man.

Instead of helping his new found friend ADAM spins on his heel and goes for his RIVAL. He unleashes a ferocious assault and creams the bastard. The girl screams, clutching her red hair in both hands as she stomps her feet and expresses her anguish.

This fight with 5 combatants draws the attention of the crowd. Now with their blood up the men form a tight circle around the boxers, pushing and shoving them together like the crowd at a cock fight. ADAM goes to help TYRONE who just then flattens one of the GOONS. The last GOON standing tries to escape. He hasn't got a chance. A moment later he's on the floor.

A gang of cops burst into the hall and indiscriminately beat their way to the center of the party using their clubs. WELCOME TO MARS says a banner.

Dissolve.

INT. PUBLIC BATHROOM

ADAM and TY recuperate at a public toilet and wash their wounds. They bond with GUYTALK. After intros we get back to business.

TYRONE

I guess we did alright out there.

CARNE

Yeah, we managed to kick ass and escape the cops.

TYRONE

Well, it's all wasted effort if we let that girl get away.

CARNE

Then I guess we're going back there. How long 'til the cops clear out?

INT. LENNY'S LOUNGE

The place is a shambles. The patrons who remain seem fine with the fact that a riot just occurred. The customers straighten chairs and call for fresh drinks. All except IRIS, the object of desire. Three ladies tend her as they calm her down.

Several suiters slink away as ADAM and TYRONE approach. At first IRIS is apprehensive.

CARNE

Sorry about the mess lady. I couldn't let those clowns steal you away. You're too precious.

After a few jokes ADAM breaks the ice and the three become friends.

INT. DOWNTOWN XANTHE

In the center of town is a circular plaza, fountain and garden. Several structures up to 10 stories tall surround that open space. All the buildings are sculptured to suit the spherical motif. There are no exterior walls, these buildings look like scaffolding. Interior walls are all made of glass.

INT. AN OFFICE - 4TH FLOOR

CARNE is interviewed by his supervisor STEVE BAKER.

BAKER

How did you manage to get shipped to MARS? You have no skills. What am I supposed to do with you?

CARNE

If you can't figure it out, I guess I'm here to take your job. I scored well on adaptability.

BAKER

Wise guys like you get sent to maintenance.

CARNE

You can stuff that. I didn't come all the hell up here to swamp the john. You find something better for me to do or I'm going home on the next shuttle.

BAKER considers the situation.

BAKER

Alright hot shot. What can you do that's valuable and won't cause harm to yourself or others?

CARNE

ROVER PILOT. There can't be any previous training for that, they're only used here. I can drive anything. You set me up for ROVER training and we've got a deal.

Dissolve.

ADAM goes thru training. SPACEY MOOD MUSIC

The ROVER BAY is a high-tech garage. It's a cavernous chamber that houses 16 docks that service these futuristic dune-buggy's. An instructor shows ADAM the gadgets in the machine, teaches him to read charts, how to service the ROBOT CRAWLERS that plant seeds and fertilizers, etc. Finally ADAM gets into the vehicle, exits the DOME and takes off across the plains of MARS.....

EXT. THE PLAINS OF MARS -- AFTERNOON

ADAM IS ESTATIC. He has found his purpose on MARS. Driving sequences display the desolate landscape.

Dissolve

FILM MONTAGE -- TIME PASSES -- DISPLAY OF LIFE ON MARS

INT. THE BEEHIVE

We see men emerge from their HONEYCOMBS and scramble up and down THE WALL. Upstairs towards the outside is the interior beltway avenue. Downstairs the BOULEVARD runs thru the residential zone and connects to XANTHE'S downtown. Men go in all directions. From another direction women join the workforce as all head to their jobs.

INT/EXT. DOWNTOWN XANTHE

Thousands of people work at the transparent buildings that surround XANTHE'S central plaza. Greenery is abundant, the DOME is an air factory. The heated fountain pool is surrounded by a park featuring trees and shrubs. Vines climb the skeletal scaffolding. Prominent places feature potted plants, often of exotic varieties.

On a penthouse office balcony a beautiful woman wafts a fresh breath of air from one of the fancy plants. She expresses pleasure. A man who obviously is an EXEC, shown by his suit and clean shave, murmurs love. They are of the elite. Beneath them thousands of office personnel are seen tending to their jobs in the CRYSTAL CITY.

At another location we see industrial activity. Massive vehicles bring raw materials into a factory. Smelting and manufacturing produce components for the construction of SPACE-STATIONS and DOMES. They also refine ores that're the grist for the mills of the Space-Station Factories.

We see the INDUSTRIAL SPACE-PORT. Cargo is exported in huge steel canisters that resemble artillery shells. They are sent to the CANNONS for launching. These giant cannons use an intense anti-magnetic pulse to launch their load towards MARSTAT. In space they are gathered together to form CARGO TRAINS that will be shipped to the SPACE STATION FACTORIES.

We travel along the interior beltway avenue which is lined with evergreen trees and shrubs. We pass a massive mess hall, public lavatories, a gym, a few cafes, video lounges, chain restaurants(Mac,Pizza,Chinese,etc.)and several racks of stationary bikes. People are pumping away on those bikes cranking out Power Dollars. They get paid to produce electricity which also keeps them fit. Physical culture is emphasized as a communal jog 100 strong charges down the avenue, their leaders blasting warnings with their whistles. 38% gravity allows this horde to bound down the avenue making single strides of three mtrs. There are apartments, large and small. Computer stations are busy with info and entertainment. Daily life at XANTHE goes on.

INT. BAKER'S OFFICE-DOWNTOWN XANTHE

The glass box on the 4th floor features a garden view.

BAKER

CARNE you're still not filing your daily reports.

CARNE

What's the point. All my reports are the same. Just change the dates. The MARTIAN HABITATION PROJECT is a complete failure.

BAKER

That's not up to you to decide. We have procedures that must be followed. If you can't do your job I'll have to shift you to a lesser position.

CARNE

The hell you will. I'm the fastest thing on the planet and you know it. You need me to service the distant CRAWLERS that most PILOTS can't reach. If you want my job you're welcome to try. You wouldn't last a day.

INT. LENNY 'The SQUID'S SALOON

It's a slow night at LENNY'S. CARNE and TYRONE are playing REDDOG BLITZ, the FOOTBALL DART GAME. The long toss of the darts and walk to retrieve them allows plenty of time to talk. TY is upset. Their conversation is paced by the rythum of the dart-game. Players are quiet while shooting.

We tune in to their talk just as TYRONE is about to throw, then stops himself.

TYRONE

They didn't even ask me! I get called in to see some new EXEC and he tells me that my contract has expired. I'm schedualed to head home on the next shuttle...Home? Home to what? To the hell-hole I escaped to come here?... The decision was already made, my services are no longer required...I didn't come here for a damn job. I came to build the NEW WORLD. I helped build this damn base. Are we finished building MARS?

Conversation fades as CARNE tries to calm TY down. He leads him to the bar. LENNY 'the SQUID' is playing barkeep. He hears their talk, and he likes what he hears.

LENNY--

You're seeing this all wrong TY. This isn't a problem, it's an opportunity. Canceling your
(MORE)

LENNY-- (cont'd)
 contract makes you a free man. Now
 you don't owe them anything. They
 owe you a ticket home, but you
 don't have to take it. I went thru
 this situation 20 years ago, and
 I'm still here. I'm the first
 independent operator on the planet
 and my stake on MARS is solid. You
 can do the same.

Voices fade as these three men make plans.

INT. A GREENHOUSE IN THE DARK

IRIS leads CARNE thru a conservatory. They whisper as they walk. She knows every inch of this garden. The lush growth is a welcome contrast to the generally sterile appearance of XANTHE. Glimpses and murmurs of other lovers are noticed. A loud party featuring a QUEEN BEE and her DRONES having a gang bang is given a wide berth. All avoid contact and display mutual discretion as everyone desires privacy. Our duo find their niche under a stand of trees.

They have a tempered discussion in whispers. IRIS is upset. We tune in as she explains her bad day and blues ...

IRIS
 I feel like a fool playing part in
 a fraud. Today another of my
 proposals was denied. My job is to
 improve the PROJECT with new
 techniques. But every program I
 present gets killed by management.

CARNE
 I'm with you babe. I patrol the
 plains. Sparse tufts of grass are
 the only sign of life. It's like
 MAHAP doesn't exist. My reports are
 ignored. Nobody wants to hear bad
 news.

IRIS
 For me the worst is my boss. I hate
 that fat bitch. She outranks me
 only because she boffs our boss.
 As a botonist she's nothing.

CARNE
 She thinks she's a queen because
 she's a QUEEN BEE. She's used to
 using men. Gang-Banging is a
 competitive sport here. She's a
 champion.

IRIS

Listen to this, some of those QUEENS have banded together and bought a piece of the base. They're building their own whorehouse for fun and profit. Civilization has come to Mars.

CARNE

Well, that's called progress. Don't let it ruin our evening.

FADE INTO EROTICA

DISSOLVE

INT. LENNY'S SALOON

IRIS and TYRONE are at the bar chatting with LENNY when CARNE's friend SAM joins them.

SAM

Didja hear? CARNE's been arrested. He came back late today and was busted on the spot. They didn't even let him report. They just took him away.

IRIS

What? Why?

SAM

I don't know. When I asked the cops what the charges were they brushed me off. There's something wrong going on around here.

LENNY--

I'll get to the bottom of this.

With that LENNY gets on the phone and makes calls.

INT. MHP director NOLAN's office

NOLAN

So, what did you find out?

POLICE CAPT AYMES

Nothing you don't already know. CARNE claims he had trouble with his vehicle. There is no evidence to the contrary. I had to release him when his friends filed an official complaint. That arrest was illegal. I'm not putting my career on the line to satisfy your whims.

NOLAN

I need to know what he was doing.

CAPT AYMES

Then I suggest that you ask him. I
won't press this any further.

INT. JAIL CELL

A 3 mtr concrete cube contains CARNE. He is sitting hunched up on a steel mesh cot. His face betrays his rage.

The solid steel door is opened to reveal a huge cop filling the doorway.

COP

OUT!

CARNE looks at the cop with disdain. At his own pace he picks himself up, dusts himself off and saunters out the door.

The cop leads CARNE down a hallway to an unmarked door. Their conversation doubles.

COP

IN!

As soon as CARNE steps thru the doorway the cop slams the steel door shut. He is facing a long steel table behind which sits a short iron-haired Police SGT. He treats CARNE to a dose of official snobery as he ignores him completely. After a minute he deigns to notice his prisoner.

SGT

You're a lucky man CARNE. If it were up to me I'd hold you here until Hell freezes over or I'd got the truth out of you. However, your chief complained to my chief and so I'm being forced to release you. Tomorrow a Board of Inquiry will question you again. And if you give them the same bullshit and evasive answers you've given me I'm sure you'll be my guest again tomorrow night. Now, get the hell out of here.

No response was required and none was given. As CARNE reaches the door the SGT stalls him for a moment.

SGT

Just one thing CARNE. Do you know why you're here?

CARNE

You mean, why am I in jail?

SGT

No you fool! Why are you on MARS?

INT. POLICE STATION LOBBY

CARNE is met by IRIS and his supervisor STEVE BAKER. They escort him away as both badger him with too many questions about his mysterious adventure. He puts them off with two words.

CARNE

I'm starving.

INT. A SMALL CAFE

Our trio sit at a table covered with the remnants of a meal. BAKER presses CARNE for details of why he went missing for a day.

BAKER

OK CARNE. Now that you're fat and happy, why don't you tell me all about-- What the Hell Happened!?

CARNE

A routine day's work became a nightmare. My route brought me to the far edge of our territory. I couldn't resist the temptation to go a bit further and be the first man ever to set foot on that part of MARS.

BAKER

You know that's against orders. We have safety rules for good reasons.

CARNE

Yeah yeah yeah. After a brief survey I returned to find that the ROVER wouldn't start up. I had engine trouble. I tried calling the BASE but the IRON MOUNTAINS blocked the radio signal. Finally the engine fired up. End of story.

BAKER

Are you telling me that your excuse for being Missing In Action for five hours is engine failure? There's nothing wrong with the vehicle. We checked it inside and out. The ROVER is fine.

CARNE

You weren't there. Look, I've had a long day. Let's wrap this up and continue tomorrow.

BAKER seems satisfied.

BAKER

Alright CARNE, we'll leave it that way for now. I want you to write an official report. Have it on my desk tomorrow by noon.

Once they're alone IRIS turns to CARNE.

IRIS

You know I can tell that you're lying. What really happened?

CARNE

Not here. Let's take a walk.

Privacy is at a premium at XANTHE. We go on an extensive walking tour seeking a quiet place. The CITY CLOCKS chime announcing the MIDNIGHT HOUR. MARTIAN days are 39+1/2 minutes longer than a day on EARTH. To keep timing straight all official clocks stop at midnight for that time period then resume on schedual. All shifts change then, the streets become crowded. CARNE wants to avoid people and the questions they might ask so he leads IRIS to obscure alleys, then downstairs to the underground of XANTHE. They go down three levels, passing utility services and storage rooms. As they walk they pass a room where a QUEEN BEE is having a Gang-Bang with her DRONES. Eventually they find a deserted corridor.

IRIS wants answers. She unleashes a barrage of questions.

IRIS

What the hell happened? They told me you were missing and presumed dead. You better have a good reason for putting me and everyone else to all this trouble.... Well, what have you got to say for yourself?

CARNE reveals his secret.

CARNE

I've discovered LIFE ON MARS.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. SAME CORRIDOR MINUTES LATER.

IRIS - WITH EXASPERATION-
You can't claim land on MARS!!!

CARNE

Why not? VENTOK claimed this territory and certified their claim by building the BASE. I found the Life Zone, but I wasn't prepared to prove what I found. I'll return to make a survey, collect samples, and otherwise legitimize my claim. Then we'll see if they can take it away from me.

IRIS

Take it from you! They're more likely to shoot you!

CARNE

I know. That's why I need your help. You're a botanist, you have the knowledge and equipment to prove that native life exists on MARS. With your credentials they can't dismiss us. Once we establish that LIFE ON MARS is for real COLONIZATION OF MARS will explode! It will be the biggest boost to populating the planet since we landed. Imagine millions of people on EARTH demanding a chance to settle on MARS. It'll be like the old Gold Rush. We'll give people a reason to believe in a future that's worth living for. This could save billions from misery.

The camera pulls away and voices fade as CARNE details his plan.

DISSOLVE

INT. LENNY THE SQUIDS SALOON

LATER THAT NIGHT

It's a slow night at LENNY'S. Two teams of FOOTBALL DART PLAYERS are working both boards. The distance for a dart throw is 6 mtr. The big darts's flights look unreal. They seem to fly too slow to maintain their trajectory as they travel to their distant targets.

LENNY appears at the far end of the bar. Camera pans the saloon from LENNY'S view. He checks on the dart game and

smiles. Above the dart alley teams are posted and bet accordingly. He makes a notation on his phone. The odds on the big board change. He glances to the back room to see that POKER and DICE are alive and well. LENNY waves to a few customers and joins CARNE across the bar.

LENNY

Where the hell have you been? I heard you were dead or something.

CARNE and LENNY speak softly. After a moment a nod from LENNY leads them to his office behind the bar.

INT. LENNY'S OFFICE/WAREHOUSE/APT/DISTILLERY/BREWERY

Surrounded by supplies CARNE and LENNY settle down once drinks are poured. We see them talking and tune in as CARNE reaches the climax of his story.

FILM MONTAGE as CARNE describes the images.

EXT. MARTIAN LANDSCAPE

We see rough terrain bathed in orange sunlight. CARNE heads for the distant mountains leaving the plains behind. He enters a valley that narrows into a canyon and explores the interior of the region. Eventually his path is blocked by rocky debris.

CARNE checks his map and decides to explore on foot. He exits the vehicle in his survival suit and walks into the canyon. The rocky road becomes a huge flight of stairs formed by an ancient lava flow. Each step is 4 mtr per side, set at an angle that descends into the planets crust.

CARNE continues. The canyon darkens as CARNE descends so he puts on his helmet's headlights. The canyon walls gradually change color from dull red to dark green. Then CARNE realizes that the discoloration isn't a new type of stone but in fact is a form of life clinging to the stone walls.

CARNE HAS DISCOVERED LIFE ON MARS.

His warning whistle tells him that he has reached his safety limit, his air is running out. He scrambles back to his ROVER, low gravity displayed as he goes. He reaches his vehicle as daylight fades. He drives from the canyon as darkness falls. Night driving across the treacherous plains is dangerous and forbidden. CARNE manages to return to base.

DISSOLVE BACK TO LENNY'S OFFICE

LENNY

Let me get this straight. You wandered outside of established territory and found a hidden land with native life waiting for your discovery. That's absurd. Don't you
(MORE)

LENNY (cont'd)
think VENTOK and MAHAP would've
found it years ago if it was there?

CARNE
Yes, I do. I think they covered up
this find for their own reasons.
They have a stranglehold on XANTHE.
If people knew that LIFE ON MARS
actually exists there would be a
GOLD RUSH to MARS. Immigration will
boom, countries and corporations
will jump at the chance to gain a
piece of the planet. VENTOK and
MAHAP will be forced to open XANTHE
to others. We can catapult
COLONIZATION to a new level. All
previous contracts will be voided
in favor of a NEW DEAL.

LENNY
If that's true you are a dead man.
VENTOK will swat you like a fly if
they think you threaten their
empire.

CARNE
I know. That's why they arrested me
upon my re-entry. This discovery
will determine the future of the
planet. I need to make this find
public before they eliminate me.
Help me get this good news out.

DISSOLVE.

INT. ROVER BAY - DAWN

CARNE and IRIS, loaded down with equipment, enter the cavernous room as glimmers of dawn begin to light the sky. They start loading a Rover.

The facility is closed but TWO YOUNG GUYS are putting in volunteer time to familiarize themselves with the vehicles. While our duo prepares to leave the GUYS come over to talk. One of them recognizes CARNE as the ROVER PILOT who went missing for a day. They're eager to question CARNE about his mysterious adventure.

CARNE takes control. He ushers the GUYS aside a few yards then turns to face them, so they're backs are towards IRIS, who continues to load the vehicle.

CARNE tells the GUYS about his mission as IRIS prepares for departure. Soon IRIS waves frantically signaling CARNE that it's time to go. He quickly concludes.

CARNE

The fact is that I DISCOVERED LIFE ON MARS. We're going back to gather evidence and prove it. This news will rock both our worlds.

When it becomes clear that CARNE intends to leave immediately the GUYS begin to protest. CARNE pulls out the big pistol that LENNY gave him.

CARNE

Here's what's gonna happen. In a minute we're gone. I want you to tell everyone what's going on. Tell them that ADAM CARNE has discovered LIFE ON MARS. Tell them that I'm going to PROVE MY FIND and LAY MY CLAIM to CARNE'S CANYON. Make a lot of noise.... And stay in public places. If you allow them to arrest you before you get the word out VENTOK might shut you up the hard way....Now. Get moving! Go!!!

The men hesitate. CARNE raises his revolver and fires over the GUYS heads. The roar of the .357 Magnum is deafening and effective. The GUYS run out. CARNE quickly hits a few controls and jumps into the ROVER as the inner garage doors close, immediately followed by the outer doors opening.

EXT. THE PLAINS OF MARS.

They escape into the blush of dawn. Driving at dawn on MARS.

INT. ROVER CABIN

CARNE tells IRIS to signal LENNY. She does.

INT. LENNY'S OFFICE

LENNY receives the message. He turns to his communications console. It is quite impressive. LENNY is the only private citizen on MARS who can personally communicate directly with EARTH. He sends the story of LIFE ON MARS out in all directions. Using a Vid-Voice he broadcasts the news as if it were an official announcement. He sounds serious.

LENNY

This is RADIO FREE MARS. Yesterday the greatest discovery in history was made. There is LIFE ON MARS!!! ADAM CARNE is a ROVER PILOT who patrols the plains of XANTHE. He has found a hidden valley where native life exists. At this moment a survey team is on it's way to confirm those findings.

LENNY set the broadcast to repeat. Then he got down to business. He contacted casinos first and bet on LIFE on MARS. Then he reached people important to him and his supply line. Finally he informed every major news network he could find.

INT. ROVER CABIN

MORNING

CARNE AND IRIS are racing along. Seen from inside the ROVER an exotic driving sequence occurs as 38% gravity and JETDRIVE allow the car to fly. Giant tires stabilize the vehicle at an altitude of one mtr. The landscape flashes by.

RADIO BREAKS IN. CARNE IS ORDERED BACK TO BASE.

CARNE ARGUES THAT THEY SHOULD BE CHEERING FOR HIM.

CARNE

DON'T TRY TO PULL RANK ON ME! This discovery is more important than you or me or the PROJECT.... I won't leave it up to MANAGEMENT.... They couldn't find their own butts with both hands....You may be their lackey, I am not....By the time today is done people on EARTH will know that LIFE ON MARS is a fact. You'll never be able to hide the evidence..

THE RADIO DEMANDS HE RETURN IMMEDIATELY. There is no off switch. CARNE motions to IRIS to take his pick-axe and smash the radio. She does so as she curses them.

IRIS

Those stupid bastards haven't got a clue. Yes Sir, No Sir. For them thinking is a foreign concept.

EXT. CARNE'S CANYON MID-MORNING

Our ROVER drives as far as possible until it's path is blocked by rocky debris. CARNE and IRIS exit the vehicle. They are carrying loads of equipment including two extra airtanks each. They negotiate the rocky path and reach THE STAIRWAY which marks the frontier of the OASIS. As they descend into PLANET MARS the notable change in the CANYON'S appearance is pointed out. Dark green lichen grows from a stain on the walls into a clearly defined form of plant life that becomes more lush as they continue. IRIS takes samples.

CARNE

This is as far as I got before my air ran out. From now on everything you see is new to me. Let's be careful. We want to live to tell this tale and return to BASE alive.

They continue on. The canyon walls are now flush with MARTIAN MOSS. As the STAIRWAY crumbles the CANYON widens to form a valley. The MOSS fades as various other forms of life overrun the MOSS. Exotic plants and vines are abundant. Our duo is overwhelmed with their find. They notice that liquid water is dripping down the vines. They check the temperature, it is 35 degrees. This is shocking. The MARTIAN MOSS exudes a warm wet atmosphere that is contained by the narrow CANYON walls and capped by the cold air above. This hidden valley is an OASIS.

CARNE takes his signal flare and fires it straight to space. It sends a message with his coordinates, his I.D.# and the message LIFE ON MARS. This message will reach EARTH in minutes without assistance or interference. CARNE'S prime task has been completed.

Signs of animal life appear. Creatures like giant bugs and worms are crawling on the vines and CANYON floor. The landscape varies and changes as the elevation dictates what life forms are viable in different environments.

We go down into a hollow and discover HOT SPRINGS. This bubbling mineral water creates the warm atmosphere and supports a variety of plants and animals. IRIS is collecting organic specimens while CARNE takes samples of rock and soil. A 2 meter long many legged segmented worm that features huge jaws heads towards IRIS. She is no butterfly. When it gets too close she swings her machete and chops it's head off. She bags and tags the creature.

IRIS is drawn to a large plant that looks like a huge blue agave cactus. She touches the plant with her machete and it slowly recoils from her touch. This is shocking. She lops off a piece of the plant as a specimen. As she turns to collect the sample the creature attacks her. It is a carnivorous plant/animal.

IRIS screams. CARNE comes to assist her, attacking the creature with his pick-ax. The plant slowly sends more thorny tentacles to envelope these delicious meals. The creature has more arms than both of them and they are losing the battle for IRIS. CARNE drops the hand tool, pulls out his pistol and fires his remaining 5 shots into the plant. It slowly recoils. CARNE resumes his assault with his pick-ax and manages to free IRIS.

The plant's poisonous thorns have crippled IRIS. This emergency ends their exploration. They head back to the ROVER, CARNE dragging and carrying IRIS and their equipment.

When they reach the STAIRWAY CARNE is barely able to lift Iris, their specimens and equipment up the STAIRWAY. When they reach the rocky debris field CARNE dumps the equipment and carries IRIS fireman style. With his attention on that task he walks right into a trap. As they approach the ROVER they are arrested by a squad of cops.

CARNE is relieved. He greets the cops as if they are a rescue team. The cop caravan includes an ambulance. IRIS is placed in the rescue vehicle, CARNE is put into the paddy-wagon and they all return to BASE.

INT. POLICE WAGON AFTERNOON

On the way home CARNE has an informal interrogation. He explains the wonders that they've found. The cops laugh at him with disbelief.

COP SGT
"Martians, Monsters, whatever."

EXT. XANTHE -- SUNSET

As night falls the COP CARAVAN returns to BASE.

INT. ROVER BAY

They enter the ROVER BAY and are greeted by THOUSANDS of XANTHE RESIDENTS having a GRAND PARTY celebrating THE DISCOVERY OF LIFE ON MARS. The excitement of the crowd crests as the CARAVAN arrives. A huge banner reads BRAVO CARNE. As CARNE exits the PADDY WAGON the crowd goes wild. Cheers, horns, whistles, confetti, etc.

CARNE responds to the crowd with the VICTORY GESTURE of clasped hands raised above his head. When THE CROWD sees that he is in HANDCUFFS they immediately protest. A dozen cops were in the CARAVAN. Another two dozen were assigned to handle the crowd. They are faced with 10,000 MARSMEN who are shouting "FREE ADAM CARNE" and pressure the cops to release him. A riot is brewing. As scuffles break out a booming voice is heard over the loudspeaker.

NOLAN (O.S)
"This is DIRECTOR NOLAN of THE MARTIAN HABITATION PROJECT. ADAM CARNE is under my jurisdiction. I demand that the police surrender him to my authority. He is not a criminal. He is an explorer who has completed his mission."

The announcement calms the crowd as a squad of MHP Police, all 12 of them, come out to reinforce the order. They take CARNE from the cops and bring him upstairs to see the boss. The crowd cheers him on sight. He turns and motions the victory gesture again, then stands his ground as he shoves his cuffed wrists forward demanding the guards to release him. The crowd roars and the guards comply.

INT. DIRECTOR NOLAN'S OFFICE --OVERLOOKING THE ROVER BAY

NOLAN

CARNE, you've been a problem since the day you landed. Stealing a ROVER at gunpoint?! Are you insane?! Do you realize the damage you've done?!

CARNE

Cut the crap NOLAN. I've done more for MARTIAN COLONIZATION in one day than the PROJECT has for 20 years. You're part of a fraud. You've been covering up the fact that the MARTIAN HABITATION PROJECT is a failure.

NOLAN

Who the hell are you to make that call?

CARNE

I'm the real expert on MARS! I patrol the Plains daily. A few tufts of grass ain't much to show after 25 years of effort. The landscape is barren. MAHAP is a fraud. You're part of this scheme, faking progress reports, fixing the numbers and smiling on T.V.

NOLAN

Watch your mouth CARNE. Your career is in my hands.

CARNE

My career as a ROVER PILOT? Wow! BEING THE MAN WHO DISCOVERED LIFE ON MARS means that I outrank you.

NOLAN

You're just a grunt who got lucky.

CARNE

And you're a crook caught in a crime. VENTOK owns you body and soul. My discovery is the most important find in MARTIAN HISTORY.

NOLAN

You're not qualified to know what you may or may not have found.

CARNE

IRIS is. She's a genuine scientist. The few specimens we brought back prove that LIFE ON MARS is real.

NOLAN

Regardless of your opinion there are proper channels to follow.

CARNE

Nobody gives a damn about your procedures. You can work with me or you can go to Hell.

Yesterday I was arrested in an attempt to shut me up. It's too late for that. My people have already spread the news of this discovery across the Planet and all the way back to EARTH.

You now have a choice. Join me in forging a new era of MARTIAN COLONIZATION or be damned as a fool and a fraud. I'll allow you to claim credit for authorizing my secret mission of exploration. Otherwise, you lose.

INT. LENNY'S OFFICE/WAREHOUSE/APT/DISTILLERY/BREWERY

LENNY is charged with energy, rapidly pacing, gesturing and shouting out ideas. We tune in as he says

LENNY

CARNE, you gave NOLAN too much. He's sure to screw things up, either by incompetence or design.

CARNE

It doesn't matter what he does. With his official report on record they can't deny what's happened. When they popped me on re-entry I thought I was a dead man. VENTOK had to know something of the OASIS. It was too easy for me to find. That secret is the key to the planet. VENTOK wants to keep it to themselves. We can't allow that. We have to give this truth to the world. To BOTH WORLD'S. We can't deny this, this is our destiny calling. The future needs us.

LENNY

Today, the future has been kind.

LENNY dumps a small sack on the desk between them. The clink of coins is unmistakable. Gold and silver are plentiful on MARS.

LENNY

This is yours. I made a fortune betting on you today. Not only here but in Vegas and Macao as well. By getting us on the big boards of casinos we got world-wide publicity without government interference. We also are rich beyond measure. With wealth and fame comes power. Now we are a formidable force here on MARS. Let's clarify our goals and use our position to promote MARTIAN COLONIZATION. We can be the FOUNDING FATHERS of this NEW WORLD.

CARNE

You realize this is dangerous. I just managed to beat an arrest. Next we'll be dodging bullets.

LENNY

Only the brave go to Valhalla. We're already targets. We grab this bull by the horns or we get trampled by the stampede..... We're gonna need help.

INT-EXT DOWNTOWN XANTHE

A bird's-eye view gently glides to the Central Plaza of Crystal City. We circle a tower with penthouse offices. A glass cage contains a large conference room where a lively debate is in progress. Dozens of Suits and Uniforms clamore for attention. Thru the windows we hear muffled shouts, etc.

SWITCH SCENE

EXT. SPACE STATION OLYMPUS

INT. VENTOK CONFERENCE CENTER

A similar chaotic conference is called to order by a blast of a horn at Chairman ROSS' fingertip. From the commanding position of the raised podium he addresses his conspirators.

ROSS

As all of you know SPACE INDUSTRIES is the dynamo that drives VENTOK. For years our profits and progress have been sapped by other divisions of the CORP. The nuclear disaster in Japan, oil spills off Mexico, law suits in Europe, we are paying for mistakes made by the 'Old Guard'. The time has come to separate the past from the future.

ROSS pauses to allow the gravity of his proposal to sink in.

ROSS

MARS is the key to the SPACE-BASED ECONOMY. MARTIAN resources make Inter-Planetary Commerce possible. Our base at XANTHE provides the hardware we need to expand our holdings at STATIONONIA. Our Space Stations are manufactured on MARS and shipped here in parts. The 'Grist for our Mills' is mined and refined on MARS. Our factory town of XANTHE is entirely under our control. We dominate the planet.

ROSS pauses again, he knows how to play his audience.

ROSS

The discovery of LIFE ON MARS forces us to act today! It is vital that our hostile take-over of Space Industries is concluded before VENTOK can react. We also must secure our base at XANTHE. A paper takeover of MARTIAN territory needs teeth to be real. SPACECORPS has dispatched an army to achieve that goal. Before winter we will have severed all Space Industries from VENTOK. Our space-based empire will be centered here, in space, at OLYMPUS. MARS supplies the ores for our factories and the components for our Space-Stations. Anything we need from EARTH we'll buy as all other Space-Stations do. We don't need VENTOK.

The opposition speaks.

OPPO #1

You can't guarantee that. We have nothing but energy. A vacuum can't produce a product. We need VENTOK.

OPPO #2-

Without VENTOK and government support our competitors will eat us alive. I say we stick with the lesser of two evils.

OPPO #3-

You're talking treason! I won't be part of this!

Silence descends. ROSS locks eyes with each of his foes. After a few moments of tension he smiles, nods, and accepts their verdict.

ROSS

Gentlemen, I won't argue with you.
Is there anyone else in this room
who isn't convinced to take this
path with me? Speak now or forever
hold your peace.

Nobody speaks or moves.

ROSS

Alright then. MR. COLFAX, please
escort these gentlemen out.

They go with their entourage.

The meeting continues. A more relaxed style takes over as each expert in their field yields to another revealing the depth of this plot. According to them they'll have an easy time taking over the dominant industry of Earth. All EXEC's offer their input, supported by dozens of lackeys waiting in the wings.

Soon the delegates notice debris drifting past the portals. Grotesque corpses of the OPPO's and their people float by.

INT. SPACE STATION OLYMPUS

ROSS'S swank apt is dimly lit by the moon and starlight. A beautiful naked woman offers goblets of red wine to ROSS. They toast and drink.

BITCH

You were masterful today. They'll
do anything for you.

ROSS

I was magnificent, wasn't I? They
came in like frightened sheep and I
drove them to lush pastures. All my
life I've known how to take
control. I'm surrounded by ordinary
fools who think they're smart
because they spy for answers to
simple questions. Who did what,
where, when. These facts can only
tell us the past. We need to know
the future.

BITCH

What do you know of the future?

ROSS
I know that it's mine.

Thoughtful silence, they both believe he is a man achieving a great destiny.

BITCH
Do you have any regrets?

ROSS
Only two. I never found the love of my life.

Her expression reveals her feelings.

BITCH
And the other?

ROSS
I shouldn't have murdered my second wife. That damn bitch cost me the election!

BITCH
Don't worry darling. You merely missed out on being President. You are the Caesar of Space.

EXT. MARS IN SPACE

INT. XANTHE -- MED-LAB

CARNE comes to visit IRIS and finds her on her feet for the first time since she was attacked. He steps forward to give her a gentle embrace. She flips out.

IRIS
Don't..Don't touch me. Ever since that monster mauled me I can't stand it when I'm touched.

CARNE
I'm sorry babe. How are you feeling otherwise?

IRIS
I feel strange. Peculiar. Those MARTIAN toxins really wiped me out. I'm still shakey. And high.

CARNE
We'll have you up and running in no time. In the meanwhile you rest, and think about all those great improvements in the Program that you've wanted to enact. You're going to get your chance.

INT. LENNY'S SALOON

The place is packed. The crowd spills thru the open doors and overflows into the Ave. The noise is deafening. On the big T.V. the President wraps up his speech praising the "American Team" for their "Discovery of Life on Mars." He promises a "New Era of Martian Colonization". Etc.

Then lights flash as sirens sound calling for order. After a moment of darkness CARNE is spotlighted on stage. The crowd roars!

CARNE takes control. With a few glib remarks he gains the attention of the CROWD.

CARNE

My Fellow Pioneers!!.... I got fired today. My boss told me it wasn't my job to DISCOVER LIFE ON MARS!!- I asked him who's job was it?
Our mission is to build MARS into a viable NEW WORLD. Management has different motives. All they care about is money.

The President is on board. MARTIAN COLONIZATION will be expanded. XANTHE already has over 50,000 citizens. The time has come for us to determine our own futures. We need to hold Elections!!!

RIOTOUS SHOUTS AND APPLAUSE RESULT

LENNY takes the stage.

LENNY

I've lived at XANTHE for 27 yrs. When I decided to settle here Management tried to have me deported. They said my job was over. I said 'This ain't a job. We are PIONEERS!!... MARS IS OURS!

TOTAL PANDIMONIUM!

End Act TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. SPACE STATION OLYMPUS- INT. T.V. STUDIO

Reporter CARLA SIMS, HOT, is interviewing PRESIDENT STEVENS on his way to MARS. With seductive aggression she presses the PREZ for facts. The PREZ oozes wit and charm...

CARLA--

Sir, your critics say you've given away our exclusive rights to the LIFE ZONE discovered on MARS. How do you explain your actions?

PRESIDENT

CARLA, that is primitive thinking. We live on a world of limited resources. The DISCOVERY of LIFE on MARS changes the equation concerning that planet for all mankind. It shatters the limits to MARTIAN COLONIZATION. Millions of Americans have registered to emigrate to MARS. The same is true around the world. It's our destiny calling."

CARLA--

Is it true you've promised to share all scientific finds openly? Is that in our nation's best interests?

PRESIDENT

Yes. We will share the secrets of LIFE ON MARS with all the world's scientists. We've launched the 'Martian Initiative' with the goal of doubling our base at XANTHE. I offer a friendly challenge to all people of all nations.... I'll see you on MARS."

CARLA-

Sir, we've heard disturbing reports of unrest at XANTHE. What can you tell us about that?

PREZ--

VENTOK sent an army of mercenaries to secure facilities at XANTHE. Conflicts arose between VENTOK forces, police, and civilians over control of vital utilities. A firefight erupted. There were multiple casualties. Since then XANTHE has been under Marshal Law. I've been petitioned by the Citizens of Xanthe to establish civil order. They've elected ADAM CARNE, the man who discovered LIFE ON MARS, to represent them. We've been in contact and I'm sure we can reach an understanding.

CARLA-

Is there a message you want to send to the people on MARS?

PREZ-

The Colonization of Mars is the greatest human advancement since the Stone Age. We need MARTIAN resources to support our Space Industries. XANTHE will return to normal... Tell them there's a new sheriff in town.

CARLA

And you won't be alone..

Voices fade as the camera goes thru the porthole and we see the fleet. It's an armada, the largest collection of military space ships ever assembled. We witness their departure and notice that many ships from OLYMPUS and other Stations are launching. The GOLD RUSH to MARS is on.

EXT. MARS....XANTHE

DEEP FOREST-MOUTH MUSIC

INT. XANTHE--LENNY'S SALOON

FREE MARS say the banners posted outside and inside. The place is packed. On the small stage musicians, poets, and Dominic display their talents. As the comic he tells jokes ridiculing the news of the day. Images are interspersed with scenes of military manuevers, public and private meetings, arriving personel, stressful faceoffs between armed uniforms, etc.

INT. LENNY'S SALOON --

CARNE, LENNY, TYRONE and IRIS are seated at a table when they're approached by a stranger. He asks to speak to CARNE alone. Suspicious looks go around. CARNE's gang protests and all agree to adjourn to LENNY's office.

LENNY whips out a shotgun on the stranger until he I.D.'s himself as JACK KNIGHT, a Presidential Guard. The PREZ wants CARNE to personally be his guide to the 'OASIS'.

They have a lively discussion about the fate of MARS that lasts til morning.

JACK

The PREZ asked me to ask you a few questions. How is it that you alone Discovered Life on Mars? Why did you go into the mountains? What were you looking for?

CARNE

I went to the mountains because they were there. I knew that nobody
(MORE)

CARNE

I'll tell you what I know Chief. MAHAP is a fraud. The plains of MARS are barren. They pretend the Program shows progress so they can stay in business. MAHAP is partners with VENTOK. They support each other to maintain their exclusive rights.

PREZ

You're saying that the Martian Habitation Project provides cover for VENTOK so they can raid MARS. Are you suggesting that I cancel the Program?

CARNE

No Sir. There are thousands of people in place who are dedicated to MARTIAN COLONIZATION. MARS will never be a paradise, but it is a viable world. Besides, if we don't develop MARS someone else will. Then we'd lose out twice.

PREZ

During the crisis Civil control of XANTHE was lost. An overhaul of government is in order. It seemed that nobody was in charge. I can't tell you how frustrating it is to watch from a distance and be unable to implement policy.

CARNE

We've held elections. We have new personnel in place. Your support would certify our authority.

PREZ

Well, I'm all for democracy. We'll hash out the details after I've had an inspection. The big question is how will you handle VENTOK? As PREZ I've had trouble dealing with them.

CARNE

That's because VENTOK thinks they own MARS. To be fair we never would have gotten this far without VENTOK's drive to exploit the planet. However, they've been paid 100 times over, and they didn't act alone. All of Earth is involved with Colonizing Mars.

PREZ

Your discovery of the Life Zone has ignited interest about MARS around the world. Around BOTH worlds. Our allies and enemies both here and at home are arguing over who has the rights to the 'Life Zone'. And as to business, we have been deluged with money and offers to develop the planet. Still, what about VENTOK?

CARNE

VENTOK acts as if everyone works for them. I know I don't. MARSMEN who do work for them aren't owned by them. They're free men working for industry. And they voted for us. Living on MARS is more than just a job. We are Pioneers. Our lives are a commitment to the future.

PREZ

Do you think the local residents are capable of running XANTHE? It's such a complex operation. It's more than just the town and the factory. There's politics, high finance and Inter-Planetary Commerce.

CARNE

Those 'complexities' were imposed by VENTOK to keep their choke-hold on XANTHE. Ventok doesn't want MARS to be developed for anyone else's benefit. MARS future would be grim if they had it their way. 'Better to rule in Hell than serve in Heaven', that's their motto.

PREZ

What do you propose to do?

CARNE

We will open MARS to everyone. Martian Colonization is our goal. America is the role model. Let free people improve their lives on the New World.

PREZ

VENTOK has contracts that are older than you. How can you go against them?

CARNE

All their contracts have expired!
VENTOK corrupted Congress. Their
exclusive rights were bought with
back-room bribes. Their claims to
MARS are bogus.

PREZ

Are you saying that the Martian
Project has been bungled from the
start?

CARNE

Frankly, yes. XANTHE is a vibrant
industrial base, but it should be
much more than that. VENTOK sees us
as a factory, not a colony. They've
imposed restrictions that limit
growth other than their own.

PREZ

What do you have in mind?

CARNE

FREE MARS! That's our goal.
Focus the Program on basics.
Self-sufficiency is essential.
The production of food, air, water
and new domes must be our priority.
We can double the size of XANTHE in
a year. Colonization is a vibrant
process. It takes a lot of spirit
to be a PIONEER on MARS.

PREZ

Too much spirit can lead to
disaster. Wisdom and tempered
action are what's called for here.

CARNE

That's true, but too much order
stifles growth. If I was a good
soldier we wouldn't be having this
conversation. I went against orders
and discovered LIFE on MARS. We're
going to re-write the rules. From
now on all guidelines written on
MARS will enhance and expand
Colonization.

PREZ

You talk as if you're already in
charge.

CARNE

We are. There are over 50,000
citizens at XANTHE. We've won the
elections. There is no going back.
We will determine our own future.

PREZ

I'm here to assess the situation. I may be willing to grant XANTHE some level of autonomy.

CARNE

You'll be doing more than that. We are free people. Nobody owns us. The previous government crumbled under pressure. We've held elections and appointed officials. Let's keep the facts straight. Without Martian resources the entire New Economy will collapse. EARTH needs CLEAN ENERGY. You know how bad things were before CLEAN ENERGY was invented. We are your willing partners in building the future. Work with us. That way everybody wins.

EXT. MARS

LATE MORNING

MOOD MUSIC

CARNE leads the caravan to the OASIS. They park at the same place where CARNE was arrested last time. To preserve the integrity of this fragile landscape only 9 people are allowed to explore the LIFE ZONE. CARNE, PREZ, 2 Prez guards, 3 scientists and a photo team.

We review the wonders of LIFE on MARS. Everyone is amazed. CARNE plays tour guide pointing out specific features of the OASIS. He cautions the group reminding them that IRIS nearly died from an attack by native life. Special attention is given to the specimens that previously were taken and tested. Unique properties were found in their DNA.

The scientists act like kids, their excitement is obvious. With environmental concerns in mind the investigation is kept brief. They wrap things up and return to XANTHE.

INT-- CARNE'S ROVER

AFTERNOON

PREZ-

Our goal is to boost Martian Colonization to a new level. We need to coordinate our efforts. For us to succeed you need to know about actions already in motion. VENTOK is on the verge of a civil war. They had a corporate coup d'etat that's being disputed by the old guard. Factions and armies are competing for control of Space Industry Resources, both here on MARS and at STATIONONIA. Yesterday Space Station Spartacus was nearly
(MORE)

PREZ- (cont'd)
 destroyed in a firefight between
 VENTOK SECURITY and SPACECORP..."

INT.-- EXT. DOWNTOWN XANTHE

A stage has been erected in the Central Plaza for the PREZ to address the public. Everyone is there. A throng of thousands fill the plaza. The glass buildings are packed with personnel vying for a better view.

Those who couldn't find room downtown are watching the PREZ on T.V. As are billions on EARTH and millions in SPACE.

The PREZ delivers a speech. Excerpts include.....

PRESIDENT

The dawn of a New Age...MARS is essential to the global economy...Access to MARTIAN resources is the key to settling political and economic disputes on EARTH and in SPACE... Visions of a better future will lift the gloom that characterizes our times... I've personally fought to maintain support for the Martian Habitation Project... VENTOK CORPS attempt to use force as a means to steal MARS has been soundly defeated...

Finally he speaks of the recent elections on MARS.

PREZ

The Citizens of XANTHE have held an election. I hereby certify that election legitimate. The New Age is Now!

The crowd goes wild.

INT. PREZ SUITE NIGHT

The setting is elegant and austere. PREZ and CARNE have an intimate conversation watched over by 2 guards. After polite chat and mutual congrats they get serious.

PREZ--

Last month 3 VENTOK EXEC's and Senator Hardwick were assassinated. The enemy is attacking on all

fronts. They will kill for control of MARS. I need you to work with me to advance Martian Colonization. You're the leader of the local government. We can bring about a better future for both our worlds.

CARNE

What do you want me to do?

PREZ

Be my partner on MARS.....
The Robber Barons are relentless.
At this moment they're trying to
destroy MARS as we envision it.

CARNE and PREZ consult and conspire.

INT. LENNY'S SALOON

NOON

The PREZ fills the giant TV screen as he makes his final broadcast from MARS. After praise, pep talk and promoting his vision of Martian Colonization he shatters VENTOK's grip on MARS.

PREZ

The DISCOVERY of LIFE on MARS
invalidates VENTOK's charter. From
now on MARS is open to everyone.

Riotous cheers.

T.V. BROADCAST

The PREZ whips the crowd back into a froth as he makes his exit. He leads a military parade around the town via the beltway ave. The camera dwells on the many checkpoints. Small armies look large in confined spaces, the T.V. image shows XANTHE completly under control.

We follow the PREZ party to the Spaceport. We see them load, launch, and carry on to Space. The camera reverses, we see MARS diminish in the distance. In minutes MARSTAT becomes visible. The twin wheels of the Space Station seem elegant watching over the planet. As we approach MARSTAT and prepare to dock

The docking bay explodes. Fiery debris blasts the ship. The pilots are toast. A flaming Spaceport embraces the burning ship.... It's a disaster.

INT. MARSTAT

Panic and chaos give way to order as emergency procedures take charge. The wounded PREZ is being hustled to Med-Lab.

He grabs JACK KNIGHT's forearm.

PREZ

Go back to MARS JACK. They need you.

INT. LENNY'S SALOON

Pandemonium! Mayor LENNY 'The Squid' SAUNDERS turns off the T.V. and calls for an emergency session of the Citizens of XANTHE. We watch them get organized.

SLIM stands tall.

SLIM

LENNY, what about the cops? Are they with us or against us?"

LENNY

Good point. SLIM, how's about you, CHARLIE and JONES go over to the Police Station. Tell them that we're having this meeting and we invite the Capt to attend. BALLINTINE, SCHAFFER and ROLLING go over to VENTOK HQ. Give them the same message.

BETTY, from now on you're Madame Secretary. Next year we'll all be in court. Keep the records straight. CARSON, I know you're a friend of the Chief Engineer. Bring him here. TAGERT, you play Football Darts with lots of MARSMEN. Find someone to speak for them..

Bustle and fade.

EXT. SPACE STATION OLYMPUS - INT. T.V. STUDIO

CARLA SIMMS reports on the attempted assassination. She speculates about who did it, why, and why this crime has occurred now. Her questions open mysteries without answers.

INT. ROSS'S APT at OLYMPUS

The bitch is naked and furious.

BITCH

Two seconds?! He missed with a bomb by two seconds? Can't we do better than that?

ROSS is positive.

ROSS

It doesn't matter. We've shown how easily the PREZ can be hit. His supporters will get the message.

EXT. SPACE STATION ORION-- H.Q. OF BUTLER CORP--VENTOK'S PRIME RIVAL

INT. BUTLER CONFERENCE HALL--LOTS OF SUITS

BUTLER is fat, fortyish and furious.

BUTLER

I knew ROSS was an arrogant bastard but I didn't think that he'd go this far. Losing the election must have addled his mind. He won't get away with the theft of MARS. I've contacted the Mayor of XANTHE and assured him that we are ready to replace VENTOK as the industrial patron of MARS. He was receptive. Unfortunately ROSS chose his timing well. MARS and EARTH are in divergent orbits now. As the distance between planets grows it becomes impractical to mount a campaign to supply MARS. It will be more than a year before regular shipping can resume. During that time VENTOK will try to choke XANTHE into submission. We are coming to their rescue. MARS is the prize that will determine the future. Make no mistake about it. This battle is for our survival.

INT. XANTHE - OFFICE OF MHP DIRECTOR NOLAN

NOLAN, Police Captain AYMES and General MEYERS of the local Marine base are having a private meeting. We tune in as NOLAN expresses his outrage that the PREZ certified the vote on MARS as legal and binding.

NOLAN-

A saloon keeper and a driver! I've spent 20 years building this base. Now I'm told that I'm outranked by grunts that used to work for me. What is this world coming to? Has everyone gone crazy?

GEN. MEYERS

I don't like the way this conversation is going. I'm a soldier and I follow orders. If you've got problems with the new regime send your complaints up the chain of command. So far I see nothing to object to. And if I did I'd still follow protocol.

CAPT. AYMES

NOLAN, you're a pompous ass. You talked me into arresting CARNE the day he discovered Life on Mars. That's the last time I listen to you. You ought to be glad that you've still got a job. You're tenure as Director of MAHAP has been a dismal failure. You falsified reports that cost the Martian Habitation Project 20 years of progress..... You've always been a VENTOK puppet!

Silence. Stern faces. All rise. Meeting adjourned.

INT. XANTHE--LENNY'S SALOON

LENNY's is packed. The town hall meeting has lasted all night. As CARNE enters applause, hoots and whistles greet him. Many hands usher him onto the stage where LENNY awaits.

LENNY--

Here he is, the man you've elected as the Ambassador of XANTHE! ADAM CARNE!!

The crowd roars.

As CARNE regains his composure LENNY counsels him.

LENNY

Be cool kid. It's showtime.

CARNE

Like all of you I came here with a head full of dreams. We wanted to build a New World. Now we've got our chance. The Discovery of Life on Mars has invigorated Martian Colonization. We're not just some obscure science project. We're the bridge to the future....

Etc, etc to a roaring crowd.

After speeches are done it's a party at LENNY's. JACK KNIGHT steps forward and praises CARNE.

JACK

That was a great address. I didn't know you had it in you. We need to talk.

CARNE signals LENNY and our trio heads for LENNY's office.

INT. LENNY'S OFFICE/WAREHOUSE/APT/DISTILLERY/BREWERY

JACK confirms the PREZ's commitment to MARTIAN Development. As we tune in he offers his expertise to their mutual cause.

JACK

We must be clear about every step we take. Our enemies are powerful and relentless. Any weakness we have will be exploited.....
Let's start with basic security. From now on the two of you should never be seen together. You're both targets. We can't afford to lose both of you.
LENNY has this fortress. He lives and works here. We can secure this as a safe haven. CARNE is another matter. From now on you'll never walk alone. I'll be there. If I'm busy someone else will take my place. That's no guarantee but at least it makes you twice as hard to kill.

They continue plotting and planning as we drift away...

INT. XANTHE -- BELTWAY AVE

CARNE and DOMINIC leave the mess hall and head towards LENNY's. Just before they hit the door two men step out of the shadows. DOM blasts them to hell in a second.

DOM--

I've watched them watch us all day. They were amateurs. It'll be tougher next time.

INT. LENNY'S NEW APT--SWANK

LENNY--

No one knows about this place. TYRONE did most of the work himself. The saloon is our castle.

This Apt is our hideaway. When we're here we're safe. It's outside that our problems begin. From now on your escort will be formal. JACK will guard you as he did the PREZ. Your personal team of bodyguards will never leave you lonely.

INT. LENNY'S SALOON

It's the third Town Hall meeting in a week. Now that they're organized they're making strides to effectively govern the colony. Experts in various fields head committees covering all aspects of Martian development.

Lenny sets a new policy based on mutual cooperation with the other bases.

LENNY

We need to rethink our goals. The other bases are not our enemies. They are our partners in the taming of MARS. We can all gain from mutual cooperation. Tomorrow we'll send a diplomatic mission around the world. This 'Friendship Tour' will make Allies of formal Rivals. Every settlement has unique accomplishments. We should share our knowledge and experience. We are all PIONEERS on MARS. Let's keep our eyes on the prize. The New World can be home to millions, even billions of people. MARS can benefit all of humanity. Let's focus on the future.

INT. LENNY'S OFFICE

LENNY, CARNE and JACK discuss the diplomatic mission. They conclude with a toast. As they slam their glasses down....

A BOMB BLOWS UP THE SALOON

The walls buckle, the ceiling collapses and they find themselves trapped in the ruins. After an hour they manage to dig thru debris and unearth LENNY's escape hatch. Their escape route takes them down to the sub-basement.

JACK--

You guys are the targets of this attack. Stay here while I reconnoiter.

Two hours later our trio regroup. JACK gives his report.

JACK.

Seven dead, 31 injured and the bar is a total shambles. You two are assumed to be buried alive. We'll stand for now. They can't kill you if you're already dead. Tomorrow, once we are safely gone, LENNY can announce your miraculous survival.

INT. ROVER BAY - DAWN

CARNE and JACK enter as the day shift begins. Immediately CARNE is recognized. As the men press him with questions he stops the rush of the crowd.

CARNE

Hold tight. We are on a vital mission. I'm going to need volunteers. This is no ordinary day. Today we're making history. I'll be back in 5 minutes.

CARNE and JACK climb the stairs to the Dispatcher's office. JACK takes the lead. He opens his coat and flashes his badge which also displays his gun.

JACK

I'm Federal Agent JACK KNIGHT. This is ADAM CARNE, the Ambassador of XANTHE. We're here on official business. We are commandeering this facility by order of Mayor LENNY.

The dispatcher is flustered.

DISPATCHER

I'll have to confirm this.

He reaches to push a button.

JACK grasps his wrist with an iron grip.

JACK

Don't make me mad.

EXT. XANTHE - DAWN

Minutes later 5 ROVERS exit the garage doors. As soon as they're clear they head in different directions.

INT--XANTHE- OUTSIDE LENNY'S RUINS

Rescue workers dig frantically to get thru the debris. Then LENNY arrives. Cheers go around as LENNY takes charge. Vigor is restored to exhausted workers. XANTHE is back in business.

INT. XANTHE--CRYSTAL CITY - DOWNTOWN

Mayor LENNY has commandeered the Bureau of Information, a government ploy to censor the news. He's backed by TYRONE and DOM. After kicking out a pair of clerks he broadcasts.

LENNY

This is Radio Free Mars coming to you live from XANTHE. We bring you truths that others dare not speak. I am Mayor LENNY. Last night death and destruction took it's toll on XANTHE. A bomb blast destroyed our local saloon during a Town Council meeting. There were many casualties. Some have yet to be identified. Due to this emergency I am invoking Executive Powers as granted me by the President. Changes will be made at XANTHE.

I've appointed a new director for the Martian Habitation Project. Dr. IRIS MILLER has proven that the key to Life on Mars is in the DNA from Martian plants. MAHAP has been renewed.

I'm pleased to report that ADAM CARNE also survived the bombing. Presently he is leading a diplomatic mission to visit the 5 foreign bases within our reach. The national rivalry of the past is over. We are all pioneers on MARS.

Today we begin rebuilding XANTHE. Repairing the damage is the first step to expanding our base as ordered by the PREZ. To that purpose I've drafted 1000 workers from VENTOK and all necessary materials to double the size of our town. I'll keep you informed on a daily basis of our progress...

EXT. MARS - AFTERNOON

Pale sunlight highlights the red deserts of MARS. Our ROVERS race to their destinations, the foreign bases. All our envoys carry a sign of good will, a gift of a fist sized glass globe. In each is a sample of Martian Moss.

LENNY broadcasts reports on the Diplomatic Mission. We hear his voice and see images of what our envoys experience.

LENNY

The Japanese base is stylish like an upscale urban neighborhood. Aside from their technical skills everybody is a gardener. Their town is brimming with life. Dwarf fruit trees line their streets, every balcony has window-boxes full of flowers and vegetables. Their public parks and gardens are groomed meticulously. They have made great strides in metallurgy and energy conversion. We can learn a lot from them....

Shift to the Chinese base, which is massive. Domes in many shapes and sizes cover several square miles of Martian real estate.

LENNY

The Chinese emphasized construction and food production as the keys to expansion. They've built 100's of greenhouses providing different environments for a variety of crops. They're raising chickens, ducks and pigs. They've even got fish-farming of carp, catfish and tilapia. They're importing 1000's of people per year. Their goal is to have 1,000,000 citizens on Mars by the turn of the century.

The Indian base claims that they'll reach 1,000,000 population first. They also have discovered new elements unique to MARS. The Frontiers of Science are advancing on all fronts.

Here at home construction rages onward. Competition for contracts has brought a flood of money,

floating the dream of the City of XANTHE. Our new Spaceport will double the volume of trade. Highways are being forged. The New World is pulling itself together. Our future is taking shape.

INT. EURO-BASE

The Euro-base is named The Sir Issac Newton Academy of Martian Sciences, known as Newton. They are staging a swank party to welcome their honored guest. CARNE is the most famous man in the universe, the Discoverer of Life on Mars, and the Ambassador of XANTHE. Good food and wine are abundant.

CARNE is impressed by the many advances they've made in science, technology and botany. Their experimental approach to conditions on MARS invented new techniques to solve old problems. Their proudest achievement is Green Orchids, a wonderous plant that thrives on the weak Martian sunlight. It produces volumes of oxygen without soil or water. All it's parts are edible, from it's high protein roots, vitamin rich stems, leaves that are nutritious raw or cooked, flowers that make a tasty tea, and seeds that are versatile as bread, pudding and a dozen other food products.

CARNE needs to contact XANTHE. All transmissions are spied on so guarded language is employed. The news is all bad. LENNY has no patience for protocol and he speaks his mind.

LENNY

MAHAP's ex-director NOLAN is dead. Yesterday he came to me and demanded recognition for his service. He offered to expose MAHAP, VENTOK, and a host of government officials in an extensive plot to dominate MARS now and forever. I told him to bring me proof. He was dead by morning.... Our ROVER PILOT RANKIN reached Kazakstan base and hasn't been heard of since. They deny his arrival. We want him back and we want to know what they're hiding. You're the man on the scene, Ambassador. You handle it.

CARNE has a conclave with the leaders of Newton Base. Everybody is a Dr. They discuss their hopes for progress on MARS and find their visions of the future similar. EARTH needs MARS to ease the crisis of dwindling resources and to provide a new home for EARTH's teeming billions. To be viable MARS must become self-sufficient.

Then they discuss the Kazak situation and come up with a plan. If they can prove their good intentions with evidence then perhaps the Kazaks will cooperate. They organize a convoy. Six Drs. go along to explain the new sciences. CARNE carries the plans for the expanding City of XANTHE.

EXT. KAZAK BASE - AFTERNOON

Unlike the other settlements Kazakstan base is a fortress. Our convoy is met by armed guards. A General takes charge. Using an interpreter he conducts an interview that's more like an interrogation.

After too much talk goes nowhere CARNE gets angry.

CARNE

We came in friendship to offer you a chance to join us in the future of Martian Colonization. Frankly, we don't need you, and I don't see what you can offer to our cause. Keep the gifts we've brought you. They'll be a constant reminder of your mistake today. Years from now you'll curse yourself daily, FROM YOUR PRISON CELL! Your superiors have a reputation for punishing failure.

My only concern is for our envoy. I'm not leaving without him. I am the Ambassador of XANTHE. If you arrest me there will be serious repercussions. Give me my man now!

The General seems about to shoot CARNE himself when his aide, a Capt, quickly intervenes. After a brief discussion the General angrily stalks off.

CAPT

Let us be reasonable. Of course we will release your man. We merely wanted to question him.

He barks orders at a guard who goes to fetch RANKIN.

CAPT

In the meantime I'd like to hear more of your proposal.

INT. XANTHE--

The Queen's Lounge is the newest saloon in town. Rumors say

that it's the first whorehouse on MARS. On the third day of business two men enter and speak to the owners. After polite talk they get to the point.

The men inform the Queens that they'll be needing their protection. The Queens order them to leave. The men reluctantly leave after making thinly veiled threats.

INT. MAYOR LENNY'S OFFICE

Queen Bee MARTHA lodges a formal complaint with Mayor LENNY. He gets a description of the gangsters and promises to solve this problem.

LENNY has the gangsters arrested. They're tough hoods who don't crack under questioning. After two days they're released.

That night Queen MARTHA and her two escort DRONES are shot dead on their way home. LENNY is anguished.

LENNY

We had them and we let them go. Now
we have three murders on our hands.
They have got to pay.

LENNY consults with Police Capt AYMES. They scour the town. The culprits are found. They have alibis. Nobody cares.

The gangsters died in raw sewage destined for the soil bank.

LENNY instructs Capt AYMES to investigate the thugs alibis.

LENNY

Guys like that don't work alone.
Let's find out who's with them.

INT. XANTHE--

LENNY's Lounge was resurrected to twice it's original size. The Grand Opening lasts three days. When the party was over our gang got back to business.

In his office Mayor LENNY, Ambassador CARNE, MHP Director IRIS and Police Capt AYMES have a conference. They all agree that the future looks bright with one exception. What will they do about the impending invasion of MARS by the Mobs?

LENNY--

We can't allow them to gain a
foothold on MARS. They are like a
disease. If malaria was our enemy
we'd wipe out mosquitos. I say we
deny entry to anyone identified as
a threat.

CAPT AYMES--

That's impractical. Times are hard on EARTH. Billions of people are desperate. We can't screen them all.

IRIS

We also can't sell our souls for a higher purpose. We need a better plan. One we can live with. Something that works.

CARNE--

There's only one answer. Gangsters know that somebody has to be the Boss. That's got to be you LENNY.

EXT. XANTHE -- INT. XANTHE -- TOUCHDOWN

The largest convoy in history arrives amidst much fanfare. XANTHE's population booms as more than 3000 people seek lives on the New World. Most of them have not been pre-hired, they need jobs. In anticipation of this event LENNY and the Town Council have enacted a dozen programs to employ them.

INT. LENNY'S LOUNGE

It's talent night every night at LENNY's. It's his intention to build local culture. The requirements for immigration tended towards the arts.

Musicians, dancers, poets, actors, painters, sculptors, all are welcome at XANTHE.

As the Midnight Hour rings throughout XANTHE most customers head home. At the end of that 'Hour' LENNY's door only works one way, out. Just before the doors are closed four men enter the saloon.

Sensors at the door indicate that these men are armed. LENNY hits the silent alarm. CARNE and JACK are having their night-caps with TYRONE and DOMINIC. They surround the thugs.

As the lead gangster goes for his gun JACK shoots him dead. Everybody freezes. A new day has dawned. LENNY IS the BOSS of XANTHE.

The remaining gangsters are given a choice. Work for LENNY or join the soil bank. They opt for LENNY's patronage.

INT. XANTHE -- VENTOK HQ

Chairman ROSS has come to claim control of VENTOK's Martian assets. His coup d'etat of the Corp is still under dispute. Few know that a missed hit prompted his trip. His enemies are closing in. ROSS is getting desperate.

He begins the meeting in his usual manner, aggressive with the assumption of dominance. He is cold cocked immediately.

JEFF RANSTEAD has been the Chief of Operations on MARS for years. As soon as the meeting is called to order he challenges ROSS.

JEFF RANSTEAD

Who the hell are you to call a meeting? You're not even a member of the Board anymore. Get out! You're not wanted here. Which is rare for you, being that you are wanted on criminal charges everywhere else. Get Out!! Go now or I'll have you arrested.

ROSS

You're RANSTEAD, right? Wrong call.

With that ROSS raises his left hand and snaps his fingers. Gunfire erupts from six directions. RANSTEAD is torn to shreds.

A brief shock follows. ROSS resumes control. His killers have surrounded the room.

ROSS

Let us reason together....

INT. CRYSTAL CITY--MAYOR'S OFFICE DAY

Mayor LENNY addresses dozens of suits and uniforms. They are facing a crisis. VENTOK has gone into lockdown mode. XANTHE is crippled, it's primary industry and 35,000 employees are being held hostage next door. VENTOK also has possession of the Space-Port and the new supplies. Without saying a word the threat of starvation hangs over the base. Then ROSS sent a message via T.V. He used the 'Declaration of Independence' to declare 'VENTOK's Private Holdings' as 'Beyond EARTH's Laws' and 'Not Subject to Foreign Authority.' 'Any and all means' is the theme as ROSS passionately sells his dream to the Martian public. He wants sovereignty for MARS. He quotes LENNY --"Free Mars." And he's got 1,200 troops to back him.

GEN. MEYERS

--We can take them in a day but the damage...

CAPT AYMES

--Don't be absurd! We're not going to sacrifice XANTHE. Give it time. When tempers cool, reason prevails...

DIRECTOR IRIS--

You guys don't get it. We've got a madman on our hands. ROSS wanted to be PREZ. He's been the Caesar of Space for years. Now he wants to be the King of MARS. Not a chance. We act now, before ROSS can solidify his hold. I've got a plan. We can get to ROSS. We'll send CARNE.

EXT. XANTHE -- AFTERNOON -- ORANGE DAYLIGHT - DUSTSTORMS

Bird's eye views fly around the base revealing that VENTOK's Industrial Complex dwarfs the civilian town. We focus on a portal. CARNE is inside looking out.

INT. VENTOK HQ--OFFICE ADORNED WITH TROPHIES OF INDUSTRY

ROSS, his Six Shooters, CARNE and JACK have the room.

CARNE--

Great view Too bad you can't see the future....

ROSS

I am the future of MARS. My plans and directives built this base. Without me XANTHE doesn't exist.

CARNE

Stroke yourself on your own time ROSS. I didn't come here to talk to you. There's no point talking to a dead man..... I came to save these men. They don't deserve to be shot as traitors because they were assigned to you. I represent XANTHE. I'm here to offer them amnesty. Once. Surrender your weapons...Now!

CARNE

As to you ROSS... Your crimes are too numerous to mention. Come along easy and you'll live to see tomorrow.

ROSS sneers at CARNE.

ROSS

We'll see who's a dead man.

He makes an imperious wave and snaps his fingers.

CARNE-

With his hands-up, facing the gunmen.

You're not going to shoot me. I am
your salvation. Let's wrap this up
while we're all still friends.

The Six Shooters hesitate. Then their Lt. slowly opens his coat and carefully plucks out his pistol with a thumb and forefinger. He places it on the table. ROSS is shocked. As the others follow suit ROSS snaps and goes for his gun.

JACK is faster. He puts ROSS down with a single shot.

ROSS is bleeding and moaning on the floor.

CARNE turns to JACK.

CARNE

I thought you never missed.

JACK

I thought you wanted him alive.

CARNE

Alright. Guys, pick him up. We're
going home.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. MAYOR LENNY'S OFFICE

LENNY--

CARNE, you are out of your mind!
You can't pardon killers. They have
got to pay for their crimes.

CARNE

And they will pay, but how much?
Their only crime on MARS is the
murder of JEFF RANSTEAD. The
Six-Shooters are all Federal Agents
who had perfect records until they
were assigned to ROSS. He corrupted
them. They admit they've gone wrong
and we all agreed that they'd serve
Seven Years of community service,
specifically as our Federal Agents.
These men no longer have a country.
MARS is their last stop. We'll keep
them on low wages and short
leashes. We're going to need their
manpower.

LENNY mulled that thought over.

LENNY
What about ROSS?

CARNE
That's a different story. First of all, I don't know what the wages of sin are, but in his case it was 27% of VENTOK. We own XANTHE totally from MARSTAT to the deepest mines.

Secondly, he owes us Seven Years of Service. He's an expert on Space Industries, Planetary Commerce, Zero-Grav Physics, Solar Energy and other essentials. We can use him.

Thirdly, I want to keep an eye on him. I don't trust that bastard as far as I can spit. He will betray us sooner or later. We'll use him like a bird-dog. He'll sniff out trouble. He'll identify suspects and we'll act accordingly.

LENNY
Damn CARNE, you are getting good at this.

EXT. XANTHE - NEW GIANT TWIN DOMES DOMINATE THE VIEW. BEFORE THEM DOZENS OF TUBE DOMES ARE LAID OUT LIKE RACKS OF SAUSAGES

Dozens of opaque tubes 100 X 20 mtrs form a grid alongside the New Domes of Freeport. These are greenhouses. We see one being made. A giant truck-tanker exudes liquid plexiglass pumped full with Martian Air like a clown's balloon. The frozen atmosphere crystalizes the jell and a new dome is born in an hour. From a distance it looks like a monster insect laying eggs.

INT. LABYRINTH OF TUBE DOMES.

MAHAP Director IRIS is leading 100 recruits on a tour of her gardens.

IRIS
Each individual greenhouse offers us choices. Specific environments

are groomed to maximize productivity. This garden is tropical. We're growing Green Orchids and fruit. Look at them thrive...By using lenses and reflectors to intensify natural light we've increased productivity by 30%...Warm water works magic here. A slight rise in heat and moisture generates a bounty of produce... Truffles are a form of fungi designed to create soil out on the open plains. We had limited success in the field but within contained environments their production is phenomenal. We are raising organic soil. This greenhouse alone produces one ton of soil per month....MARS will go green, one dome at a time..Chickens and eggs, goats and cheese, fish farming, using aqua-culture to enhance horticulture, these are all winning combinations to make MARS self-sufficient.... Taking this job is a sacred trust. The future of MARS is in our hands.

INT. XANTHE-- MAIN MESS HALL

CARNE and DOM are having coffee when the Six Shooters suddenly surround them. A moment of tension gives way to trust as it's clear they're there to protect him.

LT

We need to go Chief. The Boss wants you.

INT. XANTHE-- THE GRAND HOTEL

LENNY's latest creation is the swankest place in town. Rooms and apts, dining and gambling, live entertainment, business opportunities and employment are available daily.

Our gang marches thru the stylish lobby back to the rear where LENNY's private office resides. Pairs of guards are passed along the way. It's like marching thru a hall of honor, or a jail.

LENNY's office looks like a court-room. His massive desk is raised on a platform two steps tall. On either side lesser stands are stationed suitable for clerks or witnesses.

LENNY gets to the point.

LENNY

Two new problems arose in the last hour. We got an urgent call from PROF. BARNHART of NEWTON. You're friends, right? He wanted to reach you and now we can't contact him. We need to know what's going on....

CARNE--

What else went wrong?

LENNY

Then there's the really bad news. We've confirmed that a reward of millions is open to anyone who kills you... or me. We're marked men.

We separate today. If we both die Free Mars dies too. I'll hold XANTHE. I've got plenty of cops and guards to protect me. As for you, you have got to hit the road. A moving target is hard to kill. First, go to Newton base and find out what Prof. BARNHART wants. I've checked on him, he's a serious brainiac so it must be important. Then take a tour of the other colonies. Strengthen our bonds with our fellow pioneers. I see tough times ahead.

INT. ROVER BAY--DAWN

CARNE and JACK hi-jack the place, again. This time there's no resistance.

CARNE

I need five volunteers in five minutes. Get ready.

They enter the office and give the dispatcher his orders.

EXT. XANTHE--DAWN

Six Rovers exit and split in six directions. Nobody knows who is in what vehicle. CARNE has covered his tracks.

INT. XANTHE--THE BEEHIVES

IRIS's program to hang 1000's of flower pots along the walls of the Beehives bore fruit. Stone canyons became gardens

overnight. Pride of Place beautified XANTHE. Cave-man culture was enhanced as GRUNTS had reason to care about their neighborhood. Oxygen enrichment increased as edible fruits, seeds and flowers beautified the environment. Vines climb up the walls, vines hang down the walls. Then IRIS introduced songbirds. XANTHE looks and sounds like a paradise, the Hanging Gardens of Mars.

INT. LENNY'S PRIVATE OFFICE AT THE GRAND HOTEL

POLICE CAPT AYMES-

We've identified dozens of convicted felons who've recently arrived here at XANTHE. Many of them used false I.D.'s. I suspect some are killers here to claim the bounty on your head. I can't deport them without proof, and we can't ship them out until the next shuttle leaves, so how do you want to play this?

DOMINIC-

Let me see that list.

A moment of perusal.

DOMINIC

These four are ours. I called for reinforcements. These men are wanted by the cops and the mobs. They need us to give them sanctuary. Their loyalty is ours.

LENNY-

We're going to set a three-way trap. Our thugs will claim the reward, insist on proof that the cash is available and demand a down payment. When they get a response we'll follow the money trail and expose whoever is behind this plot. The other gangsters will realize that they are going to lose the contract. That should stimulate them to act now while we are ready.... I think ROSS is the Mastermind behind this conspiracy, but he isn't working alone. We need to know who his confederates are. We'll have a clean sweep of XANTHE and set our house in order.

EXT.--INT. NEWTON BASE

CARNE and JACK get a warm welcome from the DRS. of NEWTON. Once greetings are done CARNE asks about PROF. BARNHART. A curious silence descends upon the group. DR. CHILTON gets belligerent.

CHILTON

What do you want with BARNHART?

CARNE takes offense.

CARNE

Don't ask me stupid questions DOC.
The PROF. called me and I came.
Where is he?

CHILTON looks to his pair of security guards.

CARNE

Don't be a fool DOC. Those are
kittens. JACK's a tiger.

CHILTON caves in.

CHILTON

PROF. BARNHART is dead.

INT. NEWTON BASE--

We see CARNE and JACK investigate BARNHART's death. It seems that the PROF. fell down a flight of stairs. JACK is an Agent with experience in these matters. He rejects the verdict of the DRS. inquiry. This is not an accident.

JACK

There's no way that the PROF. died
falling down that flight of stairs.
Certainly not with 38% gravity.
This is murder.

The DRS. realize that JACK is better qualified than them to run a criminal investigation. They allow him to continue.

INT. NEWTON BASE--GUEST QUARTERS

JACK motions CARNE to activate their scramblers. Now they are immune from surveillance.

JACK

BARNHART knew something worth
killing for. Let's follow his
trail.

CARNE

If BARNHART was murdered we need to
find his killer.

JACK

Every other guy at this base is a spy. There's too many suspects. We'll focus on the PROF's work.

CARNE

Hold on jack. When I met BARNHART he was excited about the PYRAMIDS of THARSIS. That's a set of three sand dunes laid out as a triangle. He claimed that they weren't natural, therefore they were constructed. If he was right then those PYRAMIDS hold evidence of an advanced alien civilization. That'd be a secret worth killing for, to the wrong people.

INT. NEWTON- A Stairwell. The scene of the crime.

JACK

Evidence indicates that BARNHART passed this way often. Let's track him. I set this Sniffer to his DNA.

JACK uses a device that emits a soft blue light. It beeps as it keys on it's target. Red marks appear against the blue field.

JACK

That's BARNHART's footprints.

We take a tour of the bowels of the base. BARNHART's trail brings us to an obscure office buried in the back of the basement. JACK signals caution, there's someone inside. He stashes the sensor, draws his gun and nods for CARNE to do the same.

They burst into the room to find a tall skinny kid puttering about. He's collecting specimens, preparing them to travel.

JACK

Stop right there. Put your hands up and turn around slowly.

The kid obeys his instructions. His face changes from fear to relief when he recognizes CARNE.

KID

I know you, you're ADAN CARNE.

CARNE

That's right kid. Who are you?

KID

My name's TOM DENSKY. I'm PROF

BARNHART's assistant. Or at least I was until yesterday.

CARNE
What are you doing?

TOM
I'm collecting these specimens. The PROF told me to pack them up and deliver them to you.

CARNE
Me? Why me?

TOM
He said I could trust you. You and nobody else.

CARNE
Explain yourself.

TOM
The PROF led a dig at the PYRAMIDS of THARSIS. We found artifacts of unknown origin. After testing them he determined that these objects were remnants of an alien culture. When he presented his best evidence to his peers they dismissed him as a crackpot. Then the artifacts were stolen. The PROF. told me to gather the remaining finds and present them to you so that independent scientists could examine the evidence. Then I heard that the PROF. was dead. I've been hiding in these cellars since yesterday.

CARNE looks at the relics. He is unimpressed.

CARNE
Are you saying that PROF. BARNHART was killed over this junk?

TOM
It's not junk! The best evidence was stolen. These are the pieces that are less clearly defined. They've been worn by ages of sandblasting. The PROF. held them back from his presentation so as not to provide fuel for his critics. His rivals have established reputations that deny

the possibility of previous civilizations on MARS. If the PROF's right then they are wrong. Their status would suffer. He knew they would fight his theories to the bitter end, but we never thought they would resort to murder.

JACK

Well, you were both dead wrong kid. The PROF. was killed by someone who knew him and of his discovery. I don't know whose hands did the deed but I'm sure the mastermind is one or more of those rival DRS.

TOM

So, what do we do now?

JACK

We take the samples and split the scene. If we give them a chance we'll all be dead men.

INT. CELLAR CORRIDORS

TOM leads our trio back to the base via a different route. As he ascends a final flight of stairs....

Gunshots blast and TOM tumbles back D.O.A. JACK charges forward firing with both hands. When CARNE joins him JACK is standing over a fresh corpse.

JACK-

It's a shame about the kid. We're working in a kill zone. Let's move.

INT. XANTHE--GRAND HOTEL--OASIS RESTAURANT 10 P.M.

Two men finish dinner. As they leave they meet two others exiting the Casino who nod to four more thugs entering the hotel. The desk clerk excuses herself and ducks into the back room. The gangsters take advantage of the moment. They race down the hall to LENNY's office and burst in with their guns drawn.

The room seems deserted. Then the doors slam shut and lock. The two desks that flank the 'Judges Bench' open fire with

machine guns. The Six Shooters appear on the balconies and complete the slaughter. In seconds the battle is over.

LENNY arises from behind the Judges Bench holding a shotgun. From either side his adopted killers come up with a smile.

LENNY-

That's good shooting men. I want photos. We make it clear. Gangsters are not welcome on MARS.... Not in MY town.

The camera pulls away from LENNY in his courtroom, thru the Grand Hotel, out along the Ave, over the flowering Beehives, downtown to the Crystal City, across to the Twin Domes of Freeport, and on out over the plains of MARS. It's night, it's dark but the skies are clear. MARS is pretty in a desolate sort of way.

EXT. SPACE- MARSTAT STATION-THE TWIN WHEELS KEEP ON TURNING

The last cargo ship from EARTH arrives. ROSS's ace hatchet man, COLFAX, was on board. He's brought MARS new problems.

INT. XANTHE- ROSS'S OFFICE

COLFAX

Everything is in place. I've recruited a new Death Squad. These men can't be bought by a pardon. No country, corporation or criminal organization will accept them. We are their last hope in this life.

ROSS

And the package?

COLFAX

Set to go.

ROSS

I'd hoped it wouldn't come to this. I've spent my life and career promoting MARS. This base exists because of me. I proved that MARS was a Gold Mine that could pay it's way to EARTH and back. I created Inter-Planetary Trade. And now they take it all away and give me a job as a clerk in my own empire. We'll see who owns MARS. Go ahead. Do it.

COLFAX

No sir. That honor is yours.

COLFAX hands ROSS his phone.

EXT. SPACE -- MARSTAT STATION ORBITING MARS

The Twin Wheels of MARSTAT seem elegant as they gently turn in perfect harmony. Even during this slow season when EARTH and MARS are too far apart for regular transport commerce continues. Thousands of Cargo Containers are being rounded up and formed into Cargo Trains to eventually be shipped to the Space-Station Factories. A dozen Tugs position the cargo at locations near MARSTAT.

INT. COCKPIT OF A WORKING TUG SHIP.

Inside one Tug our three-man crew is manipulating the cargo to form a train. Tech talk is mixed with casual joking as magnetic repulsers and clamps lock the shipment together like a Lego set. As final adjustments are made they align the cargo with MARSTAT Station. All eyes witness

THE DESTRUCTION OF MARSTAT.

A series of three explosions seconds apart totally destroy the station. Flash, Bang, Boom... and the station was nothing but flaming debris falling out of the sky.

Flash--the central corridor that is the port for ships from EARTH explodes. Great jets of flame shoot out both ends of the tunnel that is the center of the station.

Bang--an internal explosion rocks the structure making it shudder like a wet dog.

Boom--the entire station shatters like a burst balloon.

EXT. MARS -- DAWN - NEWTON Base fading in the distance

Our ROVER is making it's way across the desert towards the PYRAMIDS of THARSIS. Suddenly there's a flash of light in the sky low over the horizon. Then a second explosion rocks the station. Then an explosion bright enough to light the sky and so loud that our men can hear it inside the vehicle.

The car stops and our guys get out. Flaming debris is raining on MARS. MARSTAT has been totally destroyed.

They look at each other. Shock is evident on their faces.

CARNE

That was MARSTAT! Now what do we do?

JACK-

We carry on. There's nothing we can do about MARSTAT. Let LENNY and the Big Brass handle that problem. We're going to investigate this Alien business.

END OF ACT FOUR

EPILOG

EXT. SPACE -- MARSTAT STATION ORBITING MARS

Close shot of the Twin Wheels in space. MARSTAT EXPLODES!!

EXT. SPACE STATION OLYMPUS - INT. T.V. STUDIOS

The DESTRUCTION OF MARSTAT dominates the news of the day. The explosion was filmed from a dozen vantage points. We run a gauntlet of excited reporters broadcasting the story. Many languages are spoken with just enough English to get some facts. The pictures tell the story.

And then there's CARLA SIMS. She's still hot.

CARLA

The DESTRUCTION OF MARSTAT affects everyone. Remember, MARS provides the resources that support Space Industries. The ores that are forged into Energy Panels at the Space Factories are mined on MARS. Space Station components are manufactured at XANTHE, shipped in pieces and assembled in EARTH's orbit. In fact, this Station, The Five Rings of OLYMPUS, was made on MARS. On MARS their domes and homes are all constructed locally made of native materials. MARS is a viable world. Today over 500,000 people populate the planet. ... Just a moment. The PREZ is speaking.....

PREZ - ON TV

The DESTRUCTION OF MARSTAT is an Act of War against humanity. More than half a million people from all nations are now stranded on MARS. The sabotage of our Space-Port forms a virtual blockade, cutting MARS off from EARTH. We will break that blockade by building a new GATEWAY to MARS. Saving MARS from disaster is a logistical challenge. Presently MARS is in Conjunction. That means that MARS is on the opposite side of the SUN from us. We cannot even reach them via radio for days. Normal transport won't resume for a year. We cannot wait that long. We will send the FLEET. The FLEET will intercept MARS long before it's in proximity with EARTH. We will

(MORE)

PREZ - ON TV (cont'd)
supply MARS with emergency aid
before New Years....That's on
EARTH's calendar. I'm still having
trouble translating MARTIAN dates
into EARTH-days. It's like figuring
the metric system.

REPORTER #1

When can we expect to re-establish
communications with MARS?

PREZ

That'll be in about six weeks. Then
our contact will be correspondence.
Significant time delays will occur
between asking a question and
receiving a reply until both
planets acheive proximity.

REPO #2

What can we do to help them?

PREZ

Stay calm.
Remember, the factory that built
MARSTAT is on MARS. I'm sure the
people of XANTHE can repeat their
success and put a new Space Station
in orbit.

REPO #3

Are you saying that the population
of MARS will have to fend for
themselves?

PREZ

Of course not. We will render all
possible assistance. However, there
are some products they must
produce. Space Stations are a
perfect example. Our industrial
complex at XANTHE is the prime
source for the manufacture of Space
Station components. The same is
true for Martian Shuttle Craft,
docking facilities, and other
hardware needed to build a station.
All they need from us is trained
personel, technical equipment and
another million gallons of water.
Once that's in place they'll be
back in business.

REPO #4

When can we expect this new station
to be operational?

PREZ

Our relief expedition will reach MARS by New Years. I expect that MARSTAT TWO will be operational three to six months after that... Those are EARTH dates, of course.

REPO #5

What about the other major powers? Have they offered assistance or made demands?

PREZ

Yes and yes. I gave this message to all concerned. You're welcome to join us but stay out of our way. Uncle Sam is riding to the rescue!

EXT. THE DESERT ON MARS -- AFTERNOON

Our ROVER is churning up a sandstorm as it snakes it's way up the slope of one of the PYRAMIDS of THARSIS. Carne uses all his PILOT's skills to force the vehicle to go where it wasn't meant to go. He's seeking an electronic beacon located near the peak of the sand-dune. Once they're close enough JACK sees a striped red flag that marks the spot. We go there.

The Red Flag is half-buried in the sand. Our men stop and exit the vehicle. They examine the marker. After a few minutes of digging they unEarth, or is that unMars, a flat surface of stone that has grooves similar to the shapes of the artifacts CARNE has with him. The three pronged screwdriver with sharp angles needed to work the latch is the tool that CARNE holds. He turns the key.

Instantly the angled stone wall of the PYRAMID swings inward on hinges. CARNE, JACK and tons of sand tumble down inside. After a 50 foot drop they land hard, luckily not too hard due to 38% gravity. Once they've been dumped the hinged ceiling immediately swings back into position.

Our men are groggy and half-buried in sand on the floor of a huge chamber. They are inside the PEAK of the PYRAMID.

The lighting is dim. The camera pulls back. They are surrounded by LITTLE GREEN MEN.

THE END

