

PLANEMO

By
Ian J. Courter

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ian.j.courter@gmail.com

PLANEMO

FADE IN:

EXT. HYPERSPACE

Space freighter "Ambrose" on a faster-than-light (F-T-L) jump. The doppler effect BLURS the stars.

(NOTE: All space scenes are silent)

INT. AMBROSE - BRIDGE

Laid out with futuristic consoles. The front wall is a VIEWSCREEN showing HYPERSPACE. HELMSMAN #1, SENSOR TECH #1, Communication Tech #1, and CAPT. BEN NEWSON are on-duty.

Newson sits in his command chair, using a futuristic device. Sensor tech #1 casually monitors instruments. Helmsman #1 monitors the helm, which is on AUTO-PILOT. He sighs.

HELMSMAN #1

Well, I'm bored.

SENSOR TECH #1

Didn't bring anything to read, did you?

HELMSMAN #1

I did, but I'm not feelin' it.

SENSOR TECH #1

We still have two weeks left. What do you plan to do in the meantime?

HELMSMAN #1

Eh, I'll figure it out. I can...

An alarm SOUNDS. Everyone is instantly alert.

HELMSMAN #1

We're being pulled off course. Autopilot is compensating.

WHAM. The viewscreen FRITZES. A SHUDDER. RATTLING sounds. Consoles FLICKER randomly, go out, then relight.

NEWSON

Report.

The VIEWSCREEN goes dark, then... NORMAL space. The bottom, right quarter is completely dark, the rest filled with STARS.

HELMSMAN #1
We've dropped out of hyperspace.

NEWSON
No shit. What happened?

SENSOR TECH #1 pulls up various READ-OUTS.

SENSOR TECH #1
A gravity source disrupted our jump.
There's damage to propulsion, but
everything else seems to be green.

The BLACKNESS on the SCREEN grows. Another SHUDDER. Warning lights FLASH on the console. An alarm BLARES.

NEWSON
Helm, full reverse!

HELMSMAN #1
We're being pulled in!

Newson stands. He's shaky.

NEWSON
(to Commo Tech #1)
Send the following message.

EXT. SPACE

Task Force Yokohama in NORMAL space. Destroyers protectively WEAVE around the carrier "Yokohama" and TWO heavy cruisers.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

A technician sips coffee as he monitors console SCREENS. ONE screen shows a NEWSCASTER talking.

NEWSCASTER
With the end of the war, comes the
end of an era. This is the last
deployment for retiring Task Force
Yokohama commander, Rear Admiral
Robert Jaeger. Our own Nathan Jacobs
had this interview with him.

The video CUTS TO the admiral's QUARTERS. JACOBS and RDM ROBERT JAEGER sit in comfortable padded chairs.

JACOBS
Thank you, Admiral, for taking time
to talk with our viewers.

JAEGER
My pleasure.

JACOBS
After so many years and countless
deployments, how does it feel to
know you can finally take a well
deserved rest?

JAEGER
I admit I have mixed emotions. I
have worn the uniform for over thirty
years. At the same time, I have a
wonderful wife, three grown children,
and a couple of grandkids I have
never met. No, I'm ready. I have
alot of catching...

The video PAUSES. A tone SOUNDS. The technician stops in
mid-slurp and taps a key. There is a crackle of STATIC,
then HISSING.

NEWSON (V.O.)
(distorted)
Mayday. Mayday. Mayday. This is
Captain Benjamin Newson of the TSS
Ambrose. We have been pulled off
our jump by a large gravity source.
Our engines are damaged and we are
being pulled in...

INT. YOKOHAMA - PASSAGEWAY

COL MICHAEL RADCLIFF walks with a purpose. He is mid-40s
and very fit. His uniform is crisp and neat with a "commando"
tab on his left shoulder.

He approaches large double-doors, which SILENTLY swing open.
The quiet passageway gives way to a NOISY auditorium.

INT. YOKOHAMA - AUDITORIUM

Military personnel mingle. Voice #1 shouts above the NOISE.

VOICE #1 (O.S.)
Take... seats!

The noise quickly FADES and people sit down as Radcliff approaches the podium.

VOICE #1 (O.S.)
Group! Attention!

Ground forces commander MG QUINTON DAYAN and RDM ROBERT JAEGER enter and walk to the front. Both are mid-50s and "grizzled."

JAEGER
As you were! We don't have time to
dick around.

DAYAN
(to Radcliff)
Mike, you're on.

Dayan and Jaeger sit. The lights DIM as the front wall of the auditorium becomes a giant VIEWSCREEN.

INSERT - VIEWSCREEN

The image FRITZES, then steadies. There is a field of STARS, except the lower right corner, which is BLACK. The BLACKNESS steadily grows. Newson's voice is DISTORTED.

NEWSON (V.O.)
Mayday. Mayday. Mayday. This is
Captain Benjamin Newson of the TSS
Ambrose. We have been pulled off
our jump by a large gravity source.
Our engines are damaged and we are
being pulled in. We are twenty-two
point three light years out along
route delta. We can't pull out and
have little lateral control left. I
say again. Mayday. Mayday. Mayday.

The blackness GROWS until the screen is completely BLACK.

BACK TO SCENE

The auditorium lights BRIGHTEN.

RADCLIFF
That is the sum total of what we
received. No emergency beacon, no
telemetry data, just some video and
a mayday.

Radcliff gestures. An IMAGE of the Ambrose APPEARS on-screen.

RADCLIFF

The Ambrose is a contract freighter hauling supplies, spare parts, and engineers to one of the new colonies. The cargo and people must be retrieved and ferried to the colony.

The faces in the crowd show a RANGE of emotions.

RADCLIFF

I know. It has been a long deployment for all of us, but there are colonists who need this stuff before a seasonal change occurs that will be both long and difficult. Lives depend on us. Any questions, so far?

An ARMY OFFICER raises his hand. Radcliff points at him.

ARMY OFFICER

(standing)

Sir, any evidence they encountered a black hole?

The officer sits down. Radcliff shakes his head.

RADCLIFF

No, the starfield was undistorted by a black hole's intense gravity.

Hands go up. Dayan and Jaeger stand and face the audience.

JAEGER

I know you all have questions, but we don't have any answers. In spite of the unknowns, we still have an obligation to rescue any survivors. For now, only the absolute minimum of ships and personnel will be detached for a special mission.

The room is SILENT. SEVERAL attendees lean forward.

JAEGER

The cruiser Baltimore will take four destroyers to the scene to rescue survivors and retrieve the cargo. From there, both will be ferried to the colony.

(MORE)

JAEGER (CONT'D)

The rest of the task force will continue onto the next jump point and standby in case we are needed. Complete mission details will be provided shortly. Good luck.

A naval Commander walks towards the podium as Jaeger, Dayan, and Radcliff quickly file out of the auditorium.

INT. YOKOHAMA - PASSAGEWAY

Dayan and Jaeger nod to each other and part ways. Radcliff accompanies Dayan.

RADCLIFF

Sir, what's the real story? If we're about to get into some shit, we don't have the bodies. We also left behind most of our air assets, not to mention ordnance and ammo. Hell, most of the fighters and close air support we do have are either shot up or worn out.

DAYAN

(low)

Look Mike, this probably won't be just a recovery mission. Command told Jaeger to be prepared to take the entire task force to the site.

RADCLIFF

Are they worried about threats to the shipping lanes?

DAYAN

Yes, but not from humans. We have been reconned by unknown vessels. We have to investigate in case it's the start of an attack.

RADCLIFF

Aliens?

DAYAN

Unknown. Intell has only managed to translate bits and pieces of their commo, nothing clear. So, we have to know for sure.

EXT. SPACE

Five warships POP out of hyperspace. The destroyer "Larry B. Wheeler" breaks away and ACCELERATES towards a huge BLACKNESS across the stars. The "Baltimore" and the remaining three destroyers follow at a much slower speed.

INT. BALTIMORE - BRIDGE

CAPT JAMES DENNISON stands beside helmsman #2, MATT VACHEK. They both watch the VIEWSCREEN.

VACHEK
Jump complete.

DENNISON
Ahead one-third. Let the Wheeler complete its run.

VACHEK
Aye, sir. Ahead one-third.

Sensor tech #2, TIM EVANS scans readouts. He is puzzled.

EVANS
Sir, the data I'm getting...
(turning to Dennison)
... it's a planet. Is that even possible? The nearest star is over six parsecs away.

Dennison rubs an ear.

DENNISON
Yes, Mr. Evans, it's possible. One theory was the Ambrose stumbled on a planemo... a rogue planet drifting in space.

VACHEK
A planet's gravity would explain how the Ambrose got yanked off its jump.

A tone SOUNDS.

EVANS
Incoming message from the Wheeler.

DENNISON
Put it through your station.

Dennison walks to Evans. A SCREEN shows the Wheeler's bridge with CAPT WALTER MONROE. There is STATIC and DISTORTION.

DENNISON

Go ahead, Walt.

MONROE

It's a near-earth sized planet with a nitrogen-oxygen atmosphere... and vulcanism. The volcanic gases cause a greenhouse effect that keeps the average temperature above freezing. We can't tell more, because there is a lot of electromagnetic interference. There could be life down there and we wouldn't even know it.

DENNISON

Electromagnetism? Like an E-M-P?

MONROE

More like a massive solar storm, but without a star. There are probably fantastic auroras. I bet it's fairly bright down there at times.

DENNISON

Any signs of wreckage?

MONROE

We think so. If anyone survived the crash, they could still be alive.

DENNISON

Establish orbit and try to verify. We don't have much time.

MONROE

We're about to enter orbit now.

DENNISON

Very good. E-T-A to you... ten minutes.

MONROE

Wheeler, out.

The screen FLIPS to read-outs. Dennison looks to Evans.

DENNISON
Synchronize scans with the Wheeler.
We need to find the Ambrose fast...

A FLASH of light from the main VIEWSCREEN, then a SERIES of small, silent explosions POP on-screen.

DENNISON
What the hell was that?

Evans taps buttons and brings up various data.

EVANS
The first explosion was a nuke. The other flashes are from the Wheeler. She's firing at something.

DENNISON
Action stations! Ready all tubes and guns.
(to Vachek)
Ahead full.
(to Evans)
Get me Monroe again.

A klaxon BLARES.

VACHEK
Sir, we'll overshoot the planet.

DENNISON
So, we come around again...

EVANS
(overlapping)
Inbound! It's the Wheeler.

DENNISON
(to Vachek)
Belay last order. Maintain course and speed.

EVANS
Captain Monroe hailing, sir. Audio only. There's strong interference.

DENNISON
Put him through.

There is CRACKLING and HISSING in the audio.

MONROE (V.O.)
Wheeler to Baltimore, over.

DENNISON
We hear you, Wheeler. Report.

MONROE (V.O.)
An unknown ship appeared out of nowhere and popped a nuke in our path. We gave it a full broadside, but it seems unaffected.

DENNISON
We'll pass each other in less than a minute. When we do, come about and fall in behind us.

MONROE (V.O.)
Wilco, Baltimore. Wheeler, out.

Dennison walks over to Evans.

DENNISON
Send the following message to the fleet.
(thinking)
"Have arrived at location. Encountered unknown and hostile spacecraft. About to engage. Will update when able." Send it.

Dennison walks to his command chair.

DENNISON
Time until intercept?

VACHEK
In... 15 seconds, sir.

DENNISON
Fire control, target the unknown ship. Fire when in range.

EXT. SPACE

Baltimore and the destroyers pass the Wheeler in a BLUR. A STRANGE-LOOKING spaceship trails the Wheeler. Baltimore FIRES a bunch of fast-moving "stars" at the unknown spaceship.

The unknown spaceship banks HARD, but the stars PUMMEL it. It SHIMMERS and, SUDDENLY, disappears.

INT. BALTIMORE - BRIDGE

The VIEWSCREEN shows an empty field of STARS.

VACHEK

Damn it.

DENNISON

Well said, Mr. Vachek. Mr. Evans, whose ship was that?

EVANS

It doesn't match any known configuration, friend or foe.

DENNISON

(to Vachek)

Establish a polar orbit. Have the destroyers take overwatch.

(to Evans)

Keep analyzing the data. I want a follow-up report in a half-hour.

EVANS

It has to be non-human.

DENNISON

Great. Unfriendly company is the last thing we need.

EVANS

It didn't actually fire at the Wheeler. It may have been a shot across the bow.

DENNISON

Doesn't matter. Once the report reaches the fleet, the old man will haul ass getting here.

EVANS

We don't even know what we're up against.

DENNISON

He's old school. You assume the worst and ask questions later.

Dennison walks to his command chair and sits.

MED. SHOT OF EVANS

... at a console. He taps a few keys.

CLOSE ON SCREEN

Combinations of zeros and ones scroll across the screen.

BACK TO SCENE

EVANS

Computer. Initiate signal analysis.
This station only.

EXT. SPACE - BACK AT THE FLEET

The fleet moves through NORMAL space in a slow formation.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

Jaeger, Dayan, and CDR IRA STEELE talk in low tones. In the b.g., a console light BLINKS. COMMO TECH #2 taps a keypad.

COMMO TECH #2

Sir! A message from the Baltimore.
Text only.

JAEGER

Let's see it.

The three walk over. Commo Tech #2 taps the key pad. A serving tray-size SCREEN to his right TURNS ON. Text APPEARS.

STEELE

A planet?

JAEGER

(reading aloud)

"Possible crash site found. Unknown interference prevents confirmation of survivors... Probable alien ship?!"
That does it!

(to Commo Tech #2)

Relay Baltimore's message to command and inform them I am diverting the fleet. Will update when able. Also, alert the fleet we are jumping.

Jaeger looks at HELMSMAN #3.

JAEGER
Helm, calculate minimum jumps needed
to reach Baltimore's location and
standby to initiate.

DAYAN
(moving to leave)
I'll prep the ground forces' for
immediate deployment once we arrive.

JAEGER
(testy)
Make sure everything's secured. I
don't want a bunch of shit flying
around during hard maneuvers.

DAYAN
(eyebrow raised)
I don't tell you how to suck vacuum,
so don't tell me how to pound sand.

Dayan exits. Several bridge crew look at each other.

INT. YOKOHAMA - HANGAR DECK

Soldiers and naval personnel "unwrap" futuristic tanks and
infantry vehicles. LTC Mauer directs the activity.

INT. TRANSPORT - HOLD

A sailor guides a vehicle into a transport. He signals
"stop." The vehicle's engine goes to idle.

The sailor moves between the vehicle and the interior wall
of the transport. He signals to Mauer, who hurries inside.

The vehicle LURCHES. Mauer grabs the sailor and tosses him
clear. Mauer is CRUSHED against the inside of the transport.

INT. YOKOHAMA - PASSAGEWAY

Dayan walks with a purpose. A TONE sounds.

VOICE #2 (V.O.)
General Dayan, please call sickbay.

The message REPEATS as Dayan taps an unseen earbud.

DAYAN
Dayan to sickbay.

He listens for a BEAT. His expression turns grave.

EXT. SPACE

The fleet moves slowly through NORMAL space.

INT. YOKOHAMA - CORRIDOR - OUTSIDE ARMS ROOM

Commandos stand in line. They wear empty holsters and hold weapon slings. CPL WARREN VALERA and MSG ANDREW MACOMB stand in front of a metal-screened door with a square hole.

VALERA

Valera, Warren D. Team gunner.

INT. YOKOHAMA - ARMS ROOM

The arms room sergeant taps a SCREEN. Another soldier looks over his shoulder, turns, and grabs a futuristic squad machine gun. He checks the serial number with the SCREEN, then hands the weapon butt-first through the door to Valera.

INT. YOKOHAMA - CORRIDOR - OUTSIDE ARMS ROOM

Valera brandishes the weapon.

VALERA

Check it out, sergeant. It's "Norma."

MACOMB

Great. Now go qualify with her so I know you can still shoot.

EXT. SPACE

In unison, the fleet banks then levels off. SUDDENLY, they JUMP in rapid succession.

INT. YOKOHAMA - WAR ROOM

Dayan sits at a table studying read-outs on a screen. Jaeger enters. Dayan glances up and gives Jaeger a blank stare.

JAEGER

Going over the data packets?

DAYAN

Nope. Reading the latest gossip.

JAEGER

Don't be an ass.

DAYAN

Don't ever do that again. You have something to say to me, say it in private. I am not your subordinate. Just get us to our destination.

JAEGER

Don't give me orders on my ship...

DAYAN

(overlapping)

I don't have time for a pissing contest. Your job is to get us to the site and provide security while we search for survivors. Period.

JAEGER

Who the hell...

A tone SOUNDS.

VOICE #2 (V.O.)

Admiral. Priority message for you.

JAEGER

(curt)

I'll take it here.

Jaeger walks to a desk and leans down to read the screen.

JAEGER

It's official. We're ordered to change course.

DAYAN

Par for the course. I'm already replacing people and we haven't even started ground operations yet.

Jaeger's expression softens.

JAEGER

Sorry to hear about your officer.

DAYAN

Mauer was damn good. To compound the problem, we couldn't spare a commando to replace him. I pulled some conventional force officer from a support unit and put him on staff.

JAEGER
Think he'll do alright?

DAYAN
You never know until they're in the
thick of it.

JAEGER
Looks like we'll know soon enough.

DAYAN
I need to get with my staff and
finalize plans. Can we finish this
discussion later?

Jaeger nods and walks towards the exit.

JAEGER
(over his shoulder)
I'll let you know if I hear anything
else from higher.

Jaeger exits. Dayan resumes reading.

EXT. PLANEMO - POLAR ORBIT

The Baltimore orbits over auroras PULSING in the atmosphere.

INT. BALTIMORE - BRIDGE

Text scrolls down a SCREEN until... a soft tone SOUNDS.
Evans looks over. His forehead furrows.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - NIGHT

The Ambrose LISTS slightly and there are HOLES in its hull.
Dim landing lights barely LIGHT the area.

CLOSE ON GROUND

Lines of human footprints FADE into the dark. On both sides,
non-human prints suggest the people were HERDED. HOLD for a
BEAT as a rising WIND begins to ERASE both lines of prints.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIEFING ROOM

Numerous officers and senior NCOs focus on a senior-ranking
officer (BRIEFER). Macomb listens intently.

BRIEFER
This briefing is top secret.

Briefer signals and the lights DIM. The front wall becomes a VIEWSCREEN showing the planemo floating in empty space.

BRIEFER

(pointing)

Here's our objective. A free-floating planet without a star in the middle of nowhere. It drifted into this shipping lane.

A RED LINE intersects the planet.

BRIEFER

The planet's gravity well yanked a passing freighter out of hyperspace, causing it to crash on the surface. Our mission... secure the site, evac any survivors, and retrieve the cargo. It's that simple.

Briefer DRONES ON in the b.g. Macomb leans over to a nearby officer and warrant officer.

MACOMB

(to the officer)

Sir, when an officer say something is "simple," I get nervous. That's like a warrant officer saying, "hey y'all, watch this." Nothing good follows those words.

The officer and warrant officer chuckle.

INT. YOKOHAMA - AUDITORIUM

Radcliff addresses army and naval personnel. They sit in sections LABELED: Ops, commo, close air support (CAS), etc.

RADCLIFF

Ladies and gentlemen, you're here to begin final prep for ground ops. This is an important mission, not just to retrieve vital cargo, but to rescue people in a bad spot. I've sensed indifference, even callousness about doing this. I know you all are tired, but the mission isn't complete. A colony is going to endure a drastic planet-wide seasonal change.

(MORE)

RADCLIFF (CONT'D)

If they don't get the cargo and the experts the Ambrose was carrying, people will die. Let's do what we need to and get back on our way.

A SAILOR raises a hand. Radcliff points at him.

RADCLIFF

Yes.

SAILOR

Sir, didn't they have a plan to sustain the colony or were able to predict this change well in advance?

A NAVAL OFFICER whips around in his seat.

NAVAL OFFICER

At ease, sailor. That's the shit he's talking about. It doesn't matter if they did or didn't. Focus on fixing the problem. Got it?

SAILOR

(formal)

Yes, sir.

A 3-D map of the crash site APPEARS on the auditorium screen. As Radcliff talks, the relevant parts briefly HIGHLIGHT.

RADCLIFF

The Ambrose crashed in a valley between two ranges of hills, but appears to be mostly intact. We are setting up a forward operations base ten kilometers upwind from the crash site in case of a reactor breach. Lieutenant-Colonel Hohrbach will oversee its construction. I'll land at the crash site with the recovery teams. A perimeter will be set up while the wreck is cleared out. Once the FOB is set up, I'll move there and Lieutenant-colonel Balado will take over supervising the crash site. Now, section chiefs... you all have your mission packets. Go over them with your people. I'll hang around if you have any questions of me.

SFC RUHA SAAGER, SSG MATT WIBERG, SSG RON NEALE, and TWO junior non-commissioned officers sit in the section marked "Commo." Saager gets up and faces his men.

SAAGER

I'm going to keep this simple. I'm going dirtside with Hohrbach to set up commo in the TOC. His call sign is "Lightning 6-2" since Colonel Radcliff is "Lightning 6." Matt, you are going to be in the command vehicle at the crash site until you all get pulled back to the FOB. Keep the X-0 in touch with the FOB whatever you have to do. He is "Lightning 5." Ron, sorry to do this to you, but I need you to stay on-board the Yokohama with General Dayan. Keep him up on commo and make sure he knows what's going on. The navy commo guys will assist you as needed. Coordinate with control for air support.

(to the junior NCOs)

As for you two, you'll help set up commo at the FOB and maintain the systems. Any questions?

ANGLE ON RADCLIFF

... as Dayan walks up. They both look around the auditorium for a moment. The section chiefs are briefing their people.

DAYAN

How's it looking so far?

RADCLIFF

As well as can be expected for a bunch of war-weary soldiers who have to rescue people they don't know from some godforsaken frozen planet in the middle of nowhere.

DAYAN

Either way, the fleet's about to make the last jump, then things should get interesting.

RADCLIFF

At this point, I'd be happy with "routine" or "boring." I also know hope isn't a plan. So, we'll see.

EXT. PLANEMO - POLAR ORBIT

The Baltimore orbits high over the planet.

INT. BALTIMORE - CONFERENCE ROOM

Evans talks with Dennison at a large electronic conference table. They look over images, documents, and figures.

EVANS

At first, I thought it was encrypted, but it's actually a non-human language broadcast on an open channel.

DENNISON

Non-human? You mean alien?

EVANS

Yes, sir, but believe it or not that's not the weird part. Don't ask me how, but the computer translated parts of it. What I can't figure out is this...

(pointing)

... The context is confusing, but it seems they want to colonize the planet... make it their "home."

DENNISON

Why would they want that rock?... Okay, give me what you have. I'll include it in the next report to the fleet. They should be arriving soon.

EVANS

Thank God! The more firepower we have, the better I'll feel.

INT. YOKOHAMA - HANGAR DECK

Macomb enters. His detachment waits at a transport.

MACOMB

Gather round. I need to give you all the latest...

EXT. SPACE

The fleet POPS back into normal space.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

Steele sits in the command chair, watching the main VIEWSCREEN. The doppler effect stops. Normal stars APPEAR.

Jaeger enters the bridge. Steele stands.

STEELE
Admiral on the bridge!

JAEGER
Carry on.

HELMSMAN #3
Jump complete. Beginning run.

JAEGER
Proceed. Alert ground forces to prepare to deploy and launch satellites once we're in orbit.

INT. YOKOHAMA - FLIGHT DECK

Radcliff enters wearing full armor, helmet and rifle in hand. As he approaches the rear ramp of the command transport, LTC JOSE BALADO walks down to meet him.

RADCLIFF
We're a go.

BALADO
(nodding)
Yes, sir... The weather guys say the electromagnetic interference is low for now, but comms won't last.

RADCLIFF
Not how I want to start a mission.

BALADO
Did I mention it's minus 2 Celsius?

RADCLIFF
Great. It's also cold.

Balado goes inside the transport. Radcliff looks around.

RADCLIFF'S POV

... of a huge array of varied-size transports. A half-dozen escort fighters idle in the b.g. as their canopies close. Deck crew hand-signal to the pilots.

BACK TO SCENE

Radcliff turns and enters the transport. The ramp CLOSES.

INT. COMMAND TRANSPORT - HOLD

Balado sits beside Wiberg at a console. Wiberg talks into the air. He wears futuristic headphones.

(NOTE: The military phonetic alphabet and numbering are used for all communications)

WIBERG

Lightning 6 to all elements. Confirm status. Over.

Radcliff buckles into a chair. Balado turns to face him.

WIBERG

Delta 3-4 alfa confirmed.

BALADO

(to Radcliff)

They're reporting now.

RADCLIFF

Very good.

WIBERG

Delta 3-4 bravo confirmed.

RADCLIFF

Launch when we get final clearance.

INT. COMMAND TRANSPORT - COCKPIT

The PILOT, CO-PILOT, and NAVIGATOR finish pre-launch checks.

COMMAND TRANSPORT PILOT

Roger, control. Launching now.

(keying intercom)

Everyone not strapped in, do so now.

COMMAND TRANSPORT NAVIGATOR

Course laid in.

COMMAND TRANSPORT CO-PILOT
Rigging for red.

INT. COMMAND TRANSPORT - HOLD

The interior lights go from NORMAL to DIM RED.

COCKPIT POV

The fighters LAUNCH. The VIEW PANS as the transport moves into launch position. The DECK STATUS LIGHTS go from RED to AMBER. The pilot pushes the throttles "to the wall." The transport's engines ROAR as the deck status lights turn GREEN. The VIEW BLURS as the craft surges forward.

EXT. SPACE

Transports shoot out of the Yokohama and race to catch up with the fighters. Once together, the formation bee-lines towards the dark planet. AURORAS build in the atmosphere.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - UPPER ATMOSPHERE - NIGHT

The ships enter the atmosphere and begin to GLOW. They STREAK across the sky like a METEOR STORM.

INT. COMMAND TRANSPORT - COCKPIT - NIGHT

The pilot steers to the Landing Zone (L-Z).

COMMAND TRANSPORT PILOT
On final approach to L-Z.
(keying intercom)
Two minutes.

INT. COMMAND TRANSPORT - HOLD

In the dim red light, everybody sways slightly in their seats as the transport shakes. The view TILTS as the craft banks.

INT. COMMAND TRANSPORT - COCKPIT - NIGHT

The cockpit windshield is a HEADS-UP-DISPLAY of the terrain in FALSE-COLOR. A strobe FLASHES in the center, the DIM OUTLINE of the Ambrose sits to one side. There is a long GOUGE in the landscape behind the wreck. Fighters fly overwatch for the landing transports.

COMMAND TRANSPORT PILOT
(keying intercom)
Prepare to deploy.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - NIGHT

The command transport spirals in. Its rear ramp LOWERS.

INT. COMMAND TRANSPORT - HOLD - NIGHT

The VIEW through the opening ramp is lit by the GLOW of an intense AURORA. It casts an EERIE LIGHT over the landscape. The commandos' breath forms MIST as they exhale.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - NIGHT

Transports of various sizes touch down, drop commandos, soldiers, and vehicles, then take off.

Tanks ROAR into positions as soldiers set up a perimeter. Teams of commandos run towards the Ambrose. Fighters circle overhead.

A command post vehicle rolls up and stops fifty meters from the Ambrose. Radcliff, Balado, and Wiberg walk towards it.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - FOB TIGER - NIGHT

Soldiers erect hard-shell structures and set up defensive barriers under floodlights. Transports land, disgorge men and equipment, then take off. Lifting equipment grabs pallets and set them out of the way of the incoming transports.

INT. FOB TIGER TACTICAL OPERATIONS CENTER (TOC)

Saager and other commandos set up workspaces and equipment. DISPLAYS show FUTURISTIC test screens. Hohrbach watches.

INT. AMBROSE - BRIDGE

The bridge is a SHAMBLES and DIMLY LIT. Two commandos enter and sweep through. Finished, one gestures towards the door.

TWO technicians enter. TECHNICIAN #1 goes to a console. TECHNICIAN #2 goes to another console and sets a tool box on the floor. He pulls out a cord, pops an access panel, and connects the cord to something inside. The console FLICKERS and LIGHTS UP. He stands and taps keys on the console.

TECHNICIAN #2
Switching to battery back-up.

The other consoles light up. Technician #1 taps keys.

TECHNICIAN #1
 Downloading manifest now.

INT. AMBROSE - MAIN HOLD - NIGHT

DIM ship lighting. SUPPLY SERGEANT (Nomad 5-1) uses a hand-held device, while SUPPLY CLERKS #1 and #2 wait nearby.

SUPPLY SERGEANT
 Downloading manifest now. Go section-by-section and log what you find.

They all begin examining containers. Supply clerk #2 stops and looks between two crates. He uses a knife to pull out something small that GLOWS.

CLOSE ON SUPPLY CLERK #2'S HAND

A GLOWING, caterpillar-like worm inches up the knife.

BACK TO SCENE

Supply Clerk #1 walks over. He grunts when he sees the worm.

SUPPLY CLERK #1
 Hey, dumbass. Don't touch the local wildlife. When I was in South America, there was a spiny caterpillar that could kill you.

SUPPLY CLERK #2
 I didn't know we'd see alien wildlife.

SUPPLY CLERK #1
 Who would? Nobody's been here before. I'll report it, just get to work.

Supply Clerk #1 turns back to the cargo. Supply Clerk #2 shakes the worm off his knife.

SUPPLY CLERK #2
 Ew.

He puts the knife away and continues scanning cargo labels.

INT. COMMAND VEHICLE - NIGHT

Radcliff stands in the doorway, watching the perimeter being set up. Balado and Wiberg monitor communications.

BALADO

All teams report they're finding personal items, but no people, not even bodies.

RADCLIFF

(turning)

The hell you say. There were 24 crew and passengers. What about emergency supplies and gear?

WIBERG

(keying a mike)

Nomad 5-1, have you found emergency supplies and gear? Over.

BEAT.

WIBERG

Copy that, Nomad 5-1. Standby.

Wiberg turns to Radcliff.

WIBERG

They checked that first, sir. It's all there.

RADCLIFF

They couldn't have gone far. Contact the Yokohama as soon as you can. We need to widen our search.

INT. YOKOHAMA - WAR ROOM

Neale sits at a radio system, listening intently through headphones. Dayan and several officers talk over a large table that is a SCREEN showing a map of the crash site.

NEALE

Sir, Lightning 6 for you.

Dayan taps an unseen earbud.

DAYAN

Mike. Tell me you found survivors.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - NIGHT

Radcliff stands in the doorway of the darkened command vehicle as he talks into a headset.

RADCLIFF

Wish I could, sir. They're all gone,
but they left behind their personal
stuff and cargo.

INT. YOKOHAMA - WAR ROOM

DAYAN

That makes no sense.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - NIGHT

Radcliff moves so a soldier can enter the command vehicle.

RADCLIFF

Roger, sir. We have to expand the
search. I need more men.

INT. YOKOHAMA - WAR ROOM

Dayan points to the crash site on the map, and spreads his
hands in an expanding circle.

DAYAN

I'll send in the remaining teams.
Direct them to the infil sites.
Anything else?

INT. COMMAND VEHICLE - NIGHT

Radcliff steps inside the vehicle.

RADCLIFF

Nothing I can think of, sir. Just
wish us luck. Out here.

Radcliff pulls off the headset and tosses it onto a console.

RADCLIFF

Relay the O-P locations to the fleet
so the teams can plan their drops.

BALADO

Yes, sir. Oh, one of the supply
guys found some kind of bug. He
says it doesn't seem dangerous, but
it might need to be checked out...
something about a lethal caterpillar.

RADCLIFF

So? Send a science team. I'm going to the wreck and see how the search teams are doing.

Radcliff steps to the ground and walks towards the Ambrose.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - PERIMETER - NIGHT

SSG MATT ADAMS stands in the cupola of an tank turret. A PISTOL juts out of a holster on his chest armor. He scans his surroundings with futuristic binoculars (binos). There is a LOW NOISE in the sky. He swings the binos up.

INSERT - BINO VIEW

... of a GLOWING transport.

BACK TO SCENE

Adams lowers the binos and keys his throat mike.

ADAMS

Lightning 6, Charlie 2-5 Bravo. You have in-bound from the East. Over.

PAUSE.

ADAMS

Roger that, Lightning 6. Charlie 2-5 Bravo, out.

CPL JERRY HU pulls himself out of the driver's hatch and jumps down. He opens his torso armor.

ADAMS

What the hell you doin'?

HU

I gotta take a leak, Sergeant.

ADAMS

Hurry up. We need to be mobile. I can't drive this heap from up here.

Hu trots to the side and begins urinating. Relief crosses his face. In the b.g., Adams scans the area.

HU

Hey, sergeant? Why do you have to keep watch for transports?

ADAMS
Because of the E-M interference.
Sensors can't detect shit right now.

HU
Why not send some navy wankers?

ADAMS
I don't know. Just hurry up and get
back in the driver's seat.

Hu finishes and resecurcs his armor. He turns to Adams.

HU
Man, it's cold on the wiener.

Adams lowers his bino and gives Hu an irritated look.

HU
Well, it is.

Adams drops his binos and whips out his pistol. He aims in
Hu's direction. Hu yelps and leaps aside.

CRACK. CRACK. CRACK. Adams fires at a DARK SHAPE leaping
at Hu. It FLOPS and TUMBLES against the side of the vehicle.

Hu rolls and comes up as he tries to pull his own pistol.

Adams scrambles out of the turret, keeping the pistol aimed.
He pulls a flashlight and shines it over the side. An
indistinct "shadow" disappears around the side of the tank.

HU
Yah! What the hell is that?!

Adams moves around the top of the tank. The shadow is gone.

ADAMS
You alright?

HU
Good thing I already pissed! You
coulda warned me!

Adams jumps to the ground.

ADAMS
It was either warn you or shoot.
Which one you want, dickhead?

Adams shines his flashlight on the side of the tank. The light shows "blood splatter." Adams keys his throat mike.

ADAMS
Lightning 6, Charlie 2-5 Bravo.
Over.

PAUSE.

ADAMS
Lightning 6, something attacked us.
We're fine, but we need a science
team our location ASAP. Over.

PAUSE.

ADAMS
(sighing)
Negative, Lightning 6. It ran off.
I don't even know if it had ears to
cut off. Over.

PAUSE.

ADAMS
Hell no! Even if we find it and it
has one, I won't cut it off for you.
Out here... Jackass.

INT. AMBROSE MAIN HOLD

Supply sergeant directs his men in removing cargo.

Scientist DR. ARALDI holds up a specimen jar with a glowing, wriggling worm inside. He puts the container in a case at his feet. COMMANDO #1 walks into the hold and approaches.

COMMANDO #1
(to Araldi)
Sir, I have to take you to the
perimeter. Something attacked a
couple of soldiers.

ARALDI
(smiling)
Attacked?... Yes. Yes. Lead on.

They exit.

INT. AMBROSE - MAIN CORRIDOR

Radcliff walks towards SEVERAL commandos struggling to open a hatch. COMMANDO #2 turns.

COMMANDO #2
Sir, you'll want to see this. A
scout-bot went through engineering.
The drives are missing.

RADCLIFF
The drives?! As in the F-T-L and
sub-light drives?

COMMANDO #2
We're verifying, sir.

SCREECH. A commando pries the hatch open. The rest enter.
Commando #2 listens to his earbud, then nods.

COMMANDO #2
Clear.

INT. AMBROSE - ENGINEERING

Commando #2 and Radcliff enter. Flashlights beams SWEEP around. There are spots and holes where things are MISSING.

RADCLIFF
Huh. That changes things.

EXT. SPACE - FLEET

Geo-synchronous orbit over crash site.

INT. YOKOHAMA - FLIGHT DECK

SEVERAL transports idle with their rear ramps down. Commando teams walk to each one. They wear ARMOR and are armed with a variety of light and heavy WEAPONS. Each wears a backpack. A LIEUTENANT walks down the ramp of Transport #1. He pauses for everybody to assemble.

LIEUTENANT
Gotta make this quick. Break into
your three-man teams. We're jumping
near the crash site to set up
additional O-Ps. The coordinates
are as follows...

LONG SHOT OF THE FLIGHT DECK

Transport ramps close as they taxi towards the hangar doors.

EXT. SPACE - YOKOHAMA

The transports shoot out of the Yokohama and form up. They begin to GLOW as they enter the atmosphere.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - PERIMETER - NIGHT

Hu stands on the tank hull, watching the area with binos. Adams holds a flashlight as he and Commando #1 watch Araldi examine the splatter marks.

ARALDI

Did it make any noise before attacking?

ADAMS

No, sir.
(to commando #1)
You're standing in Hu's frozen piss.

Commando #1 steps aside and scrubs his feet in the dirt.

ADAMS

Anyway, I popped it three times, but it ran off.

Araldi pulls several empty vials from his case.

ARALDI

Okay. You two help me collect samples of this stuff. I need...

ADAMS

Hell no! You want it, you collect it!

Araldi scowls at Adams. Commando #1 suppresses a smile. Adams walks around the tank. Hu leans down.

HU

(low)
Did you see the look he gave you?

ARALDI (O.S.)

I heard that! I am going to report you both to your commander.

Adams and Hu snicker.

ADAMS
(turning serious)
Shut up and keep watch.

A GLOWING transport ARCS across the sky in the b.g.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - OBSERVATION POINT #1 - NIGHT

A transport ROARS overhead. Three commandos parachute to the ground near a hilltop. They quickly retrieve gear from "leg bags," then silently move to the hilltop.

Lieutenant sets up a position. The second commando calibrates sensors. The third commando sets up small mines.

There is the SOUND of gravel TUMBLING. A small rock SKITTERS down the slope. Lieutenant rolls and pulls a pistol. A SHADOW pounces on the emptied spot. CRACK. CRACK. Lieutenant fires. The shadow disappears. A weapon FIRES O.S. Lieutenant scrambles to his feet. A mine goes BANG O.S. A shadow lunges at him. He jams the pistol in its face and fires. Another shadow lunges. He shoots it. More pounce.

INT. FOB TIGER TOC

An alarm BLARES. Saager yanks off his headset and sprints to a console. He taps a key. The alarm STOPS.

HOHRBACH
What is it? What happened?

SAAGER
We just lost three guys, sir.

HOHRBACH
What do you mean "lost?"

SAAGER
Dead, sir. Their implants no longer pick up heartbeat or respiration.

HOHRBACH
Send the Q-R-F to check it out. And get ahold of the C-O. He needs to be here directing operations, not walking around the crash site like he's still a platoon leader.

SAAGER

(icy)

He's a commando, sir, not a lead-from-behind FOB-goblin.

Saager turns back to his radio. Hohrbach glares at him.

INT. YOKOHAMA - LAB

Scientist DR. ALBERT GRIFFITH uses high-tech equipment. He pauses as Araldi and SEVERAL soldiers carry in numerous boxes.

GRIFFITH

Ah. Put them wherever there's room.

The soldiers stack the boxes in a corner, then look to Araldi.

ARALDI

Thank you. You may go.

The soldiers exit. Araldi quickly opens the specimen case and pulls out vials. The samples are gray-green.

GRIFFITH

That's disgusting. What is it?

Araldi grins.

ARALDI

Alien blood, maybe organ pieces.

GRIFFITH

(droll)

Yum.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - ROLLING PLAIN - NIGHT

A three-man fast scout vehicle races across the terrain under the GLOW of a growing AURORA. A dust cloud RISES behind it.

ANGLE ON SCOUT VEHICLE - TRAVELING - NIGHT

The TURRET GUNNER bounces, but keeps his crew-served weapon ready. The TACTICAL COMMANDER (TC) covers the right side.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - ROLLING PLAIN - NIGHT

The DRIVER skids the vehicle to a stop. The turret gunner uses binos to sweep the route ahead.

TURRET GUNNER
Movement! Nine o'clock!

The TC raises binos to his face.

INSERT - BINO VIEW

The plain RIPPLES like a huge herd of migrating wildebeest.

BACK TO SCENE

TC
(to the driver)
Move!

The driver floors the accelerator and whips the vehicle around. The gunner swivels his weapon towards the horde.

TC
(keying throat mike)
Lightning 6...

The TC unkeys the mike and looks at the driver.

TC
All I get is static!
(rekeying)
Any station this net. This is Zulu
1-1. Relay to Lightning 6... we
have massive movement and are unable
to verify O-P status. Taking
alternate route. If you copy, key
your mike three times. Over.

INT. COMMAND VEHICLE - NIGHT

Balado walks to the door and leans out.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - NIGHT

Radcliff talks with a commando. Balado gets his attention. Radcliff finishes and walks over.

INT. COMMAND VEHICLE - NIGHT

Radcliff steps inside. Balado points to a SCREEN map.

BALADO
A mobile recon team just attempted
to establish contact with an O-P
(MORE)

BALADO (CONT'D)

here. Enroute, they encountered a mass movement of "something." They dee-dee-mao'd and called in a report. The interference is back, so they couldn't hear our reply and we can't raise the fleet yet.

RADCLIFF

What about life beacons from the O-P site?

BALADO

Can't find their signals either.

RADCLIFF

This movement, are we tracking it?

BALADO

No. When we do get a lock on the satellites, they don't show anything. Whatever is out there doesn't show up on a normal scan.

RADCLIFF

We need intell on what we're facing.

BALADO

If we can get ahold of mobile recon, we can have them check it out.

RADCLIFF

Keep trying. In the meantime try to request aerial recon to check the O-P site.

BALADO

Already done. We barely managed to get the request in.

RADCLIFF

Good. Take over here. It's time I head over to the FOB and oversee operations. I can't do it from here.

BALADO

Will do, sir... good luck.

RADCLIFF

You too, Jose... Hey, Wiberg... I'm buying the beer when we get back. You've earned a cold one... or three.

WIBERG

Hooah, sir.
(into mike)
All stations this net. Lightning 5 has tactical control of crash site, time now. Lightning 6 transferring to Tiger Base.

Radcliff exits.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - NIGHT

TWO scout vehicles, with heavily armed commandos pull up to the command vehicle. Radcliff climbs on one and the vehicles ROLL OUT.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - OBSERVATION POINT #1 - OVERHEAD - NIGHT

Transport #2 hovers over the O-P with its ramp DOWN.

INT./EXT. TRANSPORT #2 - HOLD - NIGHT

The ramp gunner uses a large spotlight mounted over the ramp to light the ground below.

RAMP GUNNER'S POV

Disturbed soil and several small, DARK patches.

BACK TO SCENE

Rounds HIT beside the ramp gunner. He grabs the ramp gun and fires into the dark as the transport accelerates away.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - NIGHT

Balado PACES outside the command vehicle. Wiberg sticks his head out.

WIBERG

Sir, I just heard a call from the transport checking out the O-P site. The pilot said they're taking fire.

BALADO

Contact Lightning 6 and...

Transport #2 ROARS over the crash site. Wiberg watches it.

BALADO

Wiberg! Get ahold of Lightning 6 and find out what's going on. All hell may be getting ready to break loose and I would like to know if anything is headed our way.

Wiberg ducks back inside.

BALADO

Hey!

Wiberg sticks his head outside again.

BALADO

Find out the status of the mobile recon, too.

Wiberg nods and ducks back inside. There is the SOUND of heavy-weapons firing O.S. Balado turns.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - PERIMETER - NIGHT

Adam's tank and dug-in infantry FIRE automatic weapons into the dark. BOOM. The tank FIRES its main gun. O.S., other tanks FIRE intermittently.

INT. FOB TIGER TOC

Saager taps several buttons on a console and yanks off his headphones.

SAAGER

Incoming message!

Hohrbach walk over. Saager taps a button. There is heavy STATIC and DISTORTION.

ADAMS (V.O.)

... Unknown threat [static] location.
[static] ...ellow on ammo with two K-I-A. Perimeter [static]... breach
[static]... Over.

The TOC entrance opens. Radcliff walks inside. He places his rifle and helmet on a table, then walks up to Saager.

WIBERG (V.O.)

Say again last, Charlie 2-5 Bravo.
Has perimeter been breached? Over.

ADAMS (V.O.)

I say again, Lightning 5, perimeter
is in danger of breach by unknown
attacker. Requesting immediate
support. Over.

Radcliff looks at Saager.

RADCLIFF

Sergeant, try to get ahold of Control.
I want resupply at the Ambrose site
ASAP. And get me satellite feed.
We can't fight what we can't see.
(to Hohrbach)
Reinforce our perimeter with everybody
we have. Medical and comms are the
only exceptions.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - DESERT - NIGHT

The scout vehicle ROARS up a large dune and stops. The turret
gunner uses his binos to scan the area. The aurora LIGHTS
everything in a SHIFTING glow.

TURRET GUNNER

Good thing I don't do drugs or this
light would really creep me out.

TC

Spare us the commentary. What do
you see?

TURRET GUNNER

The sand stops about half a klick
ahead. Beyond is rolling plains.

TC

Anything moving?

TURRET GUNNER

Nope... hold on!

INSERT - BINO VIEW

A sand dune. "Something" appears at the top, then disappears.

BACK TO SCENE

TURRET GUNNER
I think I saw something.

TC
How f... ?

ZING. THUNK. The TC slumps. The turret gunner whips the turret around and fires as the driver guns the engine. The vehicle kicks up DUST as it ROARS off like a rally car.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

SENSOR TECH #3 works the console as Jaeger and Dayan watch. FALSE-COLOR satellite feed shows an overhead view of tanks firing at NOTHING.

JAEGER
What are they shooting at?

Sensor tech #3 taps keys. The COLORS on the SCREEN change along the spectrum. Red dots FLASH, then are gone.

JAEGER
Go back!

The tech taps a key several times. The dots reappear.

DAYAN
What the hell are those?

JAEGER
(to sensor tech #3)
Relay the data dirtside so they can see what's attacking them.

SENSOR TECH #3
They don't have the equipment to see that wavelength, sir. Whatever's out there is effectively invisible to them.

JAEGER
I'll worry about getting them the equipment! Relay this information to the flight deck so the air support sensors can be adjusted.

(to Dayan)
Invisible in the dark, huh?

(MORE)

JAEGER (CONT'D)

Let's see what incendiaries and high explosives do for the bastards.

DAYAN

Let's hope it's enough. Pretty much all of the mission-capable ground forces we have are dirtside now. As for the bombing mission, I'll drop Viper Team in to assess the damage. If this doesn't work, we might need to do it again.

JAEGER

No can do. This is a one-shot deal. There's not enough ordnance or bombers to fly a normal run.

DAYAN

Then let's make it count.

Jaeger pauses to look at a SCREEN with a FLASHING banner.

JAEGER

Uh-oh... Two incident reports just popped up. Both cases involved aircraft or personnel hit with rounds apparently fired from our weapons.

DAYAN

Friendly fire?

JAEGER

Don't... think so. Intell analysts believe that whatever is out there has captured some of our weapons and has figured out how to fire them.

DAYAN

(to Commo Tech #3)

Alert all ground forces. Whatever's out there is armed and using our own weapons against us.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - PERIMETER - NIGHT

A tank ROARS across uneven terrain. In the distance, shadows advance. The AURORA has almost completely FADED. There is only dim STARLIGHT. In the turret cupola, Adams FIRES a pintle-mounted automatic weapon at FLITTING shadows.

INT. TANK

Hu watches a flip-down SCREEN in front of him. The tank's engine WHINES, the PITCH rising and falling with the terrain.

EXT. CLOSE ON TANK TURRET CUPOLA - TRAVELING - NIGHT

Adams FIRES another burst from the automatic weapon, then drop into the tank.

INT. TANK

Adams pulls the hatch closed.

ADAMS

Hu! Steer right... okay, straighten out! Keep going until I say stop.

HU

On it, sergeant!

Hu guns the engine.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - PERIMETER - NIGHT

The tank ROARS into the onrushing shadows. The SEETHING mass shifts to envelope the tank, which rides on. A trail of broken and flopping "somethings" stretches behind it.

INT. TANK

Hu turns the yoke back and forth slowly. He grins from ear-to-ear. Adams braces himself against the rocking motion.

HU

(excited)

Wooooohooooo! Watch 'em go crunch.

ADAMS

(shouting)

Okay! Kill all of them you can, but watch out. We're screwed if we wreck.

(keying throat mike)

Lightning 5. Charlie 2-5 Bravo. Over.

INT. COMMAND VEHICLE - NIGHT

Adams' VOICE comes over the speaker as Balado climbs inside. Wiberg nods to him as he keys his mike.

WIBERG
This is Lightning 5. Send it Charlie
2-5 Bravo.

ADAMS (V.O.)
(garbled)
Lightning 5, we're using our tracks
against the crunchies. It seems to
be working. Recommend sending out
the other tracks. Over.

Balado gives Wiberg a puzzled look. Wiberg shrugs.

WIBERG
Stand by, Charlie 2-5 Bravo.

PAUSE.

BALADO
Did he say "crunchies?"

WIBERG
(keying mike)
Charlie 2-5 Bravo, did you say
"crunchies?" Over.

ADAMS (V.O.)
Affirmative, Lightning 5. Whatever
they are, they "crunch" when you run
'em... over.

INT. YOKOHAMA - HANGAR DECK

Bombers idle IN-LINE. A deck crewman hand-signals them into
launch positions. One by one, they LAUNCH.

EXT. SPACE - FLEET

The bombers shoot into space, form up, and SPIRAL towards
the planet.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

FALSE-COLOR planetside video APPEARS on the main VIEWSCREEN.

JAEGER
Get me audio from forward air control
[FAC].

A burst of STATIC, then light HISSING.

FAC (V.O.)

(calm)
Lasing target.

LEAD BOMBER PILOT (V.O.)

Acquired. Beginning run.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - RUINED ALIEN METROPOLIS #1 - NIGHT

Shadows POUR out of CRUMBLING buildings and holes in the ground and join a MASSIVE wave moving in a single direction. POUNDING feet SOUND like a huge herd of migrating animals.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - HIGH ALTITUDE - NIGHT

Wind HOWLS. The bombers fly in-line, bomb bay doors OPEN.

INT. LEAD BOMBER COCKPIT - NIGHT

The LEAD BOMBER PILOT, lead bomber co-pilot, and BOMBARDIER sit in the largely SILENT cockpit intent on their tasks.

BOMBARDIER

(cool)
Completing final turn. Release in...
Ten... Nine... Eight...

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - RUINED ALIEN METROPOLIS #1 - NIGHT

Shadows move en-mass through rubble-filled streets.

BOMBARDIER (V.O.)

Seven... Six... Five...

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - HIGH ALTITUDE - NIGHT

The aircraft level off one-by-one.

BOMBARDIER (V.O.)

Four... Three... Two... One... Bombs
away.

The bombers DROP their loads.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - RUINED ALIEN METROPOLIS #1 - OVERHEAD - NIGHT

EXPLOSIONS "chew" through the entire area. Shockwaves form RINGS.

INT. LEAD BOMBER COCKPIT - NIGHT

The BOMBARDIER watches a SCREEN.

BOMBARDIER
Target area saturated.

LEAD BOMBER PILOT
(nods)
Control, team is cleared for infil
on L-Z Kilo. Over.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

Jaeger sits in his command chair, brooding.

JAEGER
Audio off... I hope to hell that
worked.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - HIGH ALTITUDE - NIGHT

Transport #3 descends, silhouetted by the fading aurora.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - RUINED ALIEN METROPOLIS #1 - NIGHT

The lander spirals into the L-Z, its ramp lowering. It "kisses" the surface. CAPT KLEIDON and eleven commandos hit the ground. They run between low alien ruins as the transport ROARS away. Strange BODY PARTS lie scattered everywhere.

SUDDENLY, FLAT BLACK "arms" emerge from partially collapsed openings. Behind the arms, teeth SNAP and there is HISSING. VAGUE SHAPES struggle to free themselves.

Kleidon leads the commandos up a large, dirt-covered hill of rubble.

Shadows emerge from all over the place and surround the hill, but don't climb it. They hide in craters, behind piles of rubble, or ruined walls.

On the hilltop, the commandos take up defensive positions in bomb craters. Inside one of them, Kleidon kneels next to his radioman, COMMANDO #3.

KLEIDON
Which channel?

COMMANDO #3
Two.

Kleidon nods and punches buttons on a wrist-mounted KEY-PAD.

COMMANDO #3
On-line with "Bird Dog."

KLEIDON
(into throat mike)
Bird Dog. Bird Dog. Yankee 3-4
Alfa. Over.

BIRD DOG (V.O.)
(muted)
This is Bird Dog. Send it.

KLEIDON
Bird Dog, relay to Lightning 6 we're
pinned down. Breakout not possible.
Request extraction ASAP. Over.

BIRD DOG (V.O.)
Stand by, Yankee 3-4 Alfa.

INT. FOB TIGER TOC

Saager leans away from the radio and turns to Hohrbach.

SAAGER
Sir, Viper Team leader is requesting
extraction. He says they are immobile
and cannot break out.

HOHRBACH
Have Bird Dog ask if they're about
to be overrun.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - RUINED ALIEN METROPOLIS #1 - NIGHT

Kleidon and the commandos watch and wait.

BIRD DOG (V.O.)
Yankee 3-4 Alfa. Are you being
overrun? Over.

Commando #3 rolls his eyes. Kleidon looks disgusted.

KLEIDON
Not at this time, Bird Dog. Whatever
boxed us in is massing for a likely
assault. Over.

INT. FOB TIGER TOC

Hohrbach steps to the console and puts on headphones.

HOHRBACH
 (to Saager)
 Patch me through to him.

Saager taps a couple of keys and nods to Hohrbach.

HOHRBACH
 Yankee 3-4 Alfa, this is Tiger 6-2
 Actual. You will maintain position
 and complete your mission...

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - RUINED ALIEN METROPOLIS #1 - NIGHT

HOHRBACH (V.O.)
 ... If you are unwilling to carry
 out your orders, relinquish command
 to your second. Over.

Kleidon grits his teeth.

KLEIDON
 Roger, Lightning 6-2. Yankee 3-4
 Alfa, out.

PAUSE.

COMMANDO #3
 We're boofoo'd.

KLEIDON
 Not yet. Be ready to call in fire
 support. This could get ugly.

COMMANDO #4 hisses from several meters away.

COMMANDO #4 (O.S.)
 Heads up. There's movement.

COMMANDO #3
 (to Kleidon)
 You were saying?

Kleidon hurries to the next crater and plops down beside
 commando #4, who holds a small hand-held device.

INSERT - DEVICE SCREEN

Red BLOBS move all over the place.

BACK TO SCENE

KLEIDON
Well... hell.

INT. FOB TIGER TOC

Hohrbach talks M.O.S. to another officer. Saager interrupts.

SAAGER
Sir, Bird Dog reports Yankee 3-4
Alfa is under attack and has called
in air support.

HOHRBACH
Put them on speaker.

There is a burst of HISSING, then CLEAR transmission.

BIRD DOG (V.O.)
... two-zero meters to your six.
Copy danger close... PSYCHO 7-6
inbound. Over.

BEAT. Hohrbach turns to an N.D. commando standing nearby.

HOHRBACH
Get the C-0!

The commando exits. Saager turns back to his radio.

SAAGER
Bird-dog, this is Tiger 6-2. Relay
status of Yankee 3-4 Alfa.

BEAT.

BIRD DOG (V.O.)
Tiger 6-2. Yankee 3-4 Alfa has
requested all remaining ordnance be
dropped on his position. Over.

Hohrbach goes pale.

HOHRBACH
(screaming)
Pull them out of there!

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - RUINED ALIEN METROPOLIS #1 - NIGHT

Half-seen shadows surge up the hill. Squad weapons CHATTER. Commandos take turns firing their carbines and reloading.

COMMANDOS POV

Looking downhill as crunchies advance in now brightening AURORA light. Gunfire MOWS them down, but they keep coming.

BACK TO SCENE

Kleidon fires until he has to reload. As he inserts a fresh clip, Commando #3 shouts to him and taps his ear.

BIRD DOG (V.O.)
Yankee 3-4 Alfa, Bird Dog. Over.

KLEIDON
Send it Bird Dog.

BIRD DOG (V.O.)
Exfil in tree mikes. I say again,
exfil in tree mikes. Over.

KLEIDON
Copy tree mikes, Bird Dog... if we
make it that long.

The commandos fire as the crunchies surge uphill. Dead shadows cover the slopes. Others climb over them and advance.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - HIGH ALTITUDE - ABOVE RUINED ALIEN METROPOLIS #1 - NIGHT

CAS #1 (think space-going A-10) dives, becoming almost vertical. The WHINE of its engines turns SHRILL. It releases several CYLINDERS.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - RUINED ALIEN METROPOLIS #1 - NIGHT

A cascade of LIQUID FIRE hits the shadows climbing the hill. Hundreds SCREAM as they FRY. Weapons fire takes down the FEW that reach the top.

A shadow LUNGES into full VIEW and grabs a commando. It is HIDEOUS and EVIL-LOOKING. The commando frantically butt-strokes it repeatedly with his rifle. FINALLY, it collapses at his feet, twitching and jerking.

CAS #1 pulls up and ascends. As it passes between two relatively intact buildings, portions of the facade EXPLODE outward, striking the aircraft. Smoke PUFFS.

The cockpit canopy FLIES OFF and the pilot EJECTS. The craft WINDMILLS into the ground. A parachute POPS open and the pilot descends... towards a large concentration of shadows.

Kleidon REACTS to seeing the pilot's descent. He leaps to COMMANDO #5 manning the team's crew-served weapon.

KLEIDON
Fire into that mass...

COMMANDO #5
(overlapping)
We're too late!

They REACT as CAS #1 pilot descends into a seething mass of shadows.

INT. FOB TIGER TOC

Hohrbach listens intently to the radio traffic.

BIRD DOG (V.O.)
Yankee 3-4 Alfa. Prep for exfil.
CAS elements clear the way. Stay on
station until pickup complete. Break.
Lightning 6-2, bird down. I say
again, bird down. Over.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - RUINED ALIEN METROPOLIS #1 - AERIAL VIEW - NIGHT

Aircraft strafe the area around the hill. "Napalm" LIGHTS the terrain.

From the side, transport #4 ROARS in, its ramp dropping. It hovers over the hilltop and spins on its axis. STREAMS of fire jet out from the door gunners. A couple of spins of suppressive fire and the transport touches down.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - RUINED ALIEN METROPOLIS #1 - HILLTOP - NIGHT

The ramp gunner gestures to the team. The commandos dash for the transport. Kleidon covers his men as they board, then sprints up the ramp.

INT. TRANSPORT #4 - HOLD - NIGHT

The door gunners fire as the transport lifts off, ramp closing. The commandos strap in as Kleidon makes his way to the cockpit.

INT. TRANSPORT #4 - COCKPIT - NIGHT

The pilot pours more power to the transport's engines as Kleidon pokes his head inside the cockpit.

KLEIDON

There's a pilot down there. Have...

TRANSPORT #4 PILOT

He's dead... Look, we need to get topside, so strap in.

Kleidon nods gravely and withdraws into the hold.

INT. TRANSPORT #4 - HOLD

Kleidon sinks into a seat and straps himself in. The other commandos sag in their harnesses, exhausted.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - PERIMETER - NIGHT

A buttoned-up tank returns to the perimeter as others leave. The shadows retreat as the tanks advance.

INT. TANK

Hu REACTS to seeing the BLOBS on the screen fall back.

HU

(turning slightly)

They're falling back, sergeant.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - PERIMETER - NIGHT

The hatch on the cupola POPS open and Adams stands up. He puts binos to his face.

INSERT - BINO VIEW

Tanks plow through CLUSTERS of shadows. Bodies FLY.

BACK TO SCENE

There is a ROAR O.S. Adams lowers the binos and turns.

About 250 meters out, an alien ship hovers several meters above the ground. A "hole" opens in its side. SOMETHING slams into the side of the ship and EXPLODES.

TWO four-legged, two-armed, armored ALIENS fall out and land on the ground. The alien ship ascends STEEPLY. The aliens pull weapons and back towards the Ambrose perimeter, firing at the shadows as they go.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - HIGH ALTITUDE - NIGHT

Transport #4 banks hard to avoid the ascending alien ship. One of its engines FLARES and FADES OUT.

The alien ships ROLLS and accelerates away.

INT. TRANSPORT #4 - COCKPIT - NIGHT

An alarm BLARES. The pilot struggles with the controls.

TRANSPORT #4 PILOT
You piece of... Flame out!

He pushes the throttles all the way forward.

TRANSPORT #4 CO-PILOT
Lightning 6-2, Golf 4-4. We have an engine out. Unable to leave atmo. Diverting to your location. Over.

INT. FOB TIGER TOC

Saager taps a SCREEN next to his radio as he talks.

SAAGER
Roger, Golf 4-4. You're clear to land on... pad three.

A N.D. officer enters at the far end. Saager turns in his seat. He nods to Saager. Saager turns to Hohrbach.

SAAGER
The C-0's on the way, sir. Oh, and Golf 4-4 had engine trouble. It's diverting here with Yankee 3-4 Alfa on-board. I don't suggest being around when they arrive.

HOHRBACH
Watch you mouth, sergeant! You don't suggest anything! Is that clear?!

SAAGER

Crystal, sir. Nice knowing you.

HOHRBACH

Listen you little shit, your being special ops doesn't impress me. You're a bunch of spoiled primadonnas. There is nothing you do that regular infantry can't do as well or better.

SAAGER

(smiling)

You either tested to be a commando and failed or you didn't have the balls to... They always hate us.

Saager turns back to his radio, cutting off Hohrbach's reply.

SAAGER

Golf 4-4, Lightning 6-2... emergency personnel are standing by.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - FOB TIGER - PAD THREE - NIGHT

Transport #4 lands. The rear ramp lowers as the engines WIND DOWN. Emergency personnel race towards the ramp.

Kleidon jumps clear before the ramp is fully down. He walks with a purpose, his face hard.

INT. FOB TIGER TOC

Kleidon enters the TOC. He scans the room and stops on Hohrbach. He quietly places his rifle and helmet on a map table and strides towards Hohrbach. His eyes are "dead."

Hohrbach turns at the SOUND of footsteps. A gloved fist smashes into his nose and mouth, splattering BLOOD.

Kleidon whips out his pistol and shoves it in Hohrbach's face. Hohrbach blinks in pain.

KLEIDON

You bastard! You got a pilot killed and almost got my team wiped out!

Everybody is shocked into silence. Nobody moves. With a CLICK, Kleidon flicks the safety off.

RADCLIFF (O.S.)
He's not worth it. Besides, he's done.

Kleidon turns. Radcliff puts his helmet on the table beside Kleidon's. A couple of commandos stands behind him.

KLEIDON
All due respect, sir, that's bullshit.
Senior officers protect their own.

RADCLIFF
Not under my command. He's finished.
My word as a commando.

Radcliff cautiously steps forward.

RADCLIFF
Give me your pistol.

Kleidon takes a breath and holds it for a MOMENT. He flicks the safety on, flips the pistol around butt-first, and hands it to Radcliff. Kleidon releases Hohrbach and steps back.

RADCLIFF
(to Hohrbach)
Pack your shit. You're out of here.
(to the room)
Back to work. We have alot to do.

Radcliff guides Kleidon to the exit. As he walks, he looks at commando #6 and gestures to Kleidon's helmet and rifle. Commando #6 grabs the items and follows them outside.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - FOB TIGER - OUTSIDE TOC - NIGHT

Radcliff stops Kleidon and hands him the pistol. He reaches out and grabs the helmet and rifle from commando #6, who goes back inside. Radcliff looks hard at Kleidon.

RADCLIFF
Look, you'll be punished for striking a superior, but not now. Get your team on the next fleet-bound transport and brief the commanders.

Kleidon nods as Radcliff returns his rifle and helmet.

KLEIDON
Yes, sir.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - PERIMETER - NIGHT

Adams watches the tanks return to the perimeter. "Stuff" is SMEARED across their fronts and sides. He raises his binos.

INSERT - BINO VIEW

The armored aliens and the shadows fight ever more viciously as they approach the perimeter.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - OUTSIDE PERIMETER - NIGHT

An armored alien goes down. The other one pulls something off a belt and tosses it at the shadows. FLASH. Several shadows fall. More surge at them. The downed alien gets to its feet, but goes down under a SCREECHING mob of shadows.

BLOBS of light come out of the dark and EXPLODE inside the perimeter. Several tanks FIRE shells at the source. In the DISTANCE, there is an EXPLOSION with SECONDARY blasts.

The remaining alien turns and runs towards the human lines. Adams pivots his automatic weapon towards the shadows and sends a STREAM of fire into them. The survivors retreat.

The alien stops inside the perimeter. Soldiers aim their weapons at it. It drops its weapon and shows its "hands."

ADAMS

(yelling to a soldier)

Take it to the L-Z. Make sure it's
on the next transport to the fleet.

A soldier points towards the Ambrose. The alien leaves. Another soldier retrieves the alien's weapon and leaves.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIEFING ROOM

Jaeger, Dayan, Griffith, and several other officers sit with Kleidon, still in his dusty armor, around a conference table.

DAYAN

You say they ambushed the craft?

KLEIDON

Yes, sir. It was too coincidental
how the building exploded at the
exact moment the aircraft flew by.

GRIFFITH

That suggests we aren't dealing with mindless animals.

DAYAN

(to Griffith)

Anything to link the crunchies with the ruins?

JAEGER

Crunchies?

DAYAN

Tanker humor. That's what they call infantry soldiers. You know... run 'em over, they go crunch.

Jaeger scowls.

GRIFFITH

Uh, right width, but much too short.

KLEIDON

I don't follow.

GRIFFITH

Dimensions of personal spaces are directly related to the builder. Think of a trapdoor spider, wasp, bird, or any other animal. They all make openings for their nests and dens that fit their bodies. Same with humans. Doorways and stairs fit the height and width of an average person. The dimensions of the crunchies and the ruins don't match. It's like dwarves living in a basketball player's house.

BEAT.

DAYAN

The more info we get, the more confusing it all is.

INT. YOKOHAMA - LAB

Griffith and lab tech ALEX MEBOSO work with futuristic equipment. A tone SOUNDS.

VOICE #3 (V.O.)
 Doctor Griffith to interrogation.
 Doctor Griffith to interrogation.

Griffith looks up in annoyance.

MEBOSO
 This can't be correct.

GRIFFITH
 What?

MEBOSO
 According to this, the worms, the dirt-side aliens, and the off-world alien are... the percentage of similarity is real close.

GRIFFITH
 You're right. That can't be correct. The samples must have been mixed up or contaminated. Run the test again.

MEBOSO
 I know I did it right.

GRIFFITH
 I believe you, but we have to be absolutely sure. I'll be back after I find out what's going on in interrogation.

Griffith grabs SOMETHING off a table and hurriedly exits.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIG - OBSERVATION ROOM

A picture window SHOWS an interrogation room. Inside, the alien removes the last pieces of armor and puts them on a table. It wears loose fitting robe-like clothing.

Araldi watches while rubbing his chin, thinking.

Griffith enters. Araldi looks at him, then back at the alien.

ARALDI
 Weird, huh?

GRIFFITH
 Has it done anything?

ARALDI

Took off its armor. Now it's just standing there.

GRIFFITH

Any attempt to communicate?

ARALDI

Nope. You know, its disconcerting to see something with four legs and two arms. How dexterous do you think those digits are?

GRIFFITH

(turning to leave)

We'll see soon enough.

ARALDI

We aren't set up to question it.

GRIFFITH

We need answers now. Help Meboso retest the samples again. Sorry to cut this short, but I've gotta go.

Griffith exits the observation room.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIG - INTERROGATION ROOM

Griffith enters. The alien cautiously backs away. Griffith displays a small dumbbell shaped DEVICE, and slowly puts it on the table. He taps a small keypad on it.

GRIFFITH

Okay. Let's begin.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - NIGHT

Supply Sergeant and supply clerk #1 stand to the side of the Ambrose main hold hatch. Supply Clerk #2 uses a futuristic lifting DEVICE to carry a crate to a transport idling nearby.

SUPPLY SERGEANT

Last one.

SUPPLY CLERK #1

Do you think they'll find them?

SUPPLY SERGEANT

Hmm?

SUPPLY CLERK #1
The people.

SUPPLY SERGEANT
Hope so, but not our worry.

SUPPLY CLERK #1
That's pretty cold, sergeant.

SUPPLY SERGEANT
Look, private... I've been in combat operations most of my military career. I am a supply sergeant because I got messed up really bad and can't do infantry stuff anymore. In case that's not enough for you, I knew alot of guys that are buried on some shithole planet. So sorry for not getting too choked up over some people that got themselves in a bad spot... Come on, the Baltimore is waitin' on this stuff.

They hurry towards the transport.

INT. YOKOHAMA - LAB

Meboso runs SAMPLES as Araldi enters. Araldi glances at a SCREEN displaying data. His eyes get bigger as he reads.

ARALDI
It's so obvious!

MEBOSO
What?

ARALDI
It explains everything.

MEBOSO
Huh?

ARALDI
(rushed)
I need to brief Doctor Griffith. This changes everything... Run tests on the skulls that just came in. Soldiers have been going hand-to-hand with the crunchies and the damn things just won't go down.

Araldi hurriedly exits, leaving behind a bewildered Meboso.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - RIDGELINE - NIGHT

TWO commandos lie in the prone. COMMANDO #7 has a large sniper rifle, COMMANDO #8 a carbine. Both use binos to look down into the valley. The aurora FLICKERS.

INSERT - BINO VIEW

Crunchies enter and leave a cave at the base of a hill. Well-worn trails CRISS-CROSS the valley.

COMMANDO #8 (O.S.)
Lightning 6, Falcon 1-1. Over.

SAAGER (V.O.)
This is Lightning 6. Send it.

BACK TO SCENE

Commando #8 lowers the binos.

COMMANDO #8
Lightning 6, we have eyes on a possible concentration of crunchies about one-one klicks south-east your position. Request orders. Over.

SAAGER (V.O.)
Standby, Falcon 1-1.

INT. FOB TIGER TOC

Saager pulls off his headset and turns to Radcliff.

SAAGER
Sir, a sniper team waiting on pick-up reports they may have found a concentration of crunchies. What do you want to do?

Radcliff thinks for a MOMENT.

RADCLIFF
Leave them in place to report, but keep air support close by. If the shit hits the fan, I want them pulled.

Saager nods and puts his headphones back on.

SAAGER

Falcon 1-1, hold position and report.
Over.

COMMANDO #8 (V.O.)

Wilco, Lightning 6. Falcon 1-1,
out.

PAUSE.

RADCLIFF

Contact higher and relay the
coordinates. I'm going to let the
boss know what's going on.

SAAGER

Sir, I recommend we coordinate for a
fly-by? I bet if we stirred the
nest, we can get a better idea what's
there. As long as Falcon 1-1 stays
out of sight, they should be fine.

RADCLIFF

Do it. Let me know what they find.

SAAGER

Will do, sir.

Saager turns back to his commo gear. Radcliff goes over to
the map table. Hohrbach enters. He is thoroughly humbled
as he glances at Saager. Radcliff REACTS to seeing him.

RADCLIFF

What the hell are you doing here?!
I told you to get your sorry ass on
the next transport.

HOHRBACH

Sir, I would rather die fighting
what is out there than go home in
disgrace. Let me stay and fight. I
will be just another soldier.

Hohrbach tosses his rank on the table. Radcliff thinks for
a BEAT.

RADCLIFF

You can stay, but only because I
need trigger pullers. Follow orders
without question or I'll have you
shot. Is that clear?

HOHRBACH

(relieved)

Absolutely, sir. Thank you.

RADCLIFF

Go to the main gate and get with the
O-I-C. He'll give you your orders.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - 1500 METERS ALTITUDE - NIGHT

CAS #2 swoops into the head of a valley. The craft slows.

INT. CAS #2 COCKPIT - NIGHT

A heads-up DISPLAY shows FALSE-COLOR images of the terrain.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - RIDGELINE - NIGHT

Commandos #7 and #8 remain still as the craft cruises past.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - VALLEY - NIGHT

CAS #2 ROARS through low and slow. Crunchies BOIL out of
the cave. The valley floor quickly SEETHES with them.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - RIDGELINE - NIGHT

Commando #8 rolls onto his back and takes a breath.

COMMANDO #8

What the hell?!

(keying mike)

Lightning 6, Falcon 1-1. Over.

SAAGER (V.O.)

Send it, Falcon 1-1.

COMMANDO #8

Lightning 6, you have massive movement
headed your direction. Over.

SAAGER (V.O.)

Falcon 1-1, we copy large group of
crunchies headed our way. Stand-by.

INT. FOB TIGER TOC

Radcliff walks over to Saager.

RADCLIFF

Get me Lightning 5.

Saager talks in low tones as Radcliff walks around.

SAAGER
Lightning 5 for you, sir.

Radcliff grabs a pair of headphones and puts them on.

RADCLIFF
Jose, you hear the last transmission?

BALADO (V.O.)
Yes, sir. I'm betting that wasn't what you wanted to happen.

RADCLIFF
They were probably massing for this anyway. The fly-by set them off early. That may be to our advantage.

BALADO (V.O.)
Sucks just the same.

RADCLIFF
Well, it's done. We'll coordinate for some strafing and incendiaries. We can whittle them down before they get here.

BALADO (V.O.)
Hope so.

RADCLIFF
This may be a shit sandwich, but we all get to take a nibble. In the meantime, pull everybody here. There is nothing left on the Ambrose that warrants keeping our forces divided.

BALADO (V.O.)
Wilco, sir. We'll be there ASAP.

RADCLIFF
Watch your ass, Jose. Something is getting ready to happen. Out here.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIEFING ROOM

Jaeger, Steele, and Dayan sit at a big table. Griffith enters in a rush.

GRIFFITH

(winded)

Gentlemen, I apologize for the short notice, but a colleague just gave me vital information.

He taps a wrist-mounted keypad. A big WALLSCREEN turns ON. Two chemical FORMULAS appear side-by-side.

GRIFFITH

These are the chemical formulas for the genetic codes of the two groups of aliens. The one on the left is from the planet. The other's from the off-world aliens.

STEELE

I don't see any difference.

GRIFFITH

Chemically they're identical.

JAEGER

They're related?

GRIFFITH

Precisely, but there is more.

He taps his keypad. Two images of double helices appear.

GRIFFITH

These are human and chimpanzee DNA. They're about ninety-seven percent the same. A three percent difference expresses as two very different primate species. Now, these are...

He taps his keypad again. Two alien genetic codes appear.

GRIFFITH

... the aliens' genetic codes.

Everybody leans forward and looks hard at the images.

STEELE

Are they any different either?

GRIFFITH

About a percent. They diverged relatively recently... say, fifty thousand years ago.

JAEGER

Diverged?

STEELE

(numb)

They had a common ancestor.

GRIFFITH

Correct. Furthermore, since the crunchies are perfectly adapted to the planemo's environment and the chemical make-up of their genetic code matches all the other specimens from the planet we tested, we can say with certainty they evolved here. This is their planet of origin.

BEAT.

JAEGER

That makes no sense. It's a cold, dark rock in the middle of nowhere.

GRIFFITH

At some point, it was a garden spot orbiting a nice F-class star.

STEELE

Well, that explains the translation.

GRIFFITH

Translation?

JAEGER

The Baltimore initially translated an alien intercept as they wanted the planemo for a colony. The literal translation was "home," but it didn't make any sense to establish a colony on a sunless, cold world. Now, it does. Something threw this planet out of its star system. The survivors down there mutated, those who fled kept evolving.

GRIFFITH

That also explains why the off-world aliens went apeshit when we arrived.

DAYAN

What about their body structure?
The crunchies walk on six limbs, but
the off-worlders walk on four with
the front two used like our arms.

GRIFFITH

Take gorillas. They are quadrapeds,
but their hands and feet are like
our hands. It is similar to the
aliens. Like gorillas, I would also
bet a crunchy could tear an off-world
alien limb-from-limb.

PAUSE.

JAEGER

(to Steele)

Update command on this info. Send
it burst, data only. Dismissed.

The group disperses.

JAEGER

Commander Steele.

Steele pauses at the exit.

STEELE

Sir?

JAEGER

While you're at it, launch a full
spread of long-range patrols.

STEELE

We'll have to pull most of our fighter
cover. That doesn't leave much for
air support either.

JAEGER

No choice. Sensors are almost useless
this close to the planet. We need
to know what's out there.

STEELE

Yes, sir.

Steele exits.

JAEGER
 (to the air)
 Jaeger to Baltimore.

PAUSE.

DENNISON (V.O.)
 Baltimore here, sir.

JAEGER
 Jim, how's the cargo transfer going?

DENNISON (V.O.)
 Just stowing the last of it. You want us to stay in case the army finds anybody or should we go ahead and take the supplies onto the colony?

JAEGER
 Go. I have a feeling that if we find any survivors, they won't be in any shape to help anyone. Contact the colony and have them formally request technical assistance.

DENNISON (V.O.)
 Will do, sir... best of luck to you all.

JAEGER
 Thanks, Jim. Take care. Out here.

The link goes OFF. Jaeger pauses in thought, then exits.

INT. YOKOHAMA - LAB

Griffith and Meboso test a crunchy skull on the table. It is gouged, but essentially undamaged.

MEBOSO
 I don't know about going hand-to-hand with these guys. This skull is like the medieval armor my ancestors wore... what did I say?

Griffith opens a drawer and pulls out a pointed hammer. He whacks the skull HARD. The point PENETRATES.

GRIFFITH
 Medieval! That's it! A mace!

MEBOSO

I have a book with pictures and dimensions! We can make some for the snake-eaters.

GRIFFITH

Snake eaters?

MEBOSO

It a nickname for the commandos. During survival training...

GRIFFITH

(overlapping)

Whatever!

(to the air)

Griffith to machine shop.

INT. YOKOHAMA - FLIGHT DECK

Sleek fighters line up. The lead one "squats" and slingshots forward [think carrier launch].

EXT. SPACE - FLEET

The fighters leave the Yokohama and scatter.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

Steele watches a VIEWSCREEN that show the fighters scattering.

STEELE

(to the air)

Steele to Admiral Jaeger.

JAEGER (V.O.)

Go ahead.

STEELE

Recon patrols launched.

INT. YOKOHAMA - PASSAGEWAY

Jaeger stops in front of his quarters.

JAEGER

Very good. Keep me updated.

STEELE (V.O.)

Yes, sir. Hopefully, there won't be any surprises. Steele out.

INT. YOKOHAMA - JAEGER'S QUARTERS

The door opens. Jaeger enters. A soft tone SOUNDS.

JAEGER

Yes?

VOICE #2 (V.O.)

CINCOM hailing you, sir.

JAEGER

I'll take it here.

An image on the SCREEN pops up. ADM GREG OWENS looks glum.

OWENS

Bob. We had trouble getting through, but we received your reports.

JAEGER

Good. Then you know the battle on the ground is turning out to be a real slugfest.

OWENS

There are no reinforcements. We're spread too thin as it is.

JAEGER

Understood. We'll just have to make do with what we have.

OWENS

If the aliens on the planet are so formidable, how will their more technologically advanced relatives be if they finally hit you?

JAEGER

They may not. Our guys saw firsthand that the two are vicious as hell to each other.

OWENS

In any case, the president ordered the stealth boats to your sector.

JAEGER

Stealth boats?

OWENS (V.O.)

Yes. They're covering the likely routes the aliens could take. When needed, they'll regroup and strike.

(gravely)

More importantly, he's ordering them to cover the fleet while Dayan pulls the ground forces from the planet. You have 24 hours to withdraw.

JAEGER

Withdraw?

OWENS

Signal analysis suggests the off-world aliens are massing a fleet. We can't get ships to you in time.

JAEGER

I have patrols out. If company arrives, we should know pretty quick.

OWENS

And we'll pass along any intell we get... God speed, my friend. Out.

The SCREEN goes blank. Jaeger sighs.

JAEGER

(to the air)

Jaeger to X-0.

STEELE (V.O.)

Here, sir.

JAEGER

Just got orders. We have 24 hours to evac everybody.

STEELE (V.O.)

That means some of our dead and alot of equipment will remain dirtside.

JAEGER

I know!... I know, Ira. We just have to make it happen. Out here.

Jaeger sits for a BEAT, brooding, until finally...

JAEGER
(to the air)
Jaeger to Dayan.

DAYAN (V.O.)
Yea, Bob.

JAEGER
Command just ordered us to pull
everybody within 24 hours. I need
you to give the order to your people.

DAYAN (V.O.)
What?! You can't tell me the cargo
was more valuable than the people.
Now that it's secured, we're supposed
to just give up.

JAEGER
That's not it. There may be an alien
fleet on the way that we can't handle,
and with the departure of the
Baltimore, I am down a cruiser and
four destroyers again.

PAUSE.

DAYAN (V.O.)
I'll give Radcliff the order, but we
still need to find out what happened
to the Ambrose crew and passengers.
I have Viper Team on stand-by. As
soon as a recon element locates where
the survivors passed, the team will
track them down.

JAEGER
I hope you find them before the
outsiders arrive or we may get our
asses handed to us.

DAYAN (V.O.)
If it is humanly possible to find
them, my guys will.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - VALLEY - NIGHT

Commandos #7 and #8 approach the cave entrance. Commando #8
holds out a hand-held SCANNER.

COMMANDO #7
I can't believe we're doing this.

COMMANDO #8
We needed to check it out. Besides,
it's boring up on that ridge.

The scanner CHIRPS. He moves it back and forth slowly.

COMMANDO #8
It's a chemical signature of...

He follows faster CHIRPS to an area just off the pathway.

COMMANDO #8
... digestive enzymes. It's barf.

COMMANDO #7
Great. You found alien puke.

COMMANDO #8
No, human. The cold masks the smell.
(keying throat mike)
Lightning 6, Falcon 1-1. Over.

SAAGER (V.O.)
This is Lightning 6.

COMMANDO #8
Lightning 6, we just confirmed at
least one survivor passed this
location. Over.

PAUSE.

SAAGER (V.O.)
Copy that, Falcon 1-1. Move one-
zero-zero meters south of your present
location and standby for exfil.
Transport inbound. Over.

COMMANDO #8
(puzzled)
Exfil?
(keying mike)
Roger, Lightning 6. Moving to exfil
site. Falcon 1-1, out.

Commando #8 motions to commando #7.

COMMANDO #8
You heard the man. Let's roll.

The commandos move out at a brisk trot.

There is NOISE from the cave. A DOZEN crunchies pour out of the cave and give chase. The commandos run for it.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - 1500 METERS ALTITUDE - NIGHT

CAS #3 spirals down towards the valley. A transport follows on a slightly different track.

INT. CAS #3 - NIGHT

CAS #3 PILOT (HAMMER 2) REACTS to seeing MOVEMENT on a SCREEN.

HAMMER 2
Control, this is Hammer 2. We have movement from the cave.

CONTROL (V.O.)
Roger, Hammer 2. Take 'em out, but do not, I say again, do not hit the cave entrance. There may be Ambrose survivors inside. How copy? Over.

HAMMER 2
Roger, control. Guns only.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - VALLEY - NIGHT

CAS #3 ROARS into the valley.

INSERT - GUN SIGHT VIEW - NIGHT

A dozen RED DOTS chase two BLUE DOTS. FIRE peppers the red dots.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - VALLEY - NIGHT

Crunchy bodies EXPLODE. The survivors SCRAMBLE back.

CAS #3 ROARS out of the valley.

The transport ROARS in, spinning to present its ramp to the commandos. The ramp gunner covers the commandos as they race up the ramp. The transport RISES and ROARS off.

CAS #3 ROARS up the valley from the opposite direction. It "buzzes" the retreating crunchies, pulls up, does a roll, and flies past the accelerating transport.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - OBSERVATION POINT #2 - NIGHT

Aurora SHIMMERS as two PINPOINTS of light RISE in the sky. Macomb watches with Valera and two other commandos.

VALERA

This has to be the most boring mission I have ever been on. All of the action has been everywhere but here.

MACOMB

Be careful what you wish for.

There is muffled STATIC. Macomb keys his throat mike.

MACOMB

(softly)

Unknown station, Victor 2-4 delta. Say again. Over.

More muffled STATIC, then CLEAR transmission.

ATLAS 2 (V.O.)

Victor 2-4 delta, this is Atlas 3. Prepare for exfil. E-T-A your location fife mikes. Over.

Macomb turns and looks at Valera, puzzled.

MACOMB

Atlas 3, Victor 2-4 delta. Confirm exfil. Over.

ATLAS 2 (V.O.)

Victor 2-4 delta. Exfil confirmed. Lightning 6 ordered all teams evac'd. Atlas 3, out.

Macomb grunts.

MACOMB

(to the others)

Everyone get ready to go.

INT. YOKOHAMA - VIPER TEAM ROOM

Kleidon, in full armor, enters. He wheels in a footlocker-sized container and leaves it at the entrance. He walks quickly into the center of the room.

KLEIDON

Gather round! We have a mission!

He taps a wrist-mounted keypad. A large map of the area APPEARS on a wall. MSG STAN JONES and the rest of the team gather around him. Kleidon smiles at seeing Jones.

KLEIDON

Stan, welcome back. Doc gave you the "all clear?"

JONES

Yes, sir. I'm itchin' to kill something now.

KLEIDON

Good to have you back.

Kleidon points to map features as he talks.

KLEIDON

Recon found a cave here. Chemical signatures suggest survivors are inside. We're inserting over this ridge, then moving down and searching inside. If the crunchy horde is from there, then there probably aren't many left behind, but remaining air support is spread thin. So, we have to get in and out before the crunchies return. If we don't, we'll be trapped with nobody to pull our nuts out of the fire. Any questions?

Kleidon looks around. Nobody says a word.

KLEIDON

Suit up and grab your shit. Be ready in fifteen. Oh, any of you neanderthals ever hear of a "mace?"

JONES

You mean like pepper spray?

KLEIDON

No. Anyway, I have a bunch of them
in that box. Everybody gets one.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - RIDGELINE - NIGHT

A transport swoops in and hovers just under the crest, ramp facing the hill. The team jumps to the ground and scrambles towards the top.

The transport tilts downslope and accelerates away. Its ROAR quickly FADES. There is the faint SOUND of STRAFING and EXPLOSIONS O.S.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - CREST - NIGHT

The team spreads out along the ridge and assumes defensive positions. Kleidon and Jones use binos to look into the valley.

INSERT - BINO VIEW

Beaten PATHS converge at the base of the hill. Nothing moves.

BACK TO SCENE

They put their binos away. Kleidon signals to Jones, who moves downhill. Everybody follows at intervals.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - CAVE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The team stacks behind a commando, who slowly waves a small device in the air. After a moment, he signals "clear" and pockets the device. Jones sneaks inside. The rest follow.

INT. CAVE TUNNEL

The team moves rapidly, but quietly down the tunnel.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - OBSERVATION POINT #2 - NIGHT

Transport #6 ROARS in with its ramp down. Macomb and his teammates dash up the ramp.

INT. TRANSPORT #6 - HOLD - NIGHT

They step around a footlocker-sized CONTAINER secured to the deck and sit in jump seats. There are half a dozen commandos already seated. The ramp CLOSES as the transport lifts off.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - OBSERVATION POINT #2 - OVERHEAD VIEW - NIGHT

Crunchies shoot at transport #6 with human weapons as it moves away. Others pour over the O-P site.

INT. TRANSPORT #6 - HOLD

There are THUNKS and POPS as rounds hit the transport.

INT. TRANSPORT #6 - COCKPIT - NIGHT

Blood SPRAYS. The pilot jerks and slumps. The co-pilot wrestles the controls. The craft SHUDDERS.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - SMALL HILL - NIGHT

The transport PLOWS into the hilltop HARD before skidding to a stop. Its engines WIND DOWN.

The flood of crunchies moves around the base of the hill. A FEW break away and climb towards the SMOKING wreckage.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - LOW ALTITUDE - NIGHT

CAS #4 circles over the transport #6 wreck site.

INT. CAS #4 COCKPIT - NIGHT

CAS #4 PILOT [Condor 1] REACTS to seeing the crash.

CAS #4 PILOT

All CAS elements, bird down. Keep the crunchies back.

(taps a button)

Condor 1 to Control, bird down. I say again, bird down. Request immediate evac. Over.

CONTROL (V.O.)

Roger, Condor 1. Scrambling evac. E-T-A your location one-five mikes. Direct CAS in protecting the site until recovery complete.

CAS #4 PILOT

Wilco. Condor 1, out.

CLOSE ON A SCREEN

... showing the wreckage site in INFRARED. A DOT separates from the wreckage.

EXT. HILLSIDE - TRANSPORT #6 WRECK SITE - NIGHT

Macomb stumbles out of the side door. His carbine dangles. BLOOD oozes out of his nose. He shakes his head and winces.

In the b.g., a door gunner painfully pulls himself back into position. His helmet is gone.

SEVERAL crunchies approach. Macomb whips his carbine up. The door gunner swings his door gun back up. They both FIRE. The crunchies collapse as rounds RIP into them.

SUDDENLY, return fire PEPPERS the wreckage. Several rounds hit Macomb. His armor protects him, but the concussion knocks him to the ground.

A round hits the door gunner in the head. His body tumbles out of the wreck and lands at Macomb's feet. Macomb climbs into the gunner's position and uses the door gun against more oncoming crunchies.

INT. CAS #4 COCKPIT - NIGHT

CAS #4 Pilot watches the wreck on a SCREEN.

CAS #4 PILOT
Movement. We have survivors.

INT. FOB TIGER TOC

Radcliff and a couple of officers talk in low voices around a table. N.D. personnel carry out their duties.

RADCLIFF
The perimeter is holding... barely.
We need to hold it together a little
longer until everybody's been evac'd.

Saager spins around. He holds one headphone to an ear.

SAAGER
Sir, we have another situation.

Radcliff looks up.

RADCLIFF

Add it to the damn list. What do you have?

SAAGER

A bird just went down. CAS is holding off the crunchies until evac arrives.

RADCLIFF

Survivors?

SAAGER

At least one.

RADCLIFF

Has additional support been requested?

SAAGER

Yes, sir. The FACs are coordinating air strikes through fleet.

RADCLIFF

Keep me posted.

SAAGER

Roger, s...

(clenching phones)

Alien vessels inbound! They're shooting up the crunchies on our western perimeter.

There is the faint SOUND of ALIEN WEAPONS FIRE O.S.

RADCLIFF

Where the hell did they come from?!

SAAGER

They're dropping vehicles and troops... which are engaging the crunchies.

RADCLIFF

They're transports. Order all forces not to engage them. They may not be friendly, but at least they're not hostile... for now. They may give us a breather until we can get the hell out of here.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - PERIMETER - NIGHT

Adams fires his pintle-mounted weapon. He stops and listens through his headphones. PAUSE. He drops into the turret.

INT. TANK

Adams shouts to Hu above the noise.

ADAMS

We're forming up. We have to protect the ground-pounders until they are all in the FOB.

HU

Roger, sergeant. Movin' on-line.

INT. YOKOHAMA - CORRIDOR

Dayan walks the corridors, lost in thought. He approaches the "Science Section" as Griffith arrives.

GRIFFITH

(excited)

Sir, I have something to show you.

DAYAN

Make it quick. I've had about six hours sleep in the last 72.

Griffith steps to an automatic door. It opens silently and they both enter.

INT. YOKOHAMA - SCIENCE SECTION

Griffith and Dayan walk through a well-equipped laboratory.

GRIFFITH

After you see this, sir, you won't be able to sleep.

Griffith steps to a table with assorted tools. He points to a dull-black DEVICE.

DAYAN

Looks like a plastic dumbbell.

GRIFFITH

It's a new translator... with a twist.

Griffith turns it slightly.

GRIFFITH

Japanese.
 (pauses)
 Hello.

A foot-tall holographic PROJECTION (avatar) of a Japanese male APPEARS facing Dayan. It bows.

JAPANESE AVATAR

(in Japanese)
 Hello.

The avatar continues translating.

GRIFFITH

It translates words and body language to convey full meaning, which is easy with humans, but not aliens... Stop translation.

The avatar freezes.

DAYAN

What's your point?

GRIFFITH

This translator has a dynamic learning capability. We built up a large vocabulary with the detained alien, but it's not enough. We needed to get a prototype out to learn more.

Griffith sets the translator aside and grabs another.

GRIFFITH

(to translator)
 Alien.

An avatar of an off-world alien appears facing Dayan. Griffith make several gestures. The avatar does an alien version of each. Dayan passes his hand through the hologram, disrupting it.

DAYAN

How many do you have ready?

GRIFFITH

Only one, but I made sure Viper Team got it before they left.

Dayan grins big.

DAYAN
Outstanding work.

Dayan slaps Griffith on the back HARD and leaves without looking back. Griffith winces and returns to his work.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - PERIMETER - NIGHT

SEVERAL crunchies hurl themselves onto the tank and claw at Adams. He drops into the turret and pulls the hatch closed.

INT. TANK - TURRET

Adams shifts his weight as the tank bounces. He puts his face to the main gun's sight.

INSERT - MAIN GUN SIGHT - NIGHT

Landscape with crunchies running towards the CAMERA.

BACK TO SCENE

Adams leans down and shouts to Hu.

ADAMS
What are you waiting for? Run the bastards over!

Adams jumps up into the cupola and wrestles the hatch open.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - PERIMETER - NIGHT

The tank plows into the crunchies. Those in front fall back. Those on the sides surge towards the tank.

Adams pulls his pistol and shoots at crunchies. He yells as they SUDDENLY SURGE over the sides like an ocean wave.

INT. TANK

Hu steers the tank using the small SCREEN. A NOISE makes him turn.

Adams' legs windmill and kick, then are yanked out of sight.

Hu slams on the brakes and slaps a parking lever. He pulls his pistol as he works free of the driver's seat.

A crunchy slithers down into the turret. Hu shoots it. Another squeezes in and grabs at him. He jerks aside as he blows the creature's brains out.

His hip knocks the parking lever. The tank LURCHES, knocking him down. His pistol FIRES.

CLOSE ON PISTOL SHOT

... hitting the open shell rack with exposed main gun rounds. There is a sizzling SOUND.

BACK TO SCENE

Hu REACTS to WISPS of smoke from the rack. He drops the pistol and squeezes into the driver's seat. He tries to open the driver's hatch.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - PERIMETER - NIGHT

Flames SHOOT OUT of the turret hatch. The driver's hatch BLOWS open and flames SHOOT OUT. With a muffled BOOM, the turret FLIES OFF the tank. The tank GRINDS to a stop.

LONG SHOT OF BURNING TANKS

... lighting the crunchies as they SURGE towards FOB Tiger.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - FOB TIGER -NIGHT

The surviving soldiers are bloody. Dead crunchies and humans lie everywhere. Radcliff leans on his bloody mace like a cane. His carbine dangles by its sling.

RADCLIFF

Report!

Balado limps up. Crunchy splatter covers his chest and arms. His mace and forearm are crusty. His helmet is gone and one eye is puffy. He's missing a front tooth.

BALADO

(lispng slightly)

Thirty-seven dead, fifty-one wounded, eleven severe... and we just got word the crunchies knocked out all of our armor during the withdrawal.

Radcliff looks to the ground and spits BLOODY mucus.

RADCLIFF

Shit!

Wiberg pokes his head out of the TOC.

WIBERG

Next transports enroute. E-T-A twenty minutes.

The commandos watch the off-world aliens step out of fighting positions and carry their dead and wounded away.

BALADO

(looking at Radcliff)

I hate to say it, but it's good they showed up when they did.

RADCLIFF

Even so, we can't survive another assault.

COMMANDO #2 (O.S.)

Colonel Radcliff?

Radcliff glances over as Commando #2 walks.

COMMANDO #2

Sir, I think the alien leader wants to speak with you.

RADCLIFF

Now what?

EXT. PLANETSIDE - HILLSIDE - TRANSPORT #6 WRECK SITE - NIGHT

Macomb crouches low, firing the door gun. CAS strafes NEARBY.

INT. CAS #4 COCKPIT - NIGHT

CAS #4 Pilot taps several keys.

CAS #4 PILOT

Exfil inbound. Adjust fire fife-zero meters west of wreck. Keep 'em back, boys. Help's coming.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - HILLSIDE - TRANSPORT #6 WRECK SITE - NIGHT

There is a ROAR and a WHISTLING-HISS. Macomb stops firing and squeezes his eyes shut. BURNING "napalm" ILLUMINATES him. BEAT. There is the SOUND of transport ENGINES.

INT. TRANSPORT #7 - HOLD - NIGHT

Dim RED interior light. The crew chief lowers the ramp and WIND NOISE gets LOUD. FOUR parajumpers (PJs) get ready.

The VIEW through the open ramp PANS as the transport pivots and lands. The transport wreck is a dozen paces away. Macomb is in the b.g., at an angle, firing at the crunchies.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - HILLSIDE - TRANSPORT #6 WRECK SITE - NIGHT

The four PJs run to the wreck. CAS STRAFES close by.

INT. TRANSPORT #6 - HOLD - NIGHT

The PJs enter the shattered wreck through the side door. PJ #1 takes over the door gun. PJ #2 enters the cockpit. The other two PJs check bodies using hand-held devices. Macomb follows them. PJ #3 looks at Macomb and shakes his head.

MACOMB

No! Even the bodies go! Nobody gets left behind!

PJ #4 hurries past with an injured Valera and another commando. In the b.g., PJ #2 exits the cockpit, supporting the co-pilot. PJ #1 stops firing the door gun and helps PJ #2 carry out the pilot.

PJ #3

We gotta go!

MACOMB

Go to hell instead!

PJ #3

We're blowing the wreck! The crunchies won't get 'em!

Macomb glares at him for a MOMENT.

MACOMB

If it has to be done, I'll do it.

PJ #3 nods and quickly exits.

INT. TRANSPORT #6 WRECK - HOLD - NIGHT

Macomb runs to the back where the container is strapped to the deck. He yanks up the lid and pulls out four cloth-covered "bricks." He slaps the lid closed and lays the bricks out on it.

He opens flaps to reveal BUTTONS. He hits the same button on all four and a timer LIGHTS UP. He quickly taps out forty-five seconds on each.

He pulls a small Zippo lighter-sized "remote" out of one of the bags. He taps a button on the remote and pitches it. The timers begin COUNTING DOWN as one.

Macomb tosses a brick in each back corner and races to the side door. He tosses one in a front corner and one into the cockpit.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - TRANSPORT #6 WRECK SITE - NIGHT

Macomb runs full-speed out of the wreck and races up transport #7's ramp. He slides like a runner into home plate.

INT. TRANSPORT #7 - HOLD - NIGHT

The CREW CHIEF and PJs strap in as Macomb slides in. The crew chief keys his throat mike.

CREW CHIEF
Lift off! Lift off!

The deck LURCHES. In the b.g., the ramp begins to close.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - LOW ALTITUDE - NIGHT

The CAS ROAR O.S. Transport #7 lumbers away from the wreck.

CLOSE ON TIMER

3... 2... 1... FLASH.

BACK TO SCENE

Transport #7 races O.S. In the b.g., an EXPLOSION, then SECONDARIES.

INT. TRANSPORT #7 - HOLD - NIGHT

Macomb lies on the deck, panting. Valera flings his helmet at the ramp and buries his head in his hands.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - HIGH ALTITUDE - NIGHT

Transport #7 gains altitude, heading towards space.

INT. CAVE TUNNEL

Viper Team goes deeper. Small, bioluminescent THINGS on the walls and ceiling GLOW.

Jones signals to "freeze." He gestures down the tunnel.

KLEIDON'S POV

... of a bend in the tunnel with light SHINING.

BACK TO SCENE

Kleidon signals. The team members stack along each side of the tunnel. Jones creeps forward and pulls out a small mirror. He carefully aims it down the tunnel.

CLOSE ON MIRROR

... showing the entrance to a cavern lit by a fire. TWO crunchies stand guard, facing away.

BACK TO SCENE

Jones puts the mirror away and signals "two." Kleidon motions to TWO commandos. They hand off their carbines and pull suppressed pistols, then quietly sneak O.S.

BEAT. There are two muffled POPS in quick succession.

The commandos return carrying two dead crunchies. They dump the bodies to the side and retrieve their rifles. Jones advances up the tunnel. The team cautiously follows.

INT. CAVERN #1

There is another opening opposite the first. The commandos BOUND into the cavern. They stack at the other opening.

A commando looks at the fire and does a double-take. He gets Jones' attention and points at the fire.

ANGLE ON FIRE

A charred human boot lies at the edge of the fire.

BACK TO SCENE

Jones squats next to the fire and pulls a large combat KNIFE. He pokes at the boot, then sheathes the knife and stands. Kleidon comes around the fire and leans close to him.

JONES
(whispering)
No bones or meat.

Kleidon nods, then he and Jones resume their places in line. The team exits the cavern through the far opening.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - HIGH ALTITUDE - NIGHT

CAS #5 (Alley Cat) circles over the valley where the mass of crunchies continues to move.

INT. CAS #5 - COCKPIT - NIGHT

CAS #5 PILOT checks an INFRARED image of the valley.

CAS #5 PILOT
Control, Alley Cat. On station.
Over.

CONTROL
Roger, Alley Cat. Begin your run.
Delay them as long as possible. FOB
Tiger is still occupied. Over.

CAS #5 PILOT
Roger, Control. Beginning run now.

INT. CAVE TUNNEL

Jones comes around a bend and faces an off-world alien.
They stare at each other, weapons pointed, but not firing.

JONES
(low)
Sir, we have company.

Kleidon moves up, hands raised, weapon dangling. He pushes Jones' carbine down. The alien lowers its weapon as well.

Kleidon hands his rifle to Jones, then removes his backpack. He pulls out the TRANSLATOR and puts it on the tunnel floor.

A semi-transparent "wall" appears. A quarter-size human HOLOGRAM appears to Kleidon, while an alien HOLOGRAM appears on the opposite side. The alien steps back slightly.

KLEIDON
We don't want to fight you. We just
want our people back.

As Kleidon speaks, the alien hologram talks to the real one. The avatars SPEAK in turn.

HUMAN HOLOGRAM
Your people do not concern us. We
must exterminate the abomination
infesting this planet.

KLEIDON

Allow us to complete our mission.

HUMAN HOLOGRAM

The extermination will proceed.

The alien backs away.

KLEIDON

We know your secret! What you are doing is genocide... against your own kind!

HUMAN HOLOGRAM

We are not the same.

KLEIDON

It is genocide, just the same.

HUMAN HOLOGRAM

It is necessary to prevent their escape. Leave this planet.

The alien backs down the tunnel until it disappears. The translator shuts off. Kleidon puts it away and resumes wearing the pack.

KLEIDON

So much for reaching an understanding.

Jones returns Kleidon's carbine, then exits. The rest follow.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - FOB TIGER - NIGHT

Radcliff and ALIEN #2 stand facing each other. It holds a softball-sized sphere. Radcliff talks slowly.

RADCLIFF

We need to retrieve our people.
Once we have them, we will leave.

The sphere emits strange SOUNDS. The SOUNDS stop.

ALIEN #2

(through sphere)

Your unclear speak [CLICK] make good
[HISS] all light and darkness.

RADCLIFF

I have no idea what you just...

BLAM. A SCREAM O.S.

Radcliff spins and raises his carbine as crunchies SURGE into the FOB. He shoots several.

Alien #2 grabs Radcliff and tosses him towards an off-worlder vehicle. A couple of aliens grab Radcliff and stuff him inside. They jump in after him and the entrance closes.

Alien #2 sprays FIRE at the onrushing horde as the vehicle moves away. The weapon stops firing. It flips the "rifle" around and uses it like a club as it is quickly overwhelmed.

INT. OFF-WORLDER VEHICLE

Radcliff pounds the entryway with his fists. He pulls his pistol and turns to the two aliens.

RADCLIFF'S POV

... as alien #3 points a device at him. A FLASH of light.

INT. CAVE TUNNEL

Viper team moves through the caves. SUDDENLY, Jones signals to "hang back." The commandos stop as Jones creeps ahead.

INT. CAVERN #2

Jones cautiously emerges into a large open space filled with alien EQUIPMENT... and BODIES.

Humans and off-world aliens lie stacked like cordwood. The faces of the dead humans are wide-eyed and staring. There are circular burn marks on their temples. Jones swallows hard. His jaw muscles grind.

JONES

Sir, you gotta see this.

The commandos enter and secure the room. A couple of them begin checking the human bodies as Kleidon looks around.

KLEIDON

I need a body count.

A commando medic moves down a line, checking for pulses. His face is grim. He checks a body with the name-tape "Newson," and shakes his head. Jones walks up as he counts.

BEAT.

JONES

(turning)

Twenty-four. They're cold and stiff,
so they've been dead for awhile.

Kleidon look to Jones. His eyes are hard.

KLEIDON

Everybody clear out.

(to Jones)

Booby trap this cave.

Kleidon and most of the commandos exit the cavern.

INT. CAVE TUNNEL

They form up in the tunnel. Kleidon hovers at the entrance.

INT. CAVERN #2

Jones and a COUPLE of commandos pull DEVICES from backpacks. They push buttons and toss them around the cavern. Jones holds another device and motions to the rest. They exit.

Jones backs out and pauses at the entrance. He carefully places the device to one side and steps into the tunnel.

INT. CAVE TUNNEL

Jones signals and the team moves out rapidly.

EXT. SPACE

An ALIEN SPACECRAFT races towards the planet.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - HIGH ALTITUDE - NIGHT

It shoots across the sky like a METEOR.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - AMBROSE CRASH SITE - NIGHT

The craft releases several BLOBS of light, then ZOOMS up.

The blobs OBLITERATE the wreck, leaving FLAMING debris.

INT. YOKOHAMA - WAR ROOM

Neale monitors the situation on large SCREENS as Dayan hovers nearby. There are several blue ICONS. One FLASHES.

NEALE

Sir, Viper's requesting exfil... the team leader says...

(turning)

... everybody from the Ambrose is dead.

DAYAN

Damn it!... Have the transport pick Viper up. I don't want to lose any more men.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - RUINED ALIEN METROPOLIS #2 - NIGHT

Transport #8 roars in close among ruined buildings. There is too much RUBBLE to touch down and a strong WIND.

INT. TRANSPORT #8 - COCKPIT - NIGHT

TRANSPORT #8 CO-PILOT

Wall. Swing right two meters.

TRANSPORT #8 PILOT

Swinging right.

TRANSPORT #8 LEFT DOOR GUNNER (V.O.)

Clear left.

TRANSPORT #8 RIGHT DOOR GUNNER (V.O.)

Clear right.

TRANSPORT #8 RAMP GUNNER (V.O.)

Dust rising off our six... dust at the ramp. I've lost the ground.

TRANSPORT #8 PILOT

I have the ground... and... holding.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - RUINED ALIEN METROPOLIS #2 - NIGHT

The transport hovers, almost on top of the rubble.

INT. TRANSPORT #8 - COCKPIT - NIGHT

The pilot struggles to maintain control.

TRANSPORT #8 PILOT

Hurry up and get them onboard. I can't hold her for long in this wind.

INT. TRANSPORT #8 - HOLD - NIGHT

Transport #8 Ramp Gunner keys his throat mike.

TRANSPORT #8 RAMP GUNNER
Dust clearing... Commandos four
o'clock!... Shit! Crunchies!

He swivels his ramp gun around and fires at crunchies to the back and sides. He REACTS to the team approaching.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - RUINED ALIEN METROPOLIS #2 - NIGHT

The team sprints to the transport. The ramp gun ROARS, spitting FIRE over their heads. Kleidon covers his men.

Fire ZIPS out of the darkness and hits the transport. The ramp gunner returns fire. So does Kleidon.

INT. TRANSPORT #8 - COCKPIT - NIGHT

Transport #8 Pilot struggles to maintain position. There are POPS as rounds hit the outer skin.

TRANSPORT #8 CO-PILOT
We're taking fire!

TRANSPORT #8 PILOT
No shit!

INT. TRANSPORT #8 - HOLD - NIGHT

Ramp gunner fires one-handed as he helps the team climb up.

LONG SHOT OF CRUNCHIES

... bounding among ruins as they move towards the transport.

BACK TO SCENE

The commandos help each other climb the ramp. The ramp gunner stops firing and uses both hands to help. The next-to-last commando gestures left. The ramp gunner tries to swivel the ramp gun, but it won't go that far. He taps his throat mike.

TRANSPORT #8 RAMP GUNNER
Crunchies to our eight!

Ramp gunner kneels to help Kleidon climb up.

INT. TRANSPORT #8 - HOLD - NIGHT

The left door gunner fires BURSTS. POPS continue as rounds hit the transport.

Kleidon keeps firing as the ramp gunner and a commando pull him up the ramp by his harness. Kleidon stops firing and motions to the sky. The gunner keys his throat mike.

TRANSPORT #8 RAMP GUNNER
That's it. Lift off! Lift off!

The ramp gunner resumes firing as the transport LIFTS OFF.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - RUINED ALIEN METROPOLIS #2 - NIGHT

The transport ROARS straight up. The ramp CLOSES. Once clear of the ruins, it ZOOMS away.

INT. TRANSPORT #8 - HOLD

Kleidon lies spread-eagle on the floor, spent. Jones sits against the front bulkhead. The transport ROAR gradually changes to a steady WHINE. Kleidon sits up. Jones smiles.

JONES
(shouting)
That last part was almost fun!

Kleidon grins and shakes his head.

INT. YOKOHAMA - JAEGER'S QUARTERS

QUIET. Very DIM light. Jaeger lies on his bunk, asleep with one arm over his eyes. He is still in uniform, minus his coat and boots. A tone SOUNDS and he jerks awake.

JAEGER
(sleepy)
Yes?

STEELE (V.O.)
We just got a report the off-world aliens blew up the Ambrose. Satellite confirmed it. It also confirms the crunchies are about to attack FOB Tiger again. Transports continue to evacuate personnel, but they won't be gone in time.

JAEGER

The Ambrose? That makes no sense...
Any air support near the FOB?

STEELE (V.O.)

Not yet, sir. Those still fit to
fly are being refueled and rearmed.

JAEGER

Well, shit. Any fighters left?

STEELE (V.O.)

The few left are either trailing the
alien ship or on long range recon.

JAEGER

Recall all of them. Place the fleet
on yellow alert and have all mission-
capable fighters rotate in for fresh
pilots, fuel, and rearm. We may
need them.

STEELE (V.O.)

Yes, sir. Out here.

Jaeger lies there a moment, thinking.

JAEGER

(to the air)
Admiral Jaeger to comms.

VOICE #2 (V.O.)

Comms, sir.

JAEGER

Get me Fleet Command. Label it
"urgent." Call me when you make
contact.

VOICE #2 (V.O.)

Wilco, sir.

Jaeger gets up and begins dressing.

EXT. SPACE - JUMP POINT

Stealth boat SB-9541 (Barracuda) floats, waiting. It's BARELY
visible close-up, COMPLETELY hidden at a short distance.

There are several FLASHES in rapid succession. Alien scout
ships APPEAR. Detecting nothing, they move on.

More FLASHES. Alien ships APPEAR in a HUGE fleet. A MASSIVE ship (planet killer) is in the center. Screening ships protectively CIRCLE and WEAVE around it.

The ships move rapidly away. They bank as one, then SUDDENLY, there are FLASHES until all the ships are gone.

INT. BARRACUDA - CONTROL ROOM

CAPT GRAGO stands behind SENSOR TECH #4 watching the readings. Executive officer CDR SIMMS monitors operations.

GRAGO

Comms, relay to fleet command the course of the alien fleet. Also, alert the wolf-pack to regroup.

(to Simms)

Lay in a course to the rendezvous point.

SIMMS

Aye, sir. Course set.

GRAGO

Jump when ready.

SIMMS

Helm, engage.

EXT. SPACE - JUMP POINT

Space RIPPLES around Barracuda. In a FLASH, the ship's gone.

INT. YOKOHAMA - JAEGER'S QUARTERS

Jaeger sits at his desk, putting on his boots. A tone SOUNDS faintly.

COMMO TECH #2 (V.O.)

Incoming message, sir... tagged your eyes only.

JAEGER

I'll take it here.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - FOB TIGER - NIGHT

LOUD weapons FIRE. Commandos fight desperately as crunchies SURGE into the perimeter. Balado directs the defenders. A carbine dangles on his chest. He gestures with a mace.

BALADO

Keep them away from the transports!

Several crunchies bound into the perimeter. One attacks a N.D. soldier. Two others leap at Balado. He closes, swinging the mace. WHAM. He smashes the first one's skull.

He turns to swing at the second, but Hohrbach is already there. The crunchy lies dead at his feet. Balado nods his thanks. Hohrbach smiles,... and charges into another group of crunchies. He goes down fighting.

A BLUR. A crunchy slams into Balado, knocking him down. He jams his armored forearm into the creature's mouth and drops the mace. Another crunchy leaps on him. They push each other to get at his face. Balado pulls his pistol and blows the brains out of each in turn.

He struggles to his feet. He fires at bounding crunchies until... CLICK. He tosses the pistol and whips up his carbine. He smoothly shoots targets, then... CLICK. He unclips the carbine and drops it. He grabs the mace off the ground.

More crunchies bound into the perimeter. Soldiers disappear under a SCREECHING wave of crunchies. Balado clobbers several. A large one slams into him and smashes his skull.

Crunchies force their way into the TOC. Weapons FIRE and GRENADES from inside shreds SEVERAL, but they climb over human and their own dead to get at the living.

EXT. FOB TIGER - FLIGHT LINE - NIGHT

Wounded and non-combat soldiers rush three idling transports. The first one takes off, heavily loaded. It heels slightly and levels off. The second lifts as the rear ramp closes.

The third stays on the pad, engines idling. Wounded and non-combatants fight to get onboard.

NUMEROUS crunchies LOPE onto the flightline. A bandaged soldier turns. He screams as a crunchy lands on his chest.

The crunchies swarm into the mass of people on the ramp. There are SCREAMS as bodies go flying like rag dolls.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

COMMO TECH #2 motions to Steele.

COMMO TECH #2
Sir, we've lost contact with FOB
Tiger.

 STEELE
More interference?

 COMMO TECH #2
We should be good.

 STEELE
Anybody left flying down there?

 COMMO TECH #2
Alley Cat.

 STEELE
Have him do a fly-by.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - 1000 METERS ALTITUDE - NIGHT

CAS #5 patrols.

INT. CAS #5 - COCKPIT - NIGHT

CAS Pilot #5 focuses on SENSOR SCREENS as he flies.

 CAS #5 PILOT
Roger, control. Changing course to
overfly FOB Tiger.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

Steele waits anxiously. Commo Tech #2 taps keys on his board.
He cocks his head and puts a finger to his earbud.

 COMMO TECH #2
Sir, I have verbal confirmation two
transports are enroute from FOB Tiger.

 SENSOR TECH #3
I count three! The last one is well
back from the other two.

 STEELE
 (to commo tech #3)
Try to raise them.

COMMO TECH #3
The interference is getting worse,
sir. They may not be clear of it
yet.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - LOW ALTITUDE - NIGHT

Alley Cat circles over the FOB in a low, slow turn.

INT. CAS #5 - COCKPIT - NIGHT

CAS #5 Pilot punches up a DISPLAY. Only RED DOTS pepper the
SCREEN VIEW.

CAS #5 PILOT
Control... Damn it!

CAS #5 Pilot pushes the throttle forward and moves the control
stick hard over and back.

EXT. PLANETSIDE - OVER FOB TIGER - NIGHT

CAS #5 stands on its tail and ROARS skyward.

INT. YOKOHAMA - JAEGER'S QUARTERS

Jaeger sits at his desk looking at the SCREEN. The screen's
glow lights his face. Jaeger's eyes widen. He taps the
console. The glow goes out. He stands and hurries O.S.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

Commo Tech #2 unconsciously hunches over the console,
listening intensely.

COMMO TECH #2
Sir, Alley Cat is trying to make
contact.

Steele walks over.

STEELE
Let's hear it.

Commo Tech #2 taps a button. There is a BURST of STATIC.

CAS #5 PILOT (V.O.)
Steel... [STATIC] Cat. [HISSING].
Ov...

COMMO TECH #2
 (slow and precise)
 Alley Cat, this is the Yokohama.
 You are coming in broken. Say again
 last. Over.

CAS #5 PILOT (V.O.)
 Yokohama... FOB... ack ra... Over.

COMMO TECH #2
 Confirm, Alley Cat. Did you call
 for "Black Rain?" Over.

STATIC. BEAT.

COMMO TECH #2
 (looking at Steele)
 That sounded like a call for "Black
 Rain," sir.

STEELE
 (to the air)
 Admiral Jeager, to the bridge.
 (to Commo Tech #2)
 Get me confirmation.
 (to the air)
 Control, this is Commander Steele.
 We have an airborne alert. I say
 again this is an airborne alert.

INT. ALIEN COMMAND SHIP - HOLDING AREA

Radcliff awakens on a "bench." He sits up. Two aliens watch
 through a clear partition. There is a ledge on the other
 side with a SPHERE. Radcliff stands and walks over.

RADCLIFF
 (hesitant)
 Hello?

The clear partition vibrates slightly.

ALIEN #4
 Hello.

Radcliff touches the partition, then looks at the aliens.

RADCLIFF
 Why are you holding me?

ALIEN #4
We are isolating you until we can
make the exchange.

RADCLIFF
Exchange?

ALIEN #4
Our officer for you.

RADCLIFF
Let me call my commander. I can set
it...

ALIEN #4
We are already attempting to make
contact.

RADCLIFF
So, I just sit here with no food or
water. For how long?

ALIEN #4
Our sustenance is incompatible with
your physiology, however, I will
have water sent. In the meantime,
one of our seers requests a visit.

RADCLIFF
Seer? Yea, sure. Why not? I'm
just sitting on my ass.

EXT. PLANETSIDESIDE - UPPER ATMOSPHERE - NIGHT

CAS #5 clears the atmosphere, engines at full throttle.

INT. ALLEY CAT - COCKPIT -NIGHT

A red "Overheat" warning light FLASHES. CAS #5 Pilot pulls
back on the throttle. The warning light turn YELLOW.

CAS #5 PILOT
Alley Cat to Yokohama. I confirm,
Black Rain. FOB Tiger is under enemy
control. How copy? Over.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

The main entry opens. Jaeger rushes in.

COMMO TECH #2
I copy, Alley Cat. Call for Black
Rain confirmed. Control will guide
you home.

Steele turns as Jaeger enters in a hurry.

STEELE
Alley Cat confirmed FOB Tiger fell.
He recommends we nuke it.

JAEGER
Negative. Stand down. Notify the
fleet we're jumping.

Steele follows Jaeger and talks in LOW TONES.

STEELE
Sir?

JAEGER
Intell confirmed over a hundred alien
ships are enroute. They have us
outnumbered and outgunned. They're
escorting some kind of big mother.
So, we need to get the hell out of
here... now! In the meantime, command
ordered a stealth boat strike to buy
us time to get clear.

STEELE
Stealth boats?! To effectively hit
a fleet of that size, they would
have to call in every one of them.

JAEGER
They did.

STEELE
My gut tells me this is going to go
badly no matter what we do.

JAEGER
It's worse than you know.

INT. ALIEN COMMAND SHIP - OBSERVATION ROOM

Radcliff paces like a confined wild animal.

An alien enters the viewing room leading a DISFIGURED alien
with MILKY eyes (SEER). They stand by the window.

SEER

At last, we meet. Unfortunately, I am unable to see you. Becoming a future reader meant sacrificing forever my physical sight.

RADCLIFF

Uh, ... how may I help you?

SEER

I merely wanted to speak with one of your kind. I am very old and will not likely get another opportunity.

RADCLIFF

What could we possibly discuss?

SEER

A great deal. For example, a number of your species and mine have died recently. There would have been many more if not for extraordinary bravery on both sides. In fact, a decorated warrior saved your life.

RADCLIFF

What was that about?

SEER

Saving your life was a personal decision. He was only to make contact and assist your withdrawal.

RADCLIFF

So, why'd he do it?

SEER

Duty. Honor. Virtues we hold in high regard.

RADCLIFF

Then why annihilate the others? Surely, they respect those virtues too.

SEER

They are savage beasts and unfit to live. That shall be corrected when our fleet destroys this world.

RADCLIFF

What happened? Our scientists say you both came from this world.

SEER

The planet you see now is not what was. Our ancestors built a thriving civilization.

It waves a limb. A section of wall becomes a large VIEWSCREEN. IMAGES of alien cities and off-world aliens APPEAR and are periodically replaced by others.

SEER

We were about to be an interstellar race, until...

An image of a sun-lit planet in space APPEARS. In the distance, a BLACK HOLE. SCENES of destruction and spaceships fleeing.

SEER

We had to choose. Only one-hundredth of one percent of our race was saved. Most of the rest died as our home-world was hurled out of it's orbit.

The limbs waves.

SEER

My ancestors fled... and were attacked by beings that followed the black star. After much time, we defeated them, but we were almost destroyed as well. We were much more time getting to the present state. The technology we have is not even ours, but that of our former masters.

It waves a limb again, shutting off all images.

SEER

There were survivors on the planet. They devolved and now seek revenge. If they reach the stars, both of our races will have to fight them. They control the magnetic field of the planet, so imagine the knowledge and power they possess.

RADCLIFF

They are the source of the interference?!

SEER

Yes, their power is local for now, but they seek to leave. They hate all life not their own. They particularly hate us as descendants of traitors. Be warned. We destroyed the crashed ship to stop them.

RADCLIFF

You're too late. They already removed the drives.

SEER

The wreck was still useful as a model, but we decided to destroy the planet to ensure they cannot escape.

RADCLIFF

That must have been difficult.

PAUSE.

SEER

Beyond your comprehension.

The seer looks at Radcliff as if seeing through him.

SEER

We are more similar than you realize. You will understand when your race faces its own potential doom.

RADCLIFF

What are you saying?

SEER

Impossible choices will have to be made as to who lives and who dies. In the end, only a small number of your kind can survive.

RADCLIFF

How can you know that?

The seer turns and leaves.

RADCLIFF

Hold on! What do you know?

An alien guides the seer through a portal, which closes.
Radcliff's cell OPENS.

INT. ALIEN COMMAND SHIP - PASSAGEWAY

Two aliens wait next to a hovering vehicle. Radcliff steps
into the passageway. An alien gestures for him to climb on.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

Commo Tech #2 taps a couple of keys. He listens intently to
his headphones. He taps another key.

COMMO TECH #2

Sir, I am receiving a signal from
outside the fleet.

JAEGER

Fleet command?

COMMO TECH #2

No, sir. Opposite direction and
fairly close. The signal's strong.

JAEGER

Patch me through... This is the
Yokohama. Identify yourself.

MECHANICAL VOICE (V.O.)

Yokohama. This is the [BEEP]. We
request a parley.

JAEGER

Parley? For what?

MECHANICAL VOICE (V.O.)

We wish to exchange your officer for
ours.

JAEGER

What officer? What's his name?

MECHANICAL VOICE (V.O.)

Radcliff.

JAEGER

(to commo tech #3)

Audio off... Put the alien on a transport. Launch it with a pair of escort fighters. Get them to Radcliff's location ASAP.

(to air)

Jaeger to Dayan!

INT. YOKOHAMA - MAIN HANGAR DECK

Two fighters and a transport LAUNCH.

INT. YOKOHAMA - LAUNCH CONTROL

An ENSIGN watches the launch through the large viewing window. He speaks into the air.

ENSIGN

In-bound transports, you are cleared to land.

(tapping a key)

Medical personnel standby.

INT. YOKOHAMA - MAIN HANGAR DECK

The first transport shoots into the hangar. It hits an arrestor field, stops, pivots and moves to a parking area. The second transport lands and goes through the same moves. The ramp of the first transport lowers as the second taxis into the adjacent spot.

Medical personnel swarm to the transports and begin off-loading the wounded. The non-combatants exit the transports and move to the hangar exits.

The third transport shoots in. It hits the arrestor field and stops. As it SWIVELS, the rear ramp lowers. SUDDENLY, crunchies BOIL OUT.

Walking wounded and noncombatants bolt toward an open portal. Litter-bound soldiers scream as the crunchies attack them.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

A light FLASHES on a console. Commo Tech #2 taps a key. PAUSE. He turns to Jaeger and Steele.

COMMO TECH #2

Sir, Captain Grago reports the wolf pack is in position. He expects the alien fleet anytime.

JAEGER

Very good. Listen for his report.

Jaeger turns back to Steele. They talk in low tones.

INT. YOKOHAMA - LAUNCH CONTROL

An ENSIGN and an enlisted sailor are engaged in conversation M.O.S. The sailor turns slightly to the window and REACTS. The ensign turns.

ENSIGN'S POV

... of the main hangar. There is utter CHAOS as crunchies swarm over wounded and noncombatants packed at an exit.

BACK TO SCENE

The ensign smacks a red BUTTON. A Klaxon BLARES.

ENSIGN

(to the air)

Crunchies onboard! Main hangar!

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

The klaxon BLARES and emergency lights FLASH. The ensign's warning ECHOES.

JAEGER

Lock down the main hangar deck and all decks above and below it. We have to contain them!

(to Steele)

Call in the commandos. They're trained for this shit.

STEELE

Sir, we'll trap alot of people with the aliens.

JAEGER

We have to seal the crunchies in. Get those commandos moving, Ira!

Steele runs to a console. He quickly taps buttons.

INT. YOKOHAMA - VIPER TEAM ROOM

An alarm BLARES. Commandos jump to their feet and leap to their lockers. They begin to "armor up" and arm themselves. Kleidon runs in and begins putting on armor.

KLEIDON

Gear heavy, boys. We have crunchies
on the main hangar deck.

The door to the team room opens. In the passageway, a large golfcart-like vehicle sits.

INT. YOKOHAMA - PASSAGEWAY - OUTSIDE TEAM ROOMS

A line of the vehicles wait outside the team rooms as scores of commandos hurriedly finish gearing up and jump aboard.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

Steele stands over the security console. Jaeger walks over.

JAEGER

Status, Commander.

STEELE

General Dayan says an hour to clear
them out... tops.

JAEGER

I want to know without a doubt we
got them all.

COMMO TECH #2

(overlapping)

Incoming message. The transport
made contact with the alien vessel.
They'll leave with Colonel Radcliff
shortly.

JAEGER

Alert them we're making a short jump
and give them the coordinates.

INT. ALIEN SHIP - HOLD - TRANSPORT #9

Radcliff straps into a jump seat as the transport taxis.
The VIEW through the rear ramp PANS.

RADCLIFF'S POV

... through the rear ramp. The freed alien walks with other aliens. It glances at Radcliff before the ramp CLOSES.

RESUME SCENE

The transport's engines ROAR. Radcliff sways slightly to one side as the transport takes off. BEAT. The roar is replaced with a steady WHINE. Radcliff unbuckles and stands.

INT. TRANSPORT #9 - COCKPIT

Radcliff sticks his head into the cockpit. The pilot continues to fly. TRANSPORT #9 CO-PILOT turns.

TRANSPORT #9 CO-PILOT

The fleet moved a parsec out, so we have to try making a short jump. Please strap in, sir.

RADCLIFF

Won't the planet's gravity disrupt it?

TRANSPORT #9 CO-PILOT

Not necessarily on a short jump, but we don't have a choice, sir.

RADCLIFF

Well, I need to call the fleet first.

The co-pilot points to a set of head-phones. Radcliff reaches in and puts them on.

RADCLIFF

Yokohama. This is...
(to co-pilot)
... what's your call sign?

TRANSPORT #9 CO-PILOT

Mercury one-niner.

RADCLIFF

Mercury one-niner to Yokohama. Over.

VOICE #3 (V.O.)

This is Yokohama. Send it Mercury one-niner.

RADCLIFF

This is Colonel Radcliff. Patch me through to Admiral Jaeger or General Dayan. It's urgent. Over.

VOICE #3 (V.O.)

Hold one, sir.

BEAT.

JEAGER (V.O.)

This is Jeager. Over.

RADCLIFF

Sir, there's an alien fleet enroute. We're not the target! Its mission is to sterilize the planet. The crunchies are building spacecraft and will attack everyone they encounter.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

Jeager looks at Steele with alarm.

JEAGER

Recall the...

COMMO TECH #2

(overlapping)

Barracuda reports they have engaged!

STEELE

Shit.

EXT. SPACE

Begin Grieg's "IN THE HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN KING."

An alien fleet spirals towards the CAMERA.

Music BUILDS.

Closer.

Escort vessels CIRCLE and WEAVE.

Closer.

CRESCENDO.

Torpedoes HAMMER the alien ships from every direction.

EXPLOSIONS obliterate the escorts.

The BOMBARDMENT shifts to focus on the planet killer.

The planet killer ROLLS and TWISTS slowly as the impacts pound the shields and make circular DIMPLES in the hull.

Shields weaken and FAIL. Torpedoes PUNCH through the hull.

INT. PLANET KILLER

A torpedo penetrates and EXPLODES. Bulkheads EXPLODE outward. Aliens windmill and bounce around as they spew into space. The vessel SHUDDERS.

EXT. SPACE - ANGLE ON PLANET KILLER - FRONT

The alien ship TWISTS and TURNS with the force of IMPACTS and EXPLOSIONS. There is no return fire.

EXT. SPACE - ANGLE ON PLANET KILLER - REAR

The main drive PULSES and FADES.

Music STOPS as the vessel falls towards the planet.

INT. BARRACUDA - CONTROL ROOM

Grago and Simms stand behind Sensor Tech #4, watching a PROJECTION of the planet killer's destruction.

GRAGO

(to Simms)

It's done. Scatter the wolf pack.
Have them rendezvous with their supply
ships ASAP. Until we all rearm,
we're useless.

Simms nods and moves to HELMSMAN #4. SENSOR TECH #4 turns.

SENSOR TECH #4

Sir, she's entering the atmosphere.

GRAGO

Calculate the probable impact site
and log it.

(to helmsman #4)

Helm, make our jump.

HELMSMAN #4
Aye, sir. Beginning jump.

Simms returns to stand next to Grago.

GRAGO
Mark my words. This is the start of
what'll be one ugly war.

SIMMS
What's next for us?

GRAGO
Supporting the next fleet-on-fleet
action or delivering commandos.
Either way, we'll be in the thick of
it.

HELMSMAN #4 (O.S.)
Jumping in 5... 4...

EXT. SPACE

Barracuda's shape BLOTS OUT the stars.

HELMSMAN #4(O.S.)
3... 2... 1... Jumping.

The starfield RIPPLES as Barracuda JUMPS.

INT. YOKOHAMA - BRIDGE

Dayan enters. Jaeger and Steele watch FOOTAGE of the planet
killer's destruction. Jaeger turns to Dayan.

JAEGER
What have we done? We handed them a
ship that can destroy a planet...
and started an interstellar war.

Dayan's face is utter disbelief.

FADE OUT.

THE END