

DOWN THE SPACESTREAM

"PILOT"

Written by

J. Stephen Howard

INT. PUBLIC HOLOGRAM STATION - DAY

In a metal box, MARCY (21), stands in a beautiful flower-pattern dress, holds her stomach, and beams with joy.

On a keypad on the wall, she types some numbers after which a BLUE LASER scans her entire body.

She sits on the metal bench a couple of feet away and waits with her hands clasped on her knees, rocking back and forth.

EXT./INT. EARTH MOON BASE/TRANSPORT HUB - SPACE

The transport hub, like a wheel, juts out from other wheels that comprise the moon base.

In his metal box, DAVID (24) sits and pounds his fists on his knees. The athletic fighter pilot-type's closely-cropped hair emphasizes his expressive eyebrows which convey annoyance.

The old-fashioned telephone handset shape GLOWS GREEN on the wall, and he takes a deep breath and touches his palm to it.

A BLUE LASER above scans his body, and he braces himself.

Marcy appears life-sized before David just as he appears life-sized to her.

INTERCUT MARCY/DAVID

MARCY (HOLOGRAM)
Hi, honey! Not much longer.

He can't meet her gaze.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
Hey, babe.

She gets ready to deliver incredible news but reads David's worried body language.

MARCY (HOLOGRAM)
What is it? What's wrong?

He shifts his weight and drifts off to the side before he turns and attempts a smile at her.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
You first. You look like
everything's right.

She considers this and clasps her hands together and grins.

MARCY (HOLOGRAM)
I'm pregnant.

He hesitates as if he hasn't heard right but then has a bitter-sweet smile.

MARCY (HOLOGRAM) (CONT'D)
We're pregnant, David!

Pause.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
Marcy, that's great.

MARCY (HOLOGRAM)
You don't sound like you think it's great.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
No, no--no, it is, but I guess... I won't be there when our child is born.

MARCY (HOLOGRAM)
What do you mean? You're due to ship back after your reconnaissance mission.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
I was, but I guess I, or we, did a good job. A really good job. We found something, and now I'm heading back to Europa.

It's as if her breath has been knocked out as she stumbles backward to find a seat.

He, also, eases down to a place approximately near her hologram, and they sit in silence to take it all in.

He clears his throat a couple of times to get her hologram to look his way.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM) (CONT'D)
Marcy, I have to. Government's orders.

MARCY (HOLOGRAM)
What do you mean, government's...?

He waves at her to stop.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
They're probably listening now.

She cries, and he bites his bottom lip.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM) (CONT'D)
I don't care if they're listening.
I love you. I love our child... our
child, and I'll do anything for
her.

She smiles.

MARCY (HOLOGRAM)
Or him.

EXT./INT. SPACE TRANSPORT - SPACE

A MINERS TRANSPORT, a battered, utilitarian vessel, flies through space--the STARS blurred, elongated points of light.

Inside, in his space mining suit, a hybrid of a coal miner's and astronaut's suit, David sits in the crowded hull along with nine others dressed like him.

He flips up his helmet visor to reveal his weary face despite the sign that says

SUPER: KEEP YOUR HELMET VISOR ON AT ALL TIMES.

The miner beside him, COREY (24), signals for David to put his helmet visor back down, but David ignores him.

Corey flips his own helmet visor up to show the face of a tough-looking man with gentle eyes.

David grins.

DAVID
You should put your helmet visor
back down. Didn't you read the
sign?

Corey stares in disbelief and laughs.

COREY
I guess I'm destined to follow
trouble. That's what my Momma
always told me. I'm Corey.

David reaches out a gloved hand to shake Corey's.

DAVID
David. Since when did the
conscription code extend to miners?

COREY

Tell me about it. Let me guess:
you're a hotshot pilot, but since
you come from a humble background--

DAVID

Takes one to know one. What's in
the lovely mines of Europa?

COREY

A mineral that's supposed to save
the world.

DAVID

Like nuclear fusion did, right?

They have a shared laugh at this.

A hockey puck-sized PROBE FLOATS near David and Corey.

COREY

Oh boy.

DAVID

We can grab this little toy.

A RED LIGHT SHINES at the front of the PROBE and sends a TWIN
RAY that ZAPS them with a mild jolt.

PROBE

Recruits, unsanctioned speech is
not allowed. Put your helmet visors
down.

Both do as they're told, and the PROBE floats back toward the
front, after which they put their helmet visors back up.

A CONSCRIPTED MINER next to David shakes his head at them.

DAVID

Something tells me you know more
than most about what's going on.
How's that?

COREY

I'll tell you more when I can.
Let's just say, you sat in the
right seat.

Both put their helmet visors down as the PROBE hovers near.

INT. SPARK OF NATURE - NIGHT

In a cavernous underground area, a futuristic speakeasy, patrons spray FINGER-SIZED CANISTERS with synthetic scents into their noses.

SUPER: 11 YEARS LATER...

Marcy sips CHARDONNAY on one end of the bar.

Her husband works the other side like a regular politician, Corey beside him, the two like brothers on a mission.

NATHAN MORA (40s) steps up beside her and smiles: an overweight man who gets away with being fat due to his girth. He's around the same age as her husband but has a worldly charm about him that makes David look mundane in comparison.

MARCY

I hate these things.

NATHAN

So do I.

MARCY

So why did we come?

NATHAN

David Winters. We went to school together and lost touch until he became a supporter of the cause.

She smiles and appears surprised to be doing so.

MARCY

Are you?

NATHAN

A supporter? Oh honey--you don't mind if I call you honey--I support the winning side.

A WOMAN snorts a PEACH PIE-SCENTED CANISTER and appears to get a delightful buzz from it.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Care to try it?

Before she can answer, he orders her one. After the BARTENDER hands her a CANISTER, she turns it about in her hand.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Here, allow me.

She lets him apply the CANISTER to her nose and click a button to release the scent.

She has a look like she's finally come home.

EXT./INT. L.A. HOVER TRAIN - NIGHT

Sans cables or a track, a HOVER TRAIN zooms above the traffic of people who still drive MOTORIZED VEHICLES in Los Angeles.

The SKYSCRAPERS all levitate 10 feet and are wrapped in hologram advertisements such as, "Heavenly Boost Hovercrafts: Take a ride in the clouds" and, "Blue Sky Detoxify Chambers: Keeping your loved one's lungs healthy and clean."

Inside the hover train, Marcy and David sit at the end of a plastic bench as far away from others as possible but with people within a two-foot radius.

DAVID

I don't know why you're so upset.

MARCY

You know how I feel about politics.

She nods at a HOLOGRAM ADVERTISEMENT for, "HOME: Heroes of Mother Earth."

DAVID

See how they promote themselves now out in the open? They should be the ones who have to go into hiding.

She shushes him and nods at a BUSINESS MAN in a suit who gives them a suspicious look, and they both speak lower.

MARCY

Who was that couple you were talking with?

DAVID

They provide a safe harbor for those in need.

MARCY

A safe harbor? More like a magnet for danger.

He squints as he scrutinizes her face to observe how her focus and awareness seem to go in and out.

DAVID

You've been canning?

She turns away from him.

DAVID (CONT'D)

The Marcy I know would never let
anyone shove something up her nose.
Much less a stranger.

MARCY

The David I know would never take
me to a party and leave my side.

DAVID

Did you know the man you were
talking to?

MARCY

I talked to him, didn't I? A hedge
fund manager.

DAVID

I don't trust him. He pretends to
raise money for our cause, but I
think he does that for the other
side.

The Business Man seems to have taken great interest in what
David just said.

MARCY

I trust him, and it's not our
cause. Speaking of our cause, while
you're out there in space, I'm down
here trying to secure a good future
for our son.

DAVID

By the way, what was Flynn doing in
his room all last night? He kept
mumbling the same thing.

MARCY

Rehearsing.

INT. LIVING ROOM SET FOR COMMERCIAL - DAY

The TV studio set mimics the style of a 1950s sitcom: a brown
couch with a stone fireplace behind.

On the couch, FLYNN (11), short-for-his-age with soulful
eyes, stares at his feet to avoid the bright studio lights.

Offstage, his parents argue.

DAVID (O.S.)
I never agreed to this.

MARCY (O.S.)
You're never home. This is a great
opportunity. And not just for
Flynn.

DAVID (O.S.)
He might get the wrong idea.

MARCY (O.S.)
About what?

DAVID (O.S.)
About everything!

FIRST A.D. (O.S.)
Folks, I'm gonna need you to wait
in the green room.

The DIRECTOR (late 40s), a tall and thin man with early
wrinkles from an overly-expressive face, crouches down from
behind the CAMERA MAN and offers a plastic smile.

DIRECTOR
Go ahead, Flynn. Sell it to us.

Flynn takes a deep breath and...

COMMERCIAL - INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Flynn hunches over on the couch, his hands under his chin.

FLYNN
I'm a kid just like any other. I
want to run around outside and play
without worrying about... well,
everything.

His worried eyes reflect the first image he watches on TV of
a LIGHTNING BOLT.

BEGIN MONTAGE

-- an epic lightning bolt like we've never seen strikes,
flashes in the grey clouds of day, and spreads thousands of
miles along wooded areas and spawns firenadoes.

-- intense smoke eventually clears enough to reveal wildfires
with 500+ mile radiuses in California, Northern Angola,
Nepal, and Sardinia.

-- dry, cracked Earth in farmlands spread across thousands of miles in Ethiopia, Puerto Vallarta, Iowa, and Yunnan.

-- multiple level-five hurricanes join together in gigantic swirls of water that swallow Florida; same thing happens in Eifel, Germany and Easter Island, Chile.

END MONTAGE

COMMERCIAL - INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Flynn's expression brightens like someone's given him candy.

FLYNN

Now those dark clouds are
vanishing. The sun has come out and
is shining on a new day.

The darkness of the living room fades to reveal...

EXT. HOME WITH CLIMATE SPHERE - DAY

Flynn runs around on the ultra bright green grass with plenty of room inside a CLIMATE SPHERE: a FORCEFIELD BUBBLE over the home and back and front yards.

The glorious sun shines on Flynn who falls to the ground and rolls around in the lush lawn.

We look down on his beaming face.

FLYNN

Thanks to Climate Solutions, I can
be a kid again. You can, too. Even
if you're not wealthy. If you and
your family are extra good
citizens, you can win a climate
sphere like I did.

INT. CLIMATE SOLUTIONS LABORATORY - DAY

The brightly lit laboratory has reflective metal walls to give the whole place the feel of a giant petri dish.

A line of 10 SCIENTISTS, in white lab coats, adjust MICROSCOPES which radiate HOLOGRAMS above that can be manipulated to focus on the DIAGRAMS OF POLLUTANT MOLECULES.

In front of them, a supremely physically fit BENJAMIN EREBUS (46) rotates from within a HOVERING FIVE-FOOT RADIUS FORCEFIELD that extends from a CENTRAL HUB. He exudes aggressive confidence and swagger.

BENJAMIN

That's right, Flynn. Hi, folks.
Climate Solutions CEO Benjamin
Erebus, here. I want young people
like my new friend to have what I
can no longer enjoy. But while I
may never make it out of my own
climate sphere, it's always been my
mission to help others to see
daylight again. How's my dream
coming along, Roger?

A "scientist" from the middle of the line turns around and stands beside Benjamin's sphere. ROGER (30s) looks nothing like the stereotypical scientist: tanned, muscular, and chiseled features. He mugs for the camera.

ROGER

We're making important strides
every day. The bicarbonate silicate
we're mining from Europa not only
powers the climate spheres you now
enjoy, it'll harness the ability of
our pollutant sweeper towers.

Benjamin grins and nods in his sphere as he touches a few buttons on a virtual keypad to summon a hologram video of 50-foot towers whose sides resemble air purifier filters.

An orbiting satellites chain communicates with towers below.

Benjamin's sunshine grin fills the frame.

BENJAMIN

Thank you so much for trusting
Climate Solutions. We salute the
men and women who brave the mines
on Europa. Their sacrifices and
yours will help us rebuild a new
Earth.

The Climate Solutions logo, of a double-Earth, one BROWNISH-BLACK GLOBE on the bottom with a BRIGHT BLUE ORB rising out of it, appears on the screen set against a GREEN BACKGROUND.

SUPER: CLIMATE SOLUTIONS: SAVING THE PLANET ONE DAY AT A TIME.

END COMMERCIAL

INT. TV STUDIO GREEN ROOM - DAY

A small space with white walls with interactive hologram posters that exalt the endeavors of Climate Solutions:

how bicarbonate silicate is mined on Europa, processed, and shipped to Earth for use in climate spheres.

Marcy, now 32 and thin, almost emaciated but lovely, beats her husband's chest before he gently holds her arms at bay.

David, now 35, looks like he carries the weight of the world and chastises himself for not doing a better job.

DAVID

All that matters is what's best for Flynn.

MARCY

When they catch you, we'll lose everything.

Flynn stands in the doorway with eyes that have a shine between happiness and sorrow.

Marcy relaxes, and David lets her arms fall to her sides.

DAVID

Flynn, my boy, how did it go?

FLYNN

Fine. Is everything okay?

Marcy crouches to be at eye level with her son.

MARCY

I'm sure you were great. And now we're great.

She stands and turns to glare at David who smiles and nods as any dutiful father would.

EXT. CLIMATE SOLUTIONS CORPORATE TOWER - DAY

The 20-story structure hovers 10 feet off the ground, surrounded by a climate sphere forcefield.

From a hovercraft garage 50 yards away, TWO MEN stand beside a levitated bridge connected to the tower in the distance.

SIMÓN (mid-40s) always has a wide-eyed look and hair to match the notion that he's been electrocuted recently and likes it. He's in wrinkly casual clothes.

David, in a metal-weaved suit and tie, shakes his head.

DAVID
I don't know if I like this.

SIMÓN
David, mi amigo, they'll never
suspect anything. Just keep your
shirt collar down.

David puts his shirt collar up. His finger traces the FAUX
METAL RING around the back of his neck and to the other side.

DAVID
It's not real metal?

SIMÓN
The latest hybridized version that
uses the best transitory properties
without the messy alarm-triggering
ones.

DAVID
And you don't need to be in the
building to do your thing?

SIMÓN
You do your thing. I'll do mine.
Entiendo? That means, understand.

David rolls his eyes and flips his shirt collar back down.

SIMÓN (CONT'D)
We have good intel. A bug's been
placed near the company's mainframe
right there beside Benjamin's
office. It'll be like scraping off
burnt toast.

DAVID
Let's hope so, or we're all toast.
Understand that?

Simón gives him a sarcastic okay sign.

INT. CLIMATE SOLUTIONS/BENJAMIN'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is a huge, open area with marble wall tiles and a
Romanesque water with flower water in the center.

Benjamin floats over in his CLIMATE SPHERE to meet David at
the door.

BENJAMIN
Hello, Flynn's father.

David nods and smiles to show he gets the joke.

DAVID
That's how I'll always be known
from now on.

Suspended within the CLIMATE SPHERE, Benjamin projects a god-like aura by design.

BENJAMIN
Your son's a good little actor. But
I know you, too. Your little
illegal union's getting some,
perhaps, unwanted attention.

David runs a finger along the inside and at the top of his collar but quickly removes it.

DAVID
I wouldn't call it that.

BENJAMIN
Relax. Although the only reason I
agreed to meet with you is because
of your boy.

DAVID
I'm just a miner who finds himself
in a good position to talk to you.

BENJAMIN
Are your boys not making enough?
The shifts are too long?

David catches himself before he fingers his collar.

DAVID
It's not that. I'm just wondering
if you've seen the reports about
children growing sick from our
eroding atmosphere.

Benjamin hovers toward the water fountain.

BENJAMIN
You don't like my fountain, do you?

David raises a hand to scratch his collar but stops himself.

DAVID
I haven't given it much thought.

Benjamin turns toward David.

BENJAMIN

Too much starch in your shirt? Your collar...

DAVID

There're reports that the bicarbonate silicate used to power climate spheres--

BENJAMIN

This fountain symbolizes the hope of humanity. The greatest civilization of ancient man showed us--

DAVID

It's 100 times more corrosive to our climate than carbon emissions.

BENJAMIN

You're welcome for your family's climate sphere.

David tenses up, and it's like fighting a volcanic eruption.

DAVID

Screw your climate sphere!

David appears more shocked than Benjamin by his outburst. He storms toward the door.

BENJAMIN

I'd be careful about consuming illegal reports.

DAVID

Since when did information, like the very air we breathe, become someone's property?

Benjamin sneers down at David from his CLIMATE SPHERE.

BENJAMIN

Since Clear Skies for All began infecting people with their dangerous ideology. A man like you should be careful about the company he keeps.

David meets Benjamin's sneer with a defiant look.

DAVID

Like me? I have old friends who'll
always have my back.

BENJAMIN

Are you sure they're all friends?
You only thought you were asking me
for a meeting, but the truth is, I
wanted to see you to size you up.

David's confident veneer crumbles.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

Class dismissed.

David sighs and strides out.

EXT. CLIMATE SOLUTIONS CORPORATE TOWER - DAY

David marches across the levitating bridge toward the
hovercraft parking garage.

EXT./INT. C.S.A. HOVERCRAFT - DAY

The Clear Skies for All hovercraft resembles an RV.

Inside, COREY (35) and two thirty-something women, LATOYA,
muscular with a mother's regard, and APRIL, small with an
inquisitive expression, and Simón sit around a table.

COREY

Why so grim, my friend?

David casts a wary eye as he scrutinizes his crew and shakes
his head in disappointment with himself.

DAVID

Benjamin would have that impact on
you, too.

LATOYA

You did it, David.

APRIL

The question is, now what?

DAVID

Also, I may have just ended my
marriage.

Simón grins.

SIMÓN

I've got something for our reporter contact. After you see this, we might need to considerar un plan alternativo--un plan B, sí?

Simón punches a few keys on the table console to call up a HOLOGRAM VIDEO of a meeting in the same place from before-- Benjamin's office.

HOLOGRAM VIDEO - INT. BENJAMIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

SENATOR BRADFORD (60s), a short woman with an owlsh face in a plaid suit, strides in with the urgency of her office.

Within his CLIMATE SPHERE, Benjamin sizes her up with the coldness of a scientist dissecting a frog but flashes a smile when she looks up at him.

BENJAMIN

Please, Susan. Have a seat.

He gestures to the table off to the side away from the Romanesque water fountain.

SENATOR BRADFORD

I'm fine talking from here, and it's Senator. Not that I've earned the title--

BENJAMIN

Of course you have! As long as you've been in the Senate, I think--

SENATOR BRADFORD

I remind myself of my job to the American people. I work for them. They've been generous to you, and I'm here on their behalf.

The fountain babbles in the background as the LIGHTS DIM to reflect the time of day.

BENJAMIN

Of course!

Benjamin nods in mock seriousness as if caught being bad by the teacher and floats over to the table from before which has a hologram console in the middle.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

Let me show you what--

SENATOR BRADFORD
I'm not interested in well-produced
hologram presentations.

Benjamin stops clicking on buttons on his virtual keypad.

BENJAMIN
I can assure you, Senator, the plan
is viable. We did a local test--

SENATOR BRADFORD
Yes, I was there. And I was
impressed. But it was a local test.
By now, I would have expected to
see more than the construction of a
few demonstration models.

BENJAMIN
I have to tell you, you're great at
your job. The American people are
so lucky to have you, Senator.

SENATOR BRADFORD
That doesn't matter if I can't
deliver for them. What should I
tell them?

BENJAMIN
Tell them all specs have been
finalized, and the hard hats will
be breaking ground within a month.

SENATOR BRADFORD
I hope so, Mr. Erebus. Hard hats or
even high-grade masks won't help
them unless you act fast.

END VIDEO

INT. C.S.A. HOVERCRAFT - DAY

David appears unimpressed.

DAVID
We could've found that out from
talking to the good senator.

Corey puts a hand on Simón's shoulder.

COREY
I trust our friend has more.

SIMÓN

Sí. Es muy espectacular. But in a bad way. No bueno.

EXT. EARTH TROJAN ASTEROID/C.S.A. NEWS STUDIO - SPACE

SUPER: CLEAR SKIES FOR ALL NEWS STUDIO

A spherical structure, the size of a football field, is anchored to the asteroid. Its silvery shine glints against the backdrop of a starry background.

INT. C.S.A. NEWS STUDIO - SPACE

One section has a handful of desks with computers built into adjustable monitors.

Another section's a news studio with camera drone trees.

Five automate everything from their desks. CREW MEMBER #1 presses a button on his computer optimizing it at its widest.

A HOLOGRAM VIDEO appears of mid-forties dedicated reporter, VICTORIA RYDELL: a striking woman in a shiny, green blouse with a symbol of the Earth, a flower in the top left corner.

VICTORIA RYDELL (HOLOGRAM)

Are we ready?

CREW MEMBER #2 gives a thumbs-up.

Victoria's hologram nods.

EXT. MINERS SPACESHIP - SPACE

The spaceship, shaped like an oil derrick tower with wings, leaves Europa: a white marble with brown scratches.

SUPER: DESTINATION: EARTH

INT. MINERS SPACESHIP/MAINTENANCE ROOM - SPACE

Steel-plated walls are decorated with ordinary items from Earth such as a horseshoe, a fishing pole, and even tools from a toolbox such as a hammer and screw driver.

David stands in his protective suit and visor: a hazmat suit for space.

He pulls out a needle-pointed laser rod arm from a square block in the middle with a number of tools embedded in it.

He squeezes a trigger to the side of the tool as he lasers off microscopic space debris on a SIX-FOOT RADIUS DRILL bit viewed from special goggles underneath his visor.

Latoya, in a suit similar to David's, comes behind him and taps him on the shoulder.

He doesn't release his tool right away but finally relents under pressure from her.

He takes a step back, puts his foot down on a lever on the floor, and a RADIATION-PROOF METAL COVER comes down from the ceiling and goes over the workbench.

He takes off his visor and goggles and Latoya does the same.

LATOYA

It's about time. You can't avoid this. I did and look what happened to my family.

DAVID

But will she listen? I swear, the distance of space has nothing to do with it.

She gives him a tough look and nod to send him on his way.

INT. MINERS SPACESHIP/HOLOGRAM BOOTH - SPACE

David sits in a pod in a hologram booth and sighs, dialing a code on the table console.

SUPER: SANTA CLARITA, CA

INT./EXT. WINTERS HOME/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Marcy's in a black, silken nightgown and paces back and forth at the foot of her bed as she clenches her jaw.

She has her family's pictures everywhere and even on the hologram pedestal, which now RINGS and FLASHES, at the foot of the bed.

Shaking her head, she clicks the accept hologram call button.

DAVID'S HOLOGRAM appears.

In the hall Flynn has his ear to the door. He's in fighter pilot PJ'S and has a look as if he knows his world is coming apart but doesn't know why.

DAVID (O.S.)
He needs to know. Where did you put it?

Marcy removes a thumb-sized, round device, a MEDIA KEY, from a bureau drawer.

MARCY
I almost threw it away. Why would you put us in danger like that?

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
I'm thinking of Flynn's future--our future. You can't ignore--

MARCY
How you lost our climate sphere. That's not all you may have lost.

She puts her hands on her hips as a reminder to him in her silken nightgown.

His mouth is a grim line of uncertainty.

MARCY (CONT'D)
How do you know what you're seeing is the truth? Things are getting better. They're making strides.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
You won't even watch to see what's really happening.

She stares at him as if she can read his very soul.

MARCY
You've done more than watch, haven't you?

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
I bear some responsibility.

MARCY
Doing your job? That's all you've...

She realizes something about him and gasps.

MARCY (CONT'D)
 I can't believe this. It's you,
 isn't it?

He can't meet her fierce gaze.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
 After what I saw, there was no
 other choice.

In the hallway, Flynn can't breathe.

INT. VARIOUS HOMES AND APARTMENTS AROUND EARTH - NIGHT

Different people around the world tune in to the secret news report put out by the C.S.A. studio.

BEGIN MONTAGE

-- A MINNESOTA FAMILY OF FOUR crowd around a wall monitor. The THIRTY-SOMETHING FATHER puts his eye up to a NEWS KEY attached to the monitor's side to activate the news feed.

-- An ELDERLY COLOGNE, GERMAN COUPLE snuggle in a recliner with an overhanging roof with a screen. The WIFE positions her eye near the NEWS KEY attached to an arm rest.

-- A FILIPINO COLLEGE STUDENT in her Manila dorm room attaches a hand-sized HOLOGRAM VIDEO PROJECTOR to the wall. She puts her eye up to an attached NEWS KEY.

END MONTAGE

Victoria Rydell's HOLOGRAM appears on screen.

She looks in earnest at her audience. The texture and color of the hologram video bring the drama of the situation into stark relief.

VICTORIA RYDELL (SCREEN HOLOGRAM)
 Good evening from the Clear Skies
 for All newsroom, broadcasting from
 an undisclosed location funded by
 you, the viewers. I have some
 disturbing news concerning the mega-
 corporation, Climate Solutions.

The Climate Solutions LOGO appears beside her and beneath:

SUPER: 80% OF PEOPLE POLLED TRUST CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

* GOVERNMENT SURVEY RESULTS NOT INDEPENDENTLY VERIFIED.

VICTORIA RYDELL (V.O.)
We have leaked footage that shows
another side of CEO Benjamin
Erebus' face.

HOLOGRAM VIDEO - INT. BENJAMIN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The footage is the same one David saw earlier.

Bradford gives Benjamin a scolding stare as she exits.

VICTORIA RYDELL (V.O.)
The footage you see is the end of a
meeting between Senator Bradford
and Benjamin Erebus after he
promised once again to get his
pollutant sweeper towers installed.

Moments later, Nathan Mora enters the office: the hedge fund
manager-turned shadow government conspirator. He is shifty-
eyed and cautious.

BENJAMIN
Nathan Mora, you do exist beyond
the shadows.

Nathan keeps his facial expressions in check.

NATHAN
I was told where we're at is in the
shadows, but I had to duck for
cover when the senator passed by.

BENJAMIN
Why so shy?

NATHAN
You know the game we're playing at.
What did Bradford want?

BENJAMIN
I don't know if I like your
inquisitive tone.

NATHAN
If I'm going to stick my neck out,
my friends in high places will want
to know where your loyalties lie.

BENJAMIN

I danced with the senator. But between you and me, let's just say, the pollution sweeper towers aren't viable--both economically and for our longterm strategy. But there is something much more enticing for your friends.

Benjamin frowns as if something has gone wrong.

Nathan panics.

NATHAN

What is it?

BENJAMIN

Maybe nothing. Definitely nothing. Just know that the plan I have is bigger than your friends could ever imagine.

END VIDEO

BACK TO VICTORIA RYDELL BROADCAST

VICTORIA RYDELL (SCREEN HOLOGRAM)

The recording ends there, leading us to speculate Benjamin got a reading of the hologram recording on his monitor and promptly escorted Nathan Mora out with reassurances.

Victoria's theory below is depicted with 3D animation.

VICTORIA RYDELL (V.O.)

Perhaps Benjamin suspects, as we do, that the senator or her people had planted a bug during her visit. At any rate, the bug got swept up afterwards, but it's enough for us to realize Benjamin's promise of a solution to stave off climate collapse is not valid. And since then, there's one person establishing himself or herself in opposition and therefore, as a mythic figure to many who're looking for a hero.

The news bulletin continues as we go to...

EXT. EUROPA PROCESSING PLANT - SPACE

Fifty-foot tall silver towers fill the frozen horizon. Their pointed tops emit mountainous plumes of smoke.

An ASTRONAUT with a jet pack darts away from the silver towers, and moments later, the pollution becomes thinner and dissipates until it ceases altogether.

VICTORIA RYDELL (V.O.)
 Space Force authorities are still
 searching for the Mining Saboteur
 as multitudes of silent supporters
 cheer on his or her efforts.

INT. MANILA COLLEGE STUDENT DORM ROOM - NIGHT

A HOODED FIGURE lurks behind the Filipino student from earlier with a WEAPON to her head: the foremost part, the trigger of a handgun, the other half a rectangular block like a new kind of scanner.

The Filipino College Student trembles in her desk chair.

Hooded Figure notices how she stares at his WEAPON.

HOODED FIGURE
 It's a mind eraser. Don't worry:
 it'll only erase the past month.
 Maybe less than that if you tell me
 about the C.S.A. news crew member
 you've been in contact with.

FILIPINO COLLEGE STUDENT
 I don't know...

Hooded Figure strikes her head with the SCANNER-LIKE MUZZLE.

HOODED FIGURE
 You want me to take a year or more
 of your memory? Take enough and a
 person will beg you to kill them.
 Now, tell me all about the person
 who can lead me to the Mining
 Saboteur.

INT. WINTERS HOME - FLYNN'S BEDROOM - DAY

On his bed by the window, Flynn guides a MINIATURE VERSION OF HIS DADDY'S SPACESHIP as Marcy runs her fingers through his hair and sits beside him.

He peers out the window, his palms flush against the glass.

MARCY

Staring out the window won't bring
him back any sooner.

FLYNN

Daddy's keeping the lights on back
here on old Earth.

MARCY

So your father says.

FLYNN

Is there something secret about
Daddy?

MARCY

Did you know that in space there's
no sound so you can't hear
anything: like people's private
conversations?

Her insistent eyes suggest he drop it. He tugs on her elbow.

FLYNN

Can I go outside?

MARCY

No, silly.

FLYNN

Another climate day.

He sighs and puts the MODEL SPACESHIP beside him.

FLYNN (CONT'D)

How did Daddy lose our climate
sphere?

MARCY

By not being your Daddy first.

He looks let-down by his hero. He pleads with open eyes and
clasped hands, and she feels his forehead.

FLYNN

It looks fine out there to me.

MARCY

You, in particular, mister, have no
business going out in that.

He swings his body to dangle his feet off the bed.

FLYNN

I'm fine, Mom. That doctor doesn't know what he's talking about.

MARCY

Excuse me. Did you become a doctor overnight?

She tickles him as he gently elbows her away and gets up.

FLYNN

Stop it already.

She stands and pretends like she's ready to pounce again.

MARCY

Flynn Walter Winters, no son of mine's going to get black lung just because he wants to see his girlfriend!

FLYNN

Sawyer? She's not my girlfriend.

MARCY

Be careful around her. I'm not sure if she should be your friend.

FLYNN

But why, Mom?

MARCY

Some people, you should know, are bad for our environment.

FLYNN

And black lung? It's not breaking news that half the kids at my school have trouble breathing.

She can't seem to decide if she wants to be pissed or amused, so she affects the attitude of a woman from one of the 1950s sitcoms she binge-watches.

MARCY

Breaking news?

She takes a pretend six-shooter out of her pretend holster, points it at him, and speaks like a cowboy.

MARCY (CONT'D)

No excuses, mister. If you go outside, I'll string you up by your boots.

He shakes his head but smiles as she gently squeezes the back of his neck.

He gazes at various posters of designs for nature scenes. These drawn-up images have notes about how they will function as projected, interactive virtual images.

FLYNN

When're they going to produce your designs?

MARCY

Some day, Flynn. Some day. You'll see, sweetie. You'll have real hologram wall art and anything else you could ever want.

He stares at a baseball field design: a stadium where players can play ball against virtual characters.

She kisses him on the forehead and shuffles to the doorway. She starts to say something but stops to just watch Flynn resume his flight patterns with his MODEL SPACESHIP.

He looks up at her, and they smile at each other, after which she blows him a kiss and pads down the hallway.

He hears a SHUTTLE HOVERCRAFT land, sets the MODEL aside, and peers out his window as the SUBMARINE-SHAPED VESSEL floats away up into the clouds.

Flynn's daddy, David, looks somber in his SEE-THROUGH MASK that covers nose and mouth and serves as a half-effective air filter. He lugs his SPACEFARING TRUNK.

Marcy's with David on the front porch, her arms crossed and confusion on her face beneath the same MASK.

He gestures with open arms, but she pushes him back.

Flynn jumps up from his bed and races out of his bedroom.

INT. WINTERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Both of Flynn's parents take their MASKS off in the doorway. David appears tired yet ready for this moment while Marcy's more than prepared for battle.

He wears his climate solutions uniform, a cross between a dress suit and a workman's coveralls, and scratches his chiseled cheek.

They speak with quiet intensity and face each other.

DAVID
They're on to me.

MARCY
Your little temper tantrum didn't
help. How do you know?

DAVID
I know.

She shakes with rage.

With a tissue, he wipes the sweat and pollution residue from
his face.

He pulls her tight despite her resistance.

MARCY
You knew this would happen. You
should be concerned about us.

David struggles with his emotions, which makes it difficult
for him to maintain his brave face.

DAVID
Of course, I am. You're the reason
for everything I do.

She peers down at Flynn whose big eyes search for answers.

David tries to take her hand, but she grabs Flynn's instead.

FLYNN
What do I need to know, Daddy?
What's the secret?

David begins to say something but then just sighs as Marcy
points to the door.

INT. WINTERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Moments later, David trudges in with TWO SUITCASES.

Like a guard, Marcy waits at the door. Sunlight streams
through the window and makes her seem even more statuesque.

David bends down to be at eye level with his son.

DAVID
You and your mother are going to be
just fine. I need you to be brave,
okay? Be strong for your mother.

David stands back up and gently takes Marcy by the shoulders.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You will be fine. Some people from
C.S.A. will be by from time to time
to see to that.

David kisses her on the lips, but she doesn't kiss him back.

An INSISTENT KNOCK is followed by a head with that familiar
SEE-THROUGH MASK: Corey.

COREY
We don't have much time.

Flynn runs to his father and hugs his waist.

DAVID
I love you, little buddy.

Corey taps David on the shoulder as he stares at his family
with a hurtful longing.

David turns to Corey with an expression that suggests he's
torn and might change his mind but makes his body shift out
the door.

Flynn stares at dust motes that dance in a shaft of sunlight.

INT. WINTERS HOME - FLYNN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The only light in the room comes from a rocket lamp whose
base is lit a dim orange.

Flynn gets into bed as Marcy enters his room, and he frowns.

MARCY
Getting too old for me to tuck you
in?

He sighs, gets under covers, and allows her to tuck him in.

She bends down to kiss him on the forehead, and he at first
resists but relents.

She sits at his bedside and runs a hand through his hair.

MARCY (CONT'D)
Do you blame me?

He rolls over to face the wall.

MARCY (CONT'D)

Your father got himself mixed up in
all of this.

He turns to face her.

FLYNN

What is "all of this?"

MARCY

The thing is, your father made a
choice for all of us. All you need
to know is he got into trouble at
work and now has to go away for
awhile.

FLYNN

For how long?

She studies his face.

MARCY

As long as it takes.

She again bends to kiss him on the forehead and heads to the
door but turns back around.

MARCY (CONT'D)

I love you, Flynn.

FLYNN

(conflicted)

Love you, too.

She smiles and leaves him to stare at the PICTURE OF HIS DAD
he picks up from his chest of drawers. He has a conflicted
look about him, too.

INT. WINTERS HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

In her dimly lit bedroom and wearing her black, silken
nightgown, Marcy gets on the right side of the bed, lifts the
cover, and stops before she climbs in.

She stares at the other side of the bed: empty.

Tears well up which she bites back as she leaps on the bed
and pounds where David would be with her fists: one, two,
three-four-five.

She falls back on her side and sobs.

She takes several deep breaths and sits up to gaze with a wary eye at the walk-in closet entryway to her right.

She leans forward as if a magnetic force, her conscience, prevents her progress but soon bolts up and dashes into the closet where she grabs her jewelry box, opens the lid, and flips up the false bottom to reveal...

A pile of SYNTHETIC-SCENT CANISTERS.

Her hand shakes as she reaches in and snatches one, drops to the ground, and applies to her nose not just one dose, but two, three...

She leans back, as if the world is a bright blue sky commercial, and drags some clothes from their hangars with her.

Beneath the pile of clothes, she sighs as she closes her eyes and falls asleep.

INT. NEIL ARMSTRONG MIDDLE SCHOOL - PLAYGROUND ROOM - DAY

Kids enjoy recess in the middle of what appears to be nature because of wall panels that simulate outside conditions.

The sun seems to shine, and the grass appears within reach.

A group of kids at one end play dodgeball. At the other, another bunch jump rope.

By himself, Flynn stands near a park bench in the middle and practices his swing with a LOUISVILLE SLUGGER BASEBALL BAT.

SAWYER, a girl with a boy's buzz haircut, comes to within a safe distance and waits for him to look at her.

SAWYER

Sorry about your father.

He continues to take practice swings as if to hit a home run.

FLYNN

He'll be home soon.

DOUG takes an interest from a few feet away, the giant-for-his age like a prison guard with a perpetual sneer.

DOUG

No, he won't. He's never coming back, TV Boy.

Flynn, who still holds his BASEBALL BAT like a safety blanket, shakes his head at Sawyer who balls up her fists.

She ignores Flynn and marches over to confront Doug.

SAWYER

What're you doing, fart face? Tired
of getting creamed in dodgeball?

DOUG

Get away from me, you dingie!

Flynn inserts himself in between Sawyer and Doug.

FLYNN

What did you call her?

DOUG

Whoah, you feeling brave today,
little kid?

The others gather to watch as Sawyer takes Flynn by the hand to speak off to the side.

SAWYER

I'm fine.

FLYNN

I don't like what he said about you
or my father.

SAWYER

I can handle this.

Sawyer steps back in front of Doug.

DOUG

Did you two lovebirds come to an
agreement?

SAWYER

Why'd you call me a dingie?

DOUG

'Cause that's what you are. You're
a dirty birdie, and I can't wait to
get away from all you farm animal
dingies. My home's getting a
climate sphere. Ever heard of one
of those? TV Boy used to know.

SAWYER

Of course I have. So?

DOUG

So, I'm being transferred to a school that's also getting a climate sphere. One of the first ones, and I won't have to smell your foul odor or end up puking my lungs out like you, dingie!

Flynn jumps between Doug and Sawyer with his BAT raised.

DOUG (CONT'D)

If you come at me with a weapon, little kid, you'd better be ready to use it!

Flynn adjusts his grip on the BAT and shifts his gaze from Doug to Sawyer to the other kids.

FLYNN

Sawyer's no dingie, and my father's coming back.

The kids seem divided on this as some nod their heads at Flynn while others look at Doug.

ELIZA, the school's biggest tattletale with an appropriately long neck and beady eyes, cranes her head in alarm.

Doug lunges for and grabs Flynn's BAT.

The two struggle, and Doug enjoys watching the anger flare up in Flynn. When MRS. GLADSTONE, with her wide hips, wades through the crowd, Doug lets go of the BAT just as Flynn's temper reaches its zenith.

Flynn ends up swinging the BAT toward DOUG but stops as Mrs. Gladstone yells.

Doug raises his hands, pretends to be on the verge of tears.

DOUG

Mrs. Gladstone, thank God!

Mrs. Gladstone, who normally has nothing but smiles for Flynn, turns on him in fury.

MRS. GLADSTONE

I'm so disappointed in you, Flynn.

FLYNN

But, but Doug...

A look of concern flashes on her face like there's something she wants to share, but almost similar to the kids, she glances at Doug and her expression hardens.

INT./EXT. C.S.A. HOVERCRAFT - DAY

Corey, Latoya, April, and Simón sit around a table.

David stares out the port window as they fly over a scarred-Earth pit that emits CARBON-RICH STEAM in intervals.

Corey gets up and pats David on the shoulder.

COREY

Flynn will understand some day.

They sit at the table.

DAVID

If she ever lets him. How would I have felt at his age, watching my father...?

Latoya gets low to force David to stare into her eyes.

LATOYA

Abandon his family? Is that what you think?

David POUNDS the TABLE.

DAVID

It's what I know. Marcy's done her damndest to keep our family together, and all I've done is--

LATOYA

Make the tough, brave decisions that might just save us all.

DAVID

Not sure I'd describe them that way. And I've got another doozy.

David holds a STEEL CARD in his hand as if weighing it.

LATOYA

You're also worried you've put us at risk.

DAVID

Which I have. I just... keep looking at this video.

He slides the CARD into a slot in the middle of the table, and a hologram screen emits an image.

The HOLOGRAM VIDEO, like an oil painting with dots, reveals a middle-school-aged boy racked with pain as he coughs uncontrollably--grayish in color with purplish neck veins.

Victoria Rydell stares with piercing eyes at the audience.

VICTORIA RYDELL (HOLOGRAM VIDEO)

The rate of children succumbing to bronchial diseases due to climate change has increased to one out of every 50. This is contrary to the official news being reported by the major five countries which have put a stranglehold on global democracy. The only bright spot is they're each power-hungry and not united.

David retrieves the CARD, and the hologram projection ceases as the whole room is stone cold silent.

COREY

Flynn's around that age.

David maintains a grim facade as he nods.

Corey stands.

COREY (CONT'D)

I think I speak for all of us, even the ones not here, in saying we support you, David. But if we do this, you won't have access to a spaceship. I guess the Mining Saboteur will have to go into retirement.

DAVID

I've reached out to contacts who can help us.

David punches a few buttons on the console to call up a hologram video of his plan. A PROCESSING PLANT appears with ANIMATED RED LINES that radiate from it to the other PLANTS.

DAVID (CONT'D)

We can cause a ripple effect that would set Climate Solutions back.

LATOYA

What if they're on to you? Benjamin Erebus has the power, resources, and reach of a small empire. You'd be a brave man to act like this when there's a target on your back.

DAVID

But, as I was going to say, one person can't do this alone, and there's a way that after the sabotage, Climate Solutions can remain crippled until they meet our concessions. Each of us knows the risk we take in just meeting like this, so I'll get right to the point. With the futures of our children at stake, I say we can no longer avoid the inevitable. Now is the time for us to make a statement.

Everyone stands, nods, and claps.

INT. UPSTATE NEW YORK - BENJAMIN'S MANSION - STUDY - DAY

An omnipresent TV surrounds the study. Built into the four walls, the images projected follow the viewer with an adaptive 360-degree perspective.

A special feed has been set up in a FIVE-FOOT RADIUS FORCE FIELD SPHERE that hovers. BENJAMIN EREBUS (46) rotates from within and TV images follow.

He wears a gold track suit, wipes the sweat from his forehead and taps a button on a virtual console VIRTUAL CONSOLE to the right of his VIRTUAL STATIONARY BIKE as it disappears.

The shots we get on TV are from DRONE CAMERAS that buzz around like birds that zero in on their prey as a HOLOGRAM OF DAVID steps up to the microphone.

ON TV SCREEN

David, Corey, and the other crew members, as holograms and in planet-mining uniforms, stand at a podium with a large number of live people behind who hold banners: "Save our climate!" and "Our planet's health is at stake!"

DAVID (HOLOGRAM ON TV)
We're here today to announce our
crew is going on strike because our
industry has further jeopardized
the Earth's climate.

Victoria Rydell stands below the podium.

VICTORIA RYDELL (ON TV)
But you're conscripted. You can be
arrested and charged with
desertion.

He flinches at that last word as his hologram flickers.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM ON TV)
There are some in your field, such
as yourself, who're risking
everything to report the truth.

He stares back at the cameras with daring and determination.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM ON TV) (CONT'D)
Clear Skies for All is challenging
this illegal application of the
conscription military code. I
enlisted with Space Force to serve
as a pilot. The U.S. Government
abandoned that contract when they,
I hate to say it, sold me out to a
corporation.

VICTORIA RYDELL (ON TV)
Do you anticipate blowback and
retribution?

DAVID (HOLOGRAM ON TV)
Blowback and retribution... Well,
our holograms are here, and we only
agreed to a pre-recorded press
conference.

VICTORIA RYDELL (ON TV)
They will find you, you must know
that. Does that worry you about
your family?

It's as if David's been struck in the face.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM ON TV)
Of course it does. But scientists
say we're already past due for a
first stage climate collapse event
which would then escalate toward
the final stage.

VICTORIA RYDELL (ON TV)
When the atmosphere will no longer
sustain life as we know it.

On TV, Victoria Rydell gestures with her hand, and
an image of a brownish-black Earth appears and zooms in to
dramatize, through hologram simulation, how birds fall from
the sky to the ground where a CHILD, though she wears a mask,
gasps for air and is rushed inside her home by her PARENTS.

With a motion of Benjamin's hand, the TV IMAGES vanish.

BENJAMIN
Rosalyn!

A hologram appears and floats: ROSALYN, a smartly dressed
woman three years younger than him.

ROSALYN (HOLOGRAM)
So, you've seen the press
conference, too. My father is
already on the phone with our law
firm.

He seems to enjoy her unease.

BENJAMIN
My dear, there's no need to panic.

ROSALYN (HOLOGRAM)
Our stock just dropped twenty
percent.

BENJAMIN
You've always thought short-term
and small picture.

Rosalyn sighs as she looks up at Benjamin's smug face.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
You have to understand something:
David Winters just did us a huge
favor.

ROSALYN (HOLOGRAM)
I don't get it.

BENJAMIN

With more and more of these
conscripted astronauts boycotting
their mining missions, ironically,
new energy solutions, if you will,
won't be possible.

ROSALYN (HOLOGRAM)

What happens when the public finds
out your invention for cleaning up
the atmosphere was never a reality?

He smashes a fist into his CLIMATE SPHERE.

BENJAMIN

Ignorance isn't just bliss. It's
some people's salvation.

Realization dawns on her face.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

I can see you're finally getting
it. Daddy's money couldn't buy you
brains.

ROSALYN (HOLOGRAM)

I hate it when you talk to me like
that.

BENJAMIN

You know I'm teasing, honey pie.

ROSALYN (HOLOGRAM)

But wait... Not everyone can afford
a climate sphere around their
house. Not like they thought when
you first introduced it.

BENJAMIN

Exactly. It's all about Darwin,
dear one.

ROSALYN (HOLOGRAM)

But we still don't know who the
mining saboteur is.

BENJAMIN

It's being handled.

She has a conflicted smile as she nods at him through the
CLIMATE SPHERE.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
 You worry too much, honey bunch. Go
 reassure Daddy.

After her hologram vanishes, he pushes a button on his
 HOLOGRAM CONSOLE to call up a HOLOGRAM of HOODED FIGURE.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
 Do you have eyes on the prize?

Hooded Figure nods.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
 Stupid miner. Thinks he can spy on
 me, but I'm the watcher who
 controls the narrative.

EXT. EUROPA PROCESSING PLANT CENTER - SPACE

SUPER: A WEEK LATER

David, in a spacesuit with a jetpack, maneuvers above a
 series of white, pointed blades--ice spikes 100 feet tall.

The spikes rise up as an alien mountain terrain.

He drifts to where spikes surround the processing plant: a
 hexagonal, dome-shaped building.

SPHERES the size of a human hand, security sentinels, orbit
 the building.

EXT./INT. SPACE BUGGY ON EUROPA - SPACE

The space buggy is two times as wide as an all-terrain
 vehicle on Earth, which enables its eighteen wheels, six each
 in the front, middle, and rear, to manage the icy landscape.

It powers along and crushes ice outcrops along the way and
 maneuvers around an ice geyser.

Inside's a navigation area with a narrow crawl space that
 leads to the open compartment with a bench on each side and a
 table in the middle.

Latoya drives with Corey by her side.

April and Simón are in the back and sit on opposite sides.

Simón holds an ELECTRONICS JAMMER the size and shape of a
 Frisbee while April adjusts dials on a CONE-SHAPED
 COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVER that rests on the table.

She wears platinum-colored discs in her ears. She gives Corey, who has his own discs in his ears, the thumbs-up.

COREY
David, this is Corey. Copy?

EXT. EUROPA PROCESSING PLANT CENTER - SPACE

David speaks through a Walkie-Talkie built into his HELMET.

DAVID
Copy. I made it to the security
sentinels perimeter. Over.

Security sentinels, in an array around the hexagonal, dome-shaped building hover ten feet above.

Their chrome black balls pulse with a WHITE PIN LIGHT that radiates from top to bottom in arcs every 10°.

INTERCUT - WALKIE TALKIE CONVERSATION

COREY
Roger. Outstanding. No one spotted
you? Over.

DAVID
That's what worries me. Over.

David drifts above the GLITTERING ICE SPIKES as he scrutinizes the building.

The crew hear David over a speaker above Simón's head.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Is Simón a go? Over.

Simón adjusts dials on the ELECTRONICS JAMMER and gives a thumbs-up.

COREY
Roger that. Ready for infiltration.
Over.

Corey turns to Simón.

COREY (CONT'D)
You're sure you've got a lock on
those? Our boy's in the line of
fire if you don't.

SIMÓN

Trust me: the Security Sentinel has not only gone dark--it's casting an electronic shadow on the ones beside it.

Corey nods but faces forward to hide the doubt on his face.

EXT. EUROPA PROCESSING PLANT CENTER - SPACE

David descends and just before he lands on the ground, pushes buttons on his gloved hand which help him recalibrate for the planet's gravity differential. He lands with only a slight bobble and hop.

He proceeds toward the building which appears to be made of clay but is actually plexiglass-reinforced steel.

A security sentinel hovers ten feet above and continues to pulse with a WHITE PIN LIGHT.

His eyes fixed upon the device, he treads beneath it. It's stuck in recalibration mode.

He checks the SECURITY SENTINELS on either side spaced at about 20 feet apart, and their WHITE PIN LIGHTS oscillate in a fixed pattern.

He approaches the structure with a PALM-SIZED DEVICE.

100 feet away, the HOODED FIGURE from earlier peers into TELESCOPIC-LENSED BINOCULARS while on his LUNAR MOTORCYCLE which floats a few inches from the icy surface.

David affixes the PALM-SIZED DEVICE to a wall.

DAVID

Simón, are you sure this is all I need to do to disrupt the processing centers' network?

Simón laughs.

SIMÓN (ON DEVICE)

I trust you to do the brave hero shit. So, you should--

DAVID

Trust you to do the crazy geek shit.

SIMÓN (ON DEVICE)

Tu es muy loco, amigo.

David laughs until he glimpses something in the distance--in the direction of a DARK, OUT-OF-FOCUS FIGURE that drifts behind an ice spike.

SIMÓN (ON DEVICE) (CONT'D)
You okay, cabron?

DAVID
False alarm. The Eagle is flying home. And, by the way, I know you just called me a bastard.

SIMÓN (ON DEVICE)
Impresionante! You actually cracked open that learning module I gave you for Christmas.

David laughs, presses a button on his waist, and his jet pack thrusts him up and bound for somewhere over the ice spikes.

Hooded Figure REVS UP his LUNAR MOTORCYCLE and speeds for the spot David just came from.

He places a PUCK-SIZED RED DEVICE over the PALM-SIZED DEVICE left by David and careens away in a direction opposite from where David went.

EXT./INT. SPACE BUGGY ON EUROPA - SPACE

The space buggy zooms across the icy landscape to give them some distance from the processing center.

David sits beside April, diagonally across from Simón. They're all in casual lunar-wear clothes.

David wags his finger at Simón.

DAVID
You didn't think I could do it, did you?

SIMÓN
You make loco look good. Give credito where credito is due.

DAVID
Oh, I wasn't talking about the sabotage mission. I meant learning Spanish.

Corey enters from the cockpit, his hand on a ceiling rung.

COREY

You two giving each other shit again? It's about to make me jealous.

SIMÓN

Ready to, how you say, flip the switch?

COREY

We're far enough. Flip away, Simón.

Simón grins, nods, and flips a few buttons on his FRISBEE-SHAPED CONTROLLER.

They all watch a RADAR-LIKE DIAGRAM of the PROCESSING CENTER as the DOTS show the RED SIGNATURE of energy transmitted from the network turn BLACK.

Everyone rejoices in their shared success.

The BLACK DOTS turn to BRIGHT ORANGE-RED which makes them all gape at each other in horror as their space buggy lurches as if hit by an earthquake.

STATE NEWS VIDEO

-- TV screens and monitors from around the world watch...

-- Processing center DEBRIS flies in slow motion due to Europa's gravity. FLAMES flicker from all sides and angles.

-- News banner: "Dozens dead at Europa's main energy processing center."

-- News banner: "Robin Hood Saboteur Turned Terrorist!"

END STATE NEWS VIDEO

INT. WINTERS HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

On their TV monitor, a news banner says, "Suspected Terrorist is David Winters."

Tears stream down Flynn's cheeks as Marcy attempts to comfort him as she comes to terms with what she's seen.

INT. NEIL ARMSTRONG MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

Flynn nears the entrance of his classroom, but Mrs. Gladstone blocks the way.

MRS. GLADSTONE
You need to see Mr. Timmons.

FLYNN
Is this about Doug? But that was
over a week ago.

MRS. GLADSTONE
Something's happened which won't
allow me to forget.

Flynn sighs and heads the other direction.

INT. NEIL ARMSTRONG MIDDLE SCHOOL - MR. TIMMONS' OFFICE - DAY

This counseling office has cute stuffed animals everywhere.

MR. TIMMONS, who appears younger than he really is, beams as
Flynn enters.

MR. TIMMONS
Flynn, please take a seat. I'm so
glad you came to see me.

FLYNN
It wasn't by choice.

MR. TIMMONS
Here, have a plushy.

Mr. Timmons holds out a STUFFED BABY ELEPHANT which Flynn
takes with reluctance.

MR. TIMMONS (CONT'D)
Now, I don't want to keep you from
your learning, so I'll get right to
it. I understand you're having some
anger management issues.

FLYNN
It's all a misunderstanding.

MR. TIMMONS
Is what your father did a
misunderstanding?

Flynn grips the BABY ELEPHANT a little too hard which
provokes concern from Mr. Timmons.

MR. TIMMONS (CONT'D)
Gently, please. Hold the plushy
gently.

FLYNN

I don't want to hold it at all!

Flynn flings the BABY ELEPHANT onto Mr. Timmons' desk, and the counselor reacts as if an actual loved one has been hurt.

MR. TIMMONS

You listen to me, young man. I know your father's choices have made things difficult, but--

FLYNN

Don't talk to me about my father.

MR. TIMMONS

You'd better understand one thing, little mister. This world won't tolerate children with wicked ideologies. And if the apple doesn't fall too far from--

FLYNN

You don't understand.

Mr. Timmons glares at Flynn but backs down and looks away as he gathers the STUFFED BABY ELEPHANT into his arms.

INT. FLYNN'S BEDROOM - DAY

SUPER: A WEEK LATER...

Flynn studies a FAMILY PHOTO on his desk where his father has a big smile that radiates confidence.

DAVID (V.O.)

This is my favorite picture of us. When you don't know where to go, come back to it, and it'll guide you.

He picks up the FRAME and examines the back.

DAVID (V.O.)

And if something comes up, you know who you can go to besides your mother, right?

He slides the back out and finds a FALSE FINGERNAIL which he plucks out and puts on his index finger.

FLYNN

Sawyer.

His eyes shine with delight as the HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE that appears above his FALSE FINGERNAIL reflects a MAP of the city with a YELLOW LINE showing the way to an outskirts location.

He slides the back of the FRAME into place, sets it down, and looks at the PHOTO.

He opens the window and climbs outside.

EXT. FLYNN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Flynn stays low as he enters the side door of their garage.

INT. WINTERS HOME - GARAGE - DAY

Flynn eyes his bicycle and heads for it but hesitates.

FLYNN

Sawyer lives too far away to be
taking that.

He removes the plastic sheet of an old green hovercraft: a jalopy shaped like a frog. He sighs.

FLYNN (CONT'D)

What will Momma say?

He shrugs, slips on his SEE-THROUGH MASK, and twists the ignition key. The glow from the HOLOGRAPHIC MAP above his fingernail guides the way.

INT. WINTERS HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Marcy plops on the living room sofa and takes a good swallow from a GLASS OF CHARDONNAY.

She stares down at her CELL PHONE: one of the old ones that's still a physical instead of a virtual model.

A message from Nathan Mora blinks.

She sighs and clicks play.

NATHAN (ON PHONE)

Marcy, I just wanted you to know
you can always call me. A woman
with your talent deserves a break,
and not to brag, but I'm the guy
who can help you with that.

She stares at NATHAN MORA'S name on her phone's screen.

INT. WINTERS HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A HUMMING from the garage startles Marcy just as she's about to press the button on her PHONE to call Nathan.

MARCY

Flynn?

EXT. WINTERS HOME - GARAGE - DAY

Marcy dashes toward the garage to see the GREEN HOVERCRAFT ZIP out and down the street.

Pissed beyond belief, she goes back inside.

EXT. WINTERS NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

It's a middle class neighborhood with most of the houses raised to avoid flooding.

Flynn, his SEE-THROUGH MASK on, straddles the hovercraft and flies twelve feet in the air as the wind blows back his hair. He jets his way out of the neighborhood.

EXT. SAWYER'S LOG CABIN HOME - DAY

Flynn maneuvers the hovercraft over trees and lands. Nothing's there which puzzles him, but the image of a bare field flickers to reveal a log cabin.

Sawyer rushes out the door to meet him.

SAWYER

You're here!

FLYNN

I can't believe I made it.

SAWYER

They're waiting for you inside.

INT. SAWYER'S LOG CABIN HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sawyer ushers Flynn, who takes off his MASK. Flowers are everywhere along with little statues of animals such as foxes, pigs, and any and every other kind.

Her parents, OWEN and LINDA BAEZ, stand on either side of the fireplace mantel opposite the front door.

Owen is forty-something, chubby, and has only a few straggly hairs on his head which, in his joyful ebullience, causes him to resemble an overgrown baby.

Linda is stick-thin and could be in her late thirties or seems to be much older depending on where her mood swings her. She has long hair that hangs in two braids.

A woman on the couch off to the side makes Flynn look twice, as if he's seen her before. Although in jeans and a t-shirt, Senator Bradford has this official vibe about her.

SENATOR BRADFORD

I'm proud of your father, young man.

Flynn appears confused.

LINDA

(to Senator Bradford)

The poor dear hasn't seen the real news. His mother won't let him.

OWEN

But she will let him watch the state news' version.

FLYNN

Are you saying my daddy didn't... do that to all those people?

LINDA

Your daddy's a hero. Always remember that and stand your ground like your father.

OWEN

Senator Bradford knows all too well about standing her ground.

SENATOR BRADFORD

Ex-senator.

LINDA

Flynn, she recently gave the speech of her life on the senate floor.

SENATOR BRADFORD

Hence the 'ex' part. Thanks to some voting law addendums.

OWEN

You'll always be Senator Bradford
to us, and you'll be on the
forefront of our revolution.

LINDA

(cheering)

Clear Skies for All.

As Flynn's lower lip quivers and his eyes grow watery,
Senator Bradford crouches to within eye level of Flynn and
takes his hands in hers.

SENATOR BRADFORD

Don't you worry, honey. Your
daddy's going to be all right.

Flynn bites his lower lip to mirror her determination.

FLYNN

It's got something to do with home.
Dad kept mentioning home. Did he
mean ours?

SENATOR BRADFORD

He was talking about the so-called
Heroes of Mother Earth.

Owen leans against a post in the entrance to the kitchen. He
smiles as if to roll out a red carpet.

OWEN

Son, have you noticed how we live
differently here?

Flynn takes the room in.

Linda clucks her tongue.

LINDA

What he's saying is we live off the
grid. I'm surprised you were able
to find us.

She gives her daughter, Sawyer, a hard stare.

Flynn looks down.

FLYNN

Uh oh. Don't worry. I can keep a
secret.

Owen laughs.

OWEN
I'm sure of it.

He comes closer to Flynn, squats down, and rubs his rough hands together.

OWEN (CONT'D)
You see, partner, what you need to understand is these fellows--Heroes of Mother Earth--aren't heroes at all. What they want--

FLYNN
Is to get rid of anyone who's different or disagrees with them. See: I listen to my daddy.

This gets a round of chuckles. Senator Bradford smiles.

SENATOR BRADFORD
Flynn, what these good people here with us now do is keep individuals like me safe when we shoot our mouths off.

Flynn nods and peers at the people who crowd over him.

FLYNN
Like Daddy. Is he here?

It's hard for Linda to look Flynn in the eye.

LINDA
No, but he told us you'd be coming.

She glances over at Owen, and he sighs and nods. She turns back to Flynn and takes his hand.

LINDA (CONT'D)
What your daddy did was go to war with a powerful mega-corporation. They're slowly taking over our country.

SENATOR BRADFORD
Not slowly and not just our country.

Linda turns to Sawyer.

LINDA
Sugar, why don't you take our guest to your room while I call his mother?

SAWYER

But mom, he just got here. Isn't this where Mr. Winters wanted--

LINDA

It's not where Mrs. Winters wants him. He hoped she'd come around.

Flynn winces like he's been punched in the stomach, and she puts her hand on his shoulder.

LINDA (CONT'D)

It's okay, darling. It'll all be okay.

Sawyer takes Flynn's hand and guides him toward her room.

INT. SAWYER'S ROOM - DAY

The walls have a lot of protest signs and posters, some from the 1960s. Many are about protecting wildlife such as whales, and one shows a humpback whale as it emerges from the ocean.

There's a black lives matter poster with a raised black fist.

FLYNN

You have a lot of cool posters.

SAWYER

Thanks. Mom says anyone with a heart must have a conscience.

FLYNN

What does that mean?

SAWYER

It means everyone should care. Your father cares. It's all about saving what's important.

FLYNN

I care.

He stares at his feet.

FLYNN (CONT'D)

Do you think my daddy'll be safe?

She gazes into his shining, soulful eyes.

SAWYER

Your daddy's going to be fine, but he needs to be kept in a safer place than Senator Bradford. He's on the frontlines of the movement.

He gapes in wonder at this.

FLYNN

The movement? Why haven't I heard about it?

SAWYER

It's probably because of your mother.

FLYNN

But she cares, too.

SAWYER

Sure, she does. For you. My mother says her heart is there, but her vision's cloudy.

He nods.

FLYNN

She can only see so far.

SAWYER

She wants to protect you and your family, but these days, we're all in this together, or we're all lost.

She removes a NEWS KEY from a desk drawer and holds it up.

FLYNN

What's that?

SAWYER

It's a News Key. You attach it to a media device so you can find out what's really happening in the world.

FLYNN

But we can already watch the news.

She puts it in his palm and closes his fingers around it, and there's a moment between the two as their hands touch.

SAWYER

Your father wanted me to give it to you so you can watch top secret news that the government doesn't want you to know about.

FLYNN

But why is that?

SAWYER

Just watch and find out. You have to know who to trust in this world.

FLYNN

But I've always trusted my mother, and she says...

She kisses him on the cheek, and he glances down at his feet and fidgets before he can look up at her again.

SAWYER

Open your eyes to what's going on, and then you can trust yourself.

He's conflicted but puts the NEWS KEY into his pants pocket.

INT. WINTERS HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Marcy stands in the garage and stares in disbelief at the empty space where their hovercraft once stood.

MARCY

Where are the men in my life? I should've listened to my mother.

Her CELL PHONE BUZZES in her pocket. She anxiously pulls it out to see it's a call from Linda Baez. She frowns and shakes her head as she answers it.

She stands with the phone cradled against her ear.

MARCY (CONT'D)

Where's David? You know where he is, so tell me.

She rolls her eyes.

LINDA (ON PHONE)

We'll bring your boy home and have someone return his hovercraft.

She hangs up and stares into space.

INT./EXT. WINTERS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The SOUND OF FLYNN'S HOVERCRAFT rouses Marcy, and she rises from the couch, ready for a confrontation.

She opens the front door to see Linda there with a hand on Flynn's shoulder.

Marcy glares at her.

LINDA

We're on the same side, you know.

MARCY

Are we?

With a look of disappointment, Linda turns around to go back to her hovercraft.

A solemn, sheepish Flynn steps inside. She shakes in a mixture of anger and sadness.

MARCY (CONT'D)

How could you do that to me? You're eleven years old... How could you do that?

FLYNN

I'm okay, Mommy.

MARCY

You say that, but so many things could've gone wrong, so it's not okay. It's the opposite of okay.

She commands him to step farther inside with her stare, and he does.

She paces and her hands touch her hair, her face, her waist. Finally, she stops and stares with her mouth agape.

MARCY (CONT'D)

How did you learn to fly the hovercraft?

He stands like a sentinel who guards the truth.

MARCY (CONT'D)

Of course! David showed you.

He avoids her probing eyes.

MARCY (CONT'D)
I've told him and told him and told
him not to do things like that.

She grows alarmed.

MARCY (CONT'D)
Okay, where is it?

He feigns innocence.

MARCY (CONT'D)
The News Key? Round device that...

He crumbles under her interrogation, takes out the NEWS KEY,
and hands it to her.

FLYNN
I'm the man of the house now, and
we should know what's happening in
the world.

She doesn't laugh or even smile at this but instead maintains
a look of stone cold fury as she nods toward the couch.

MARCY
You sit down there, and don't move!

He peers up at her, and after she points a finger, he sits on
the couch. She strides over to where he practices being like
a statue as she leans over him.

MARCY (CONT'D)
You're not moving from there,
mister. Ever! I'll bring your meals
in here to you.

FLYNN
Mom, I'm sorry, but I really am--

MARCY
No! No, no, no! You will get to
move around the different rooms of
this house, but that's it. Until...
Well, until everything's safe again
which might be never.

FLYNN
But why don't you want us to know
what's going on?

MARCY
This little device could land us
both in prison.
(MORE)

MARCY (CONT'D)

It's full of lies that are harmful,
and the best thing to do is keep
your head down and take
opportunities when they come to
you.

FLYNN

Why does daddy need to be in a
safer place than Senator Bradford?

MARCY

(under her breath)
That damn senator!

She softens as she sits beside him and gently takes his hand.

MARCY (CONT'D)

You and I have to stick together.
Do you understand?

His eleven-year-old eyes are slow to comprehend.

MARCY (CONT'D)

This world is complicated, Little
Voyager.

FLYNN

More than others, like Kepler 186-
f?

This gets a half-smile from her.

MARCY

If we ever have a spaceship that
could reach it, you'd fly there
some day. I really wish I could tie
you down. I would, you realize, if
it wouldn't be judged as cruel
treatment to a minor.

FLYNN

The world is a big place, Momma.

MARCY

The universe is, and your father
keeps pushing us out of the cozy
comfort of our home sweet home. My
parents always preached how if
you've got a roof over your head,
you've got it made. And with the
way things are going--politics, my
dear--the safe thing is to stay in
our home. We are the universe.

She gestures from him to her and then draws him close for a crushing hug.

INT. BENJAMIN'S MANSION - BATHROOM - DAY

Benjamin climbs naked out of the bathtub within his hermetically sealed bathroom and towels himself off.

He dons his metal-weaved suit and enters his climate sphere attached to the bathroom entrance.

INT. BENJAMIN'S MANSION - BEDROOM - DAY

He waves his hand in the CLIMATE SPHERE, a PANEL appears, and he presses a button which causes the clamps attached to the door to release with a HISS.

The hole in the CLIMATE SPHERE fills up, and he pivots his arms and legs as the CLIMATE SPHERE rolls to a GIANT MONITOR on the far wall of his bedroom.

He waves his hand to the side, and a VIRTUAL MIRROR appears, which he uses to glance at his appearance.

He brushes back his hair, gives himself a thumbs-up, and touches buttons on the KEYPAD before him.

On the wall monitor, a SHADOWY MAN sits at a mahogany desk, his features obfuscated by pixilation.

BENJAMIN

Nice desk. I almost said your name.

SHADOWY MAN (ON MONITOR)

(robotic tone)

I'm glad you didn't.

BENJAMIN

You'll have to get me one of those someday.

Shadowy Man leans forward, and his grin can be glimpsed amidst the pixels that shift.

SHADOWY MAN (ON MONITOR)

If you make it to D.C.

BENJAMIN

I may just do that.

SHADOWY MAN (ON MONITOR)

Is there a reason you called me?

BENJAMIN

Ever impatient, aren't we? Okay,
I'll stop beating around the
bullshit. I need a meeting with
David Winters.

Shadowy Man's laugh ECHOES like a metal ball.

SHADOWY MAN (ON MONITOR)

What would you have to say to the
guy who threw a wrench into your
production?

BENJAMIN

Have you checked the stock market
lately? As in, oh, the past hour or
so?

Shadowy Man turns away, and TYPING can be heard before he
turns back around.

SHADOWY MAN (ON MONITOR)

Holy shit! Is that because...?

BENJAMIN

Of panic buying! You hit the head
on the bull.

SHADOWY MAN (ON MONITOR)

Why are you so hot about meeting
Winters?

BENJAMIN

Winters has become the mascot of a
rebellious movement. He could be
quite a valuable asset. Having a
few words with him wouldn't hurt.

Shadowy Man leans forward to reveal a cruel grin.

SHADOWY MAN (ON MONITOR)

Yeah, you want to have a few words
with him. You sure are a squirrely
bastard.

BENJAMIN

Climate Solutions has made me a
player. It's not just good for
business. It's also good for the
government.

Shadowy Man sighs and pats his pixellated stomach: a bear
ready for a meal.

SHADOWY MAN (ON MONITOR)
I've helped others like you with
your raw hunger and your bottomless
ambition.

BENJAMIN
Now you're catching on, friend.

SHADOWY MAN (ON MONITOR)
We might be able to take this
friendship further.

BENJAMIN
With my scientific know-how and the
people you've got around you, you
could help with a top-secret
project: one that could send all of
humanity finally out among the
stars.

SHADOWY MAN (ON MONITOR)
I'll set up the meeting with
Winters, and we can take it from
there.

INT. NEIL ARMSTRONG MIDDLE SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

The desks have computers built within them, with buttons on
the arm rests.

Arrayed in two sections of rows, they face each other where
there's a master console in the center.

Sawyer's beside Doug, and Flynn's on the other side by Eliza.

Mrs. Gladstone pushes a button to summon a HOLOGRAM OF A
ROBOT in the middle of the classroom.

It's dressed like a nanny from the Victorian era complete
with a white bonnet and white apron over its black dress.

SAWYER
Mrs. Gladstone?

Mrs. Gladstone ignores her as she prepares for her lesson.

SAWYER (CONT'D)
Mrs. Gladstone?

MRS. GLADSTONE
What do you want, child?

SAWYER

We were supposed to have a lesson
on the history of climate change.

It appears as if Mrs. Gladstone might cry, but she narrows
her eyes and points at Sawyer.

MRS. GLADSTONE

Now we're not, okay? Is that all
right with you?

Across from her, Flynn shares Sawyer's look of puzzlement.

Mrs. Gladstone forces a smile.

MRS. GLADSTONE (CONT'D)

Children, today we're going to
learn about Robotic Guardians or
RGs for short.

The ROBOT, in the reddish glow of its hologram projection,
has a grey, claylike "skin" which makes the attempt to
portray it as human somewhat creepy. Its eyes are red irises
against a black background.

With a fiendish grin, Doug points from Flynn to the RG.

MRS. GLADSTONE (CONT'D)

Robotic Guardians are the latest in
technology developed by the
government to assist in the well-
being of our society.

The teacher sounds like a robot herself as she reads from a
script projected in the air.

Mrs. Gladstone clears her throat as if to get rid of what
makes her sad so she can teach.

MRS. GLADSTONE (CONT'D)

Some children need firm support in
their development, and their
parents aren't always there to keep
an eye on them. Thanks to funding
and aid from Climate Solutions in
partnership with Automaton Labs,
RGs can prevent children from
becoming terrorists who endanger
our way of life.

SAWYER

You mean for the wealthy.

Doug glares at her.

MRS. GLADSTONE
Now, Sawyer, don't speak out of
turn.

Doug, with a smug expression, raises his hand to pretend he's a good student.

Mrs. Gladstone cocks her head in surprise.

MRS. GLADSTONE (CONT'D)
Yes, Doug?

DOUG
Mrs. Gladstone, are these RGs being
made to prevent kids from becoming
terrorists like Flynn's dad?

MRS. GLADSTONE
Now, Doug, go easy on Flynn. He's
going through a lot.

Everyone stares at Flynn who seems ill. Even the RG appears focused on him.

Mrs. Gladstone approaches him and waves her hand.

MRS. GLADSTONE (CONT'D)
Flynn, are you okay?

All sound becomes MUTED except for LAUGHTER FROM DOUG whose head is tossed back, in slow motion, in complete, rapturous joy at Flynn's predicament.

Sound is restored and movement returns to normal as Flynn leaps from his seat and rushes to confront Doug who cowers.

FLYNN
My father's a hero standing up for
what's right.

Flynn turns to Sawyer who grins in pride.

Mrs. Gladstone, though, almost matches the skin tone of the robot as all the color has drained from her face.

DOUG
What about those people who were
killed in that processing center?

Flynn teeters like he could pass out at any moment or lose complete control of his rage.

MRS. GLADSTONE
 Flynn Winters, you go back to your
 seat right now.

Implicit is if he does so, all could be forgiven and
 forgotten, but if he doesn't...

FLYNN
 Not until you explain why you can't
 teach us the lesson about climate
 change.

The whole class is riveted and stunned.

Mrs. Gladstone's right eyebrow twitches along with the right
 side of her mouth.

She appears on trial as all await her response as she glances
 at a COURT ORDER on the corner of her desk.

MRS. GLADSTONE
 I... I... I can't.

INT. NEIL ARMSTRONG MIDDLE SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Flynn sits by his mother across from the principal at her
 desk. Mrs. Gladstone is glaringly not part of the meeting.

MS. DANTON, the principal, has a thick neck like a bull's and
 while human comes across as a cyborg thanks to her eyewear.

She wears the new tech version of an old lady's GLASSES: the
 lenses not only magnify her pupils which stare with overly
 keen interest as they scan over Dylan, the RED LIGHT glares
 from the built-in infrared laser.

Flynn glances at his mother for support, but Marcy is a stone
 statue of disapproval.

FLYNN
 I'm sorry about Doug, but I was
 only--

MS. DANTON
 Yes, but that's not why you're
 here.

The RED LIGHT from Danton's glasses sweeps across his face.

FLYNN
 And I'm sorry I interrupted Mrs.
 Gladstone's--

MS. DANTON

Again, not the main reason you're sitting in that chair.

Marcy shakes her head and clutches at her chair's arm rest.

MARCY

Then why, Ms. Danton, are we here?

Ms. Danton glares at Marcy. Her pupils expand as she leans forward. The folds of skin under her neck sway, and the tip of her tongue flicks out to the side of her mouth.

MS. DANTON

Mrs. Winters, I'm sure you understand how we're living in uncertain times.

Marcy, quite formidable herself, doesn't back down.

MARCY

Yes, of course, but what does that have to do with my son?

Ms. Danton sighs and looks almost human.

MS. DANTON

Your son wanted his teacher to go over a forbidden topic.

Flynn seems completely confused.

FLYNN

Climate change history?

Danton bites her lip and a little blood trickles out.

MS. DANTON

No one should be asking about that right now--certainly not your son.

FLYNN

Do you want to say something about my father?

Marcy maintains eye contact with Danton despite the BRIGHT RED LIGHT which emanates from her GLASSES.

Danton softens her tone and that's somehow scarier.

MS. DANTON

Young man, you must be going through a difficult time.
(MORE)

MS. DANTON (CONT'D)

I know we want to love our fathers,
despite their mistakes.

FLYNN

I do love my father.

Marcy seems barely able to keep herself under control.

Again, Ms. Danton's tone softens to become an almost unbearable purr of understanding.

MS. DANTON

Of course, you do. Of course,
Flynn. Which is why you must be the
one to set the example.

Danton's mask of kindness dissolves to reveal a frightening ferocity as the RED LIGHT SCANNER from her GLASSES beams onto Flynn's face.

MS. DANTON (CONT'D)

And you will set the example, or
you will find yourself at another
school. Does my lovely little boy,
Flynn, understand his assignment?

He appears like someone who's been forced to swallow something that's too sour.

FLYNN

Yes, Ms. Danton.

Danton smiles which forces Marcy to reciprocate with one of her own.

MARCY

Thank you, Ms. Danton. I appreciate
everything you're doing for Flynn.

Flynn's at a loss and can't look either adult in the eye as Marcy takes him by the hand to backpedal out of the office.

EXT./INT. UNDISCLOSED CAVE LOCATION - NIGHT

David gazes up at the starry sky with a dreamy look that could match his son's.

A RING, like from an old telephone booth, alerts him.

DAVID

Answer. Corey! You checking up on
me?

COREY (V.O.)
Someone has to.

DAVID
You still don't think I should be
doing this.

COREY (V.O.)
That bug in your ear is me. I just
don't think it's safe.

DAVID
Even inside a cave? You worry too
much. If we're ever going to make
any progress, we must negotiate.

COREY (V.O.)
Whatever you say, Captain.

DAVID
I'll contact you immediately after.

David hears another RING: a sample from "Stardust Memories."

DAVID (CONT'D)
Don't answer. I'll call you in a
little bit, buddy.

As David enters the cave, the HOODED FIGURE from before
follows closely behind.

INT. WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE - NIGHT

It's a spacious room with paintings on the walls that
conceptualize the settling of an Earth-like planet.

Benjamin sits at a long table in his climate-controlled suit
which is like an astronaut's except his is an upgrade.

He continually turns to the door and taps on the table.

Finally, the door opens as Nathan Mora strolls through and
holds an OPAQUE HELMET.

BENJAMIN
Nice of you to make it.

Nathan smiles, his grin a permanent fixture between two
square jaws. He wears a metal-weaved suit that intermingles
gold and silver, and a diamond stud pokes out of his sleeve
as he extends a hand.

Benjamin waits the optimum amount of time before he deigns to take that hand and give it a firm shake.

Benjamin finally releases Nathan's hand.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

I see they sent their lap dog.

Nathan appears to be conflicted as to how to react. He seems pissed, amused, and amazed in equal parts.

NATHAN

In the flesh. But, you should note, I'm a lap dog with some incredible tricks.

BENJAMIN

A dog with a bark but no bite is simply a bitch.

Nathan laughs an uncomfortable laugh.

NATHAN

You have no filter, which, I must say, I find refreshing. I rub elbows with chameleons whose faces change when they turn their backs on you.

BENJAMIN

You're smart for a hedge fund manager, but that's not all you are, hence the incredible tricks.

NATHAN

Where's David Winters?

BENJAMIN

About that, he couldn't make it in person.

NATHAN

I was hoping he'd take the bait.

BENJAMIN

You couldn't honestly believe that guy, considering the scrutiny he's under, would show up live. Don't worry: all may not be lost. Let's get him on the hologram video.

Benjamin hands Nathan a HOLOGRAM VIDEO CARD.

Nathan dons the OPAQUE HELMET and places the CARD in a slot in the middle of the table and pushes a few buttons.

A HOLOGRAM of David Winters appears like a dot matrix painting with colors so vivid they create a surreal picture.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
Benjamin Erebus, I'm sorry this
couldn't be in person.

BENJAMIN
No, you're not.

David smiles.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
Who's your anonymous friend?

Nathan's voice cuts through metallic distortion.

NATHAN
You're not the only one who must
take precautions. This high-stakes
talk could produce benefits for
everyone. Your little stunts, which
rallied your confederates, have put
our world in a bind.

David grows grim and his leveled stare makes it seem like he's in the same room.

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
Speaking of stunts, somebody
performed an evil one that cost
many their lives.

Benjamin looks beyond pissed.

BENJAMIN
What're you insinuating?

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
Besides, I'd say we were already
put in a bind, but I'm hopeful that
we can work together to prevent
climate collapse.

BENJAMIN
So, let me guess: you want to shut
all of my mines down?

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
I'm not saying shut them down. I'm
saying use some of the bicarbonate
silicate to power your pollution
sweeper towers like you promised.

Benjamin grins.

BENJAMIN
So, you've seen them?

DAVID (HOLOGRAM)
I know of them and that with more
investment in them and a production
of them at a larger scale they
could...

David turns to someone who has come into his room.

NATHAN
What's happening?

Benjamin laughs at the situation and at Nathan's confusion.

David turns back around so his panicked eyes can be seen.

DAVID'S FEET SCRAPE the floor as he's hauled away.

Nathan stands, removes his helmet, and stares in awe at
Benjamin who claps him on the shoulder.

BENJAMIN
You thought all my bluster was
bullshit, didn't you?

NATHAN
A citizen's arrest?

BENJAMIN
What do you think of me now?

NATHAN
We should alert the authorities.

BENJAMIN
To what end? Don't you see? David
is much more valuable if we keep
his capture from the public.

NATHAN
So you can manipulate his
reputation?

Benjamin gives him a look that says now the dumbass is getting it.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I'll get my friends.

They sit, and after Nathan clicks a button on a console in the center of the table, the other chairs populate with HOLOGRAM IMAGES of three men and two women in robes that are a futuristic update of the Greek toga.

The sparkly material has a strangely metallic sheen. Their facial pixels are blurred to give them an eerie sense of being faceless as if their humanity has been scooped out.

Benjamin grins and elbows Nathan in the ribs.

BENJAMIN

Why the long faces?

Nathan doesn't smile and looks deathly serious.

MYSTERIOUS GUEST #1 sits at the head of the table opposite them and projects majesty as his RED ROBE TWINKLES.

NATHAN

These are people of great power and consequence. They come from the deepest, highest levels of their governments.

BENJAMIN

All from Heroes of Mother Earth, no doubt.

NATHAN

I don't even know who they are, but trust me, they're--

BENJAMIN

Nathan, let's dispense with the pleasantries and get on with it.

Nathan appears ill as he glances back and forth between Benjamin and the mysterious, distinguished guests.

MYSTERIOUS GUEST #2'S facial pixels are unisex, but her voice is that of a strident female who demands answers.

MYSTERIOUS GUEST #2

Did you meet with Winters? Do you have any news to report, or are you wasting our time?

BENJAMIN

Oh, I've got something better than news.

The pixel-faced figures seem to all lean toward him at once.

MYSTERIOUS GUEST #3, another female at the head of the table on the opposite side, rises.

MYSTERIOUS GUEST #3

Speak plainly, Benjamin. We agreed to procure your assistance in getting information from Winters and perhaps even progress toward a settlement.

Benjamin grows disgusted as he climbs on the table and turns so he can see, as well as is possible under the circumstances, all the attendees.

BENJAMIN

Some people prefer to do business in clandestine fashion. Not me.

MYSTERIOUS GUEST #4, a male seated in the middle of the table, stands in outrage.

MYSTERIOUS GUEST #4

You'd better be careful.

BENJAMIN

Why would you come to the world's wealthiest man? A man of endless resources with so many of his inventions which have become necessary to people across the globe.

One by one the rest join the others as they stand.

MYSTERIOUS GUEST #1

Tell us what you've done.

Nathan, a forgotten figure in all this, looks like it's been some time since he's drawn a breath.

BENJAMIN

What I've done, despite the fumbling and foolish assistance of dullards, is capture David Winters.

INT. WINTERS HOUSE - FLYNN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Flynn lies on his bed twirling his MODEL SPACESHIP as his mother yells from the kitchen.

MARCY (O.S.)
Flynn, I told you dinner's ready!

He hears her FOOTSTEPS, and she opens the door.

MARCY (CONT'D)
You have to eat.

FLYNN
No, I don't.

He aims the SPACESHIP at her.

She rushes over and grabs the SPACESHIP out of his hands and seems about ready to break it or break him, but she sets it down gently beside him.

She holds her hand out for him, but he resists. He finally takes her hand.

FLYNN (CONT'D)
He's never coming back, is he?

She averts her head, but he can see tears in her eyes before she does so. She smiles, but it's a terrible, forced smile.

MARCY
We're going to be fine.

FLYNN
That's not what I asked.

The tension in her jaw's at odds with her smile.

MARCY
Listen, Flynn dear, I know all this is hard for you, but your principal is right about one thing: these are uncertain times. And if we're truly going to be all right, we have to adapt.

FLYNN
You're telling me a story now, aren't you? Like you used to.

MARCY
You've always been bright.

She kicks off her shoes and climbs onto the bed to sit cross-legged in front of him. She takes both his hands.

MARCY (CONT'D)

Adults tell stories all the time,
only not for fun. They tell them
for survival.

FLYNN

You mean when things change.

She nods.

FLYNN (CONT'D)

Do you think Daddy's a...
terrorist?

MARCY

It's not for me to say. He made
choices, and we have to make sense
of our lives. Life doesn't go as we
planned, and if we don't adapt, we
lose ourselves.

INT. WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE - NIGHT

Mysterious Guest #1 stands and crosses his arms as his red futuristic toga twinkles in majesty.

MYSTERIOUS GUEST #1

I assume you've got a plan. You'd
better because if this goes awry
and any of us are implicated...

Benjamin puts up a hand to signal they should watch and takes out a HEXAGONAL SHAPE from a pouch in the back of his suit. He plugs it into a port on the table's center console.

A HOLOGRAM of a GRAY ALIEN appears. His BULBOUS EYES, with double purple irises, SPIN in every direction.

Benjamin gestures like a carnival barker.

BENJAMIN

As you can see, I've had some prior
experience with kidnapping.

Mysterious Guest #3 touches her scooped-out forehead and shakes her head.

MYSTERIOUS GUEST #3

This is a disaster of universal proportions. We should seize you now and charge you with treason.

Benjamin appears unfazed.

BENJAMIN

So you're not surprised to see an alien. You thought you could keep their existence a secret, but again, all of you are tragically shortsighted despite your power and privilege.

MYSTERIOUS GUEST #5 stands, and her PINK AND GOLD FUTURISTIC TOGA swirls from her sudden movement.

MYSTERIOUS GUEST #5

I, for one, am tired of your circus ringmaster theatrics! I move that we all disperse and seize this rascal immediately. I don't care how wealthy he is or how important his factories are.

Mysterious Guest #1 urges her to be calm and to be seated.

MYSTERIOUS GUEST #1

Please continue, Benjamin. You do have a lot of explaining to do.

BENJAMIN

This creature you see before you has helped Climate Solutions unlock incredible new technologies that will help us build a space superhighway.

With a wave of his hand, the projected HOLOGRAM is replaced by an image of CYLINDRICAL OBJECTS spaced apart from each other in two columns for as far as can be seen with stars in the background.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

I call it the Spacestream! And with all of your connections and power on our humble, trash-heap of a planet, you can make this design a reality.

Mysterious Guest #1 strokes his chin, the pixels blurry.

MYSTERIOUS GUEST #1

You've been planning this for some time. Why do you need us, and how does David Winters play into all of this?

Again with a showman's flair, Benjamin snaps his fingers, and in front of the SPACESTREAM BUOYS, a SPACESHIP emblazoned with a U.C.E. flag appears.

The United Countries of Earth flag has a blue star-filled background and in the left corner, a fist with each finger representing the top five countries against a red square. The base of the fist represents the United States.

BENJAMIN

We need David to help spark a war that will make the unification of our countries possible.

Mysterious Guest #4 scratches his head.

MYSTERIOUS GUEST #4

But millions of people believe in him.

BENJAMIN

Wait'll they see realistic-looking holograms of him out in the world doing very naughty things. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we've got all the ingredients we need to start a new world order. And what better way to do that than with a new Earth.

Benjamin waves his hands, and the HOLOGRAM SPACESHIP with the U.C.E. flag soars through the SPACESTREAM BUOYS at a blinding speed that causes a flash.

Once the flash resolves back into a star-filled sky, the SPACESHIP stops in the orbit of a PLANET that appears Earth-like and yet, without a doubt, has different land masses.

Applause erupts one by one, first with Mysterious Guest #1 and down the line in a ripple effect to Mysterious Guest #5.

All five still stand and applaud as Benjamin grins behind his suit's helmet.

FADE OUT

THE END