FOOD CHAIN

FADE IN:

INT. PERSONAL SPACE CRAFT 8722 - SPACE

A crackly static filled screen.

Someone hits the camera and it flickers on.

DAN RATHBONE with his three day stubble sits and stares into the screen.

DAN

Hello.

The static comes back.

DAN [O.S.]

Shit.

Another slap, this time harder and Dan comes back into view.

DAN (to camera) This is Captain Daniel Rathbone of PSC 8722. It is 7am on the 14th of July 2027 and I am preparing to land at the harvest site on Bruce Willis And there is absolutely nothing to report.

Dan's hand moves towards the camera and turns an unseen switch.

DAN (cont'd) Over and out.

Dan slides his wheeled chair over to a bank of control panels and makes a few checks, seemingly unaware that he is still on camera.

He writes numbers down in logbooks and takes the occasional slurp from a coffee mug.

A light flashes on the panel and and David Bowie's SPACE ODDITY blares from an unseen speaker.

Dan flicks a switch and his pretty wife RACHEL RATHBONE comes into view as a projected image that covers the entire wall of panels.

DAN (cont'd) Morning honey, you sleep okay?

RACHEL You know I can never sleep when you are not here. Have you landed yet?

DAN Just getting ready now. Should be good to turn this crate around by tonight.

RACHEL I'll keep the bed warm then.

Rachel appears to have just come out of the shower, she dries her hair as they talk.

DAN Hey, you know you could drop that towel for me and we could--

Dan stands up and begins to slide his belt off.

SAM

Hi Dad!

He spits his coffee over the desk when his 9 year old son SAM comes into view. Rachel grins, Dan give her the evils.

DAN Well hi Sam, how are you buddy? Where's Amy?

SAM I'm okay, Amy's been sick.

DAN Hun, she okay?

RACHEL

She'll be fine, just a flu. I'm gonna go dry my hair but Sam needs your help with his homework.

DAN Talk later babe. What do you need then tiger?

SAM I need to know about the war, you know how it all started and stuff. DAN I've told you all this before. Don't you remember?

Sam just shakes his head.

DAN (cont'd) Remember the virus?

Sam screws up his face in concentration...finally, a shake of his head.

Dan SIGHS, and turns his head to the circular window to his side.

EXT. PERSONAL SPACE CRAFT 8722 - SPACE

The small, battered craft seems to float in the black void. Dan's face, still visible in the window.

> DAN [O.S.] The attack in 2010, Sam. That's how it all began.

INT. PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Alive with life. The sun glistens through the water from above.

The bottom of a ship nearby. Something falls from it, sinks down fast.

A large, unmarked container falls to the sea bed and joins thousands others.

DAN [V.O.] They started with the water...with the fish.

A SHIP ENGINE starts and the ship moves away.

Moments pass...then the containers explode as one.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Pigs feed from troths.

Cows graze on the grass.

DAN [V.O.] Whatever the hell was in that explosion infected the world's entire water supply. Nobody realized -- not till it was too late anyway.

LATER

All the animals lie dead.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A LARGE PILE OF CHICKENS. A MAN WITH A FLAME THROWER INCINERATES THEM.

- A BUTCHERS SHOP. A 'CLOSED' SIGN ON THE WINDOW.

DAN [V.O.] The world was starving -- it was dying, Sam, understand?

SAM [V.O.] Yeah, but I need to know about the war.

- A RIOT.

DAN [V.O.] I'm getting to it.

END SERIES OF SHOTS.

EXT. RICE FIELDS - CHINA - DAY

The lush, long rice plants as far as the eye can see. They swing in the breeze.

DAN(V.O.) People discovered that rice was not infected. Obviously, the price went through the roof and China became even more of a super power.

The sun burns with fury in the sky.

DAN [V.O.] Of course, the West wouldn't have that. EXT. BATTLEFIELD - CHINA - NIGHT

Fire everywhere. EXPLOSIONS. The heart of a war.

DAN [V.O.] It was World War Three and, as predicted, the worst of the lot.

INT. PERSONAL SPACE CRAFT 8722 - BACK TO PRESENT

Dan turns to the screen. Sam furiously writes notes, tongue protruding out of the side of his mouth in concentration.

Dan smiles, wiping his tired face with both hands.

DAN That enough to get you started, kid?

Sam looks through the screen. Nods.

DAN (cont'd) Well good luck with it, say goodbye to Mommy will ya?

Dan looks back out the window. The ship approaches a blue-gray comet.

SAM Love you, Daddy.

Dan's eyes now in full concentration, still on the window.

DAN (absently) Yeah, I'll bring one back for ya.

Dan shuts the screen down and the image fades to nothing.

His attention grabbed by the camera he stares directly into the screen.

DAN (cont'd) (to camera) You useless piece of shit.

Annoyed, He reaches behind and the screen fades to black.

EXT. COMET WILLIS

SHOULDER CAM VIEW - BLACK AND WHITE GRAINY FOOTAGE.

An over the shoulder view of Comet Willis as Dan drives a vehicle down the ramp and onto the comet's dusty surface.

The only sound is the whining of the truck's electric engine and Dan's labored breaths.

Planet Earth looms large over the horizon. It appears that Dan is not that far from home.

He makes his way carefully to a nearby rocky outcrop.

Hidden amongst the shadows of the rock is the entrance to a cave, with no hesitation he plunges forward into the darkness.

INT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

A light comes on and illuminates the scene in front of him. The giant cave goes back as far as the eye can see and probably even further than that.

The truck stops and Dan jumps out and onto the ground.

The floor is covered odd shaped objects. Like plants protruding from bulbs, thousands sit on the floor, side by side on rows as if ready for planting by a farmer.

Dan's hand reaches out and picks one up, he holds it up in front of him for a moment.

He tosses it into one of the large empty container that he has towed into the cave.

A noise from somewhere in the shadows.

Dan ducks down on the floor scanning the edge of the lit area. Is that something moving up ahead?

Probably not.

He stands back up and gets to work. Quickly and efficiently plucks bulbs from the floor and tosses them into the containers.

Something moves directly in front of him.

He freezes.

A noise behind him.

He spins around, a dark shadow bears down on him.

A primal sound, almost a SCREAM, almost mechanical.

Dan is knocked to the floor.

He lies on the floor, heavy, labored breaths...the sound of real fear.

Whatever is was it doesn't come back.

EXT. COMET WILLIS

Dan pilots the truck quickly up the ramp and into the belly of the space ship.

His breath still deep and heavy.

He climbs out the truck, approaches the wall and pulls a handle firmly down. The ramp folds in on itself as the door slams shut firmly.

He looks at the five coupled containers, each full to the brim of the bulbs.

DAN This better be worth it.

He exits the hold.

INT. PERSONAL SPACE CRAFT 8722

The screen flickers on and Dan stares at the camera, coffee mug in hand.

DAN (to camera) This is Captain Daniel Rathbone of PSC 8722. It is 8pm on the 14th of July 2027. I have finished loading my cargo and am now charting a course for Earth...for home.

He picks up his mug and places it to his lips, considers...

DAN (cont'd) This might sound a little crazy--

Something falls on top of him from above and sends both him and the coffee to the floor.

Dan stands up and wipes himself down. He bends over and picks up a large metal plate, he looks up above him and shakes his head.

He leaves the field of vision.

When Dan returns he is carrying a wrench. He grabs the plate and jumps up on the chair. Only his legs are visible as he fixes the plate back in place.

DAN [O.S.]

Shit.

The wrench lands on the desk in front of the camera with a loud metallic clatter.

Dan jumps down from the chair, picks up the wrench and stares at it.

INT. PERSONAL SPACE CRAFT 8722 - DAY - FLASHBACK

The wrench tightens a bolt on one of the panels.

Dan sits back, letting out a satisfied sigh. His sleeveless t-shirt drenched in sweat.

RACHEL (O.S.) How's it going, sweetheart?

Dan wipes his face with his hands and stands up. Walks to the door.

INT. RATHBONE'S HOUSE, GARAGE - DAY

The craft barely fits in the small, basic garage.

Rachel stands at the door. Watches Dan walk out of the craft.

DAN Not bad. Think it should be just about ready to go.

Rachel curves an eyebrow, letting out a sneer.

RACHEL You're crazy, that thing?

Dan smiles and walks over to her. Wraps her in his arms.

DAN Gotta have a little faith with things the way they are, sweet cheeks.

Rachel laughs. Dan starts to dance with her. Rachel stops him. Her expression hardens.

RACHEL

What are we gonna do, Dan?

Dan looks her dead in the eyes.

DAN We're gonna be fine honey, trust me, just fine.

He kisses her on the cheek.

DAN (cont'd) I'll find something.

Sam runs through. Jumps into Dan's arms.

DAN (cont'd) Hey tiger!

Dan holds him up, tight to his body. Dan and Rachel share a look.

INT. PERSONAL SPACE CRAFT 8722 - BACK TO PRESENT

The camera is on but nobody is home.

Dan eventually appears and places two of the space onions on his desk. He leans back in his chair and begins removing the plantlike structure from one of them.

He pulls out a knife and peels it.

A loud BLEEP from the console behind him. Dan turns to face the console and flicks a switch.

The screen re-appears and Rachel is there.

RACHEL Hi hun, sorry for this but it has been a hell of a day. The kids are both sick now and I am starting to feel bad. It has just gone seven and I am going to bed now, hence this message. Dan looks on with slight concern, still peeling the onion.

RACHEL (cont'd) Doc Maguire said he will drop by in the morning, says there is a bug going around, nothing to worry about. I will call you in the morning. Love you.

DAN

Love you too.

Dan moves to turn off the screen.

RACHEL

Oh, nearly forgot. Your brother says he has found a buyer for a thousand at \$50 each. He said it would cheer you up. Don't forget to save some for us, we are nearly out. Speak to you in the morning.

Rachel's image is frozen on the screen. Dan touches her face for a moment and then turns the screen off.

He presses another button and Bruce Springsteen starts singing BORN IN THE USA. He puts his feet up on the table and cuts a large chunk from the onion and wolfs it down greedily.

> DAN (to himself) Fifty bucks! We're in the big time now Danny boy.

The other space onion sits on the desk waiting its turn.

INT. RATHBONE HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

A space onion sits on a bench.

Rachel stands opposite it, as far away as possible. Her gaze somewhere between curiosity and disgust.

RACHEL You want me to eat that?

Dan walks through with a box in his arms, filled to the top with the space onions. Puts the box down and walks to her.

DAN There's hundreds of them up there, Rach -- thousands even. They taste good too...real good.

Dan walks to the bench and grabs a knife. Cuts a section from the space onion. Turns and walks back over. Takes a bite in front of Rachel's horrified face.

> DAN (cont'd) See? Have a taste.

He holds the other half to her lips.

She hesitates...takes a tiny nibble...chews...

...her eyes light up as she eats the rest. Walks over to the bench and grabs the space onion. Gobbles it up in a flash.

Dan walks over and wraps his arms around her as she takes another space onion from the box. He laughs.

> RACHEL (mouth full) These are delicious.

Dan laughs harder.

Sam and AMY walk through.

AMY What's going on?

Dan and Rachel turn to face them, smiling ear to ear.

DAN Everything's gonna be fine now, kids. Okay?

Sam and Amy step closer. Dan grabs two space onions and hands them to his children.

DAN (cont'd) We got all the food we're ever gonna need now. Eat up.

They both take one. Amy glances up to her mother, while Sam takes a big bite. Rachel smiles and nods.

RACHEL

It's okay honey, eat it all up.

She hesitates, gazing at the onion. Sinks her teeth into it.

INT. PERSONAL SPACE CRAFT 8722 - BACK TO PRESENT The screen flickers to life and Dan is back at his desk. He looks like shit.

> DAN (to camera) This is Captain Daniel Rathbone of PSC 8722. It is..

Dan looks at his watch but strains to see it clearly.

DAN (cont'd) (to camera) ..Oh fuck it. I am approaching Earth and have engaged auto-pilot for my descent. The ground station can bring me in. I have caught some kind of bug from my kids and I am feeling pretty awful...

Dan's face turns to panic.

DAN (cont'd) (to camera) Excuse me.

He runs out of frame.

The sound of Dan vomiting violently.

He comes back and sits down at his desk.

DAN (cont'd) (to camera) This is a bad one all right..

SPACE ODDITY blares out of the speakers.

DAN (cont'd) (to camera) ..That'll be the little woman.

He flicks the switch and the screen pops into life. Rachel looks terrified.

> RACHEL Dan! Dan! Oh my god, oh my god, oh my god--

Dan jumps up, puts his face up to the screen.

DAN Rachel! What's going on?

RACHEL Dan, they are coming in, they're fucking coming in!

The sound of a door being smashed in. Rachel SCREAMS. Something grabs her and pulls her out of view. She SCREAMS again. The screen is reduced to static.

Dan hits a button on the console.

DAN This is PC8722. Pull me in now!

GROUND CONTROL Negative, you have not reached altitude yet.

DAN I don't fucking care! Pull me in now! this is an emergency.

GROUND CONTROL Your call. Prepare for a bumpy one.

The ship shudders. Dan is thrown to the floor.

He SCREAMS in pain.

He stands up and clutches his stomach.

Falls back against the console, rips of his shirt.

Something is growing inside his stomach...expanding...trying to get out.

Have you seen Alien? Well then you know what happens next...

The Alien bursts through Dan's stomach.

Blood and viscera splatter everywhere. Everything is now viewed through a rose tinted lens.

Dan's body slumps down on the desk as the alien pulls itself full out of his stomach and emits a blood curdling SCREAM.

The Alien grows rapidly once free of Dan's stomach, its dark green skin ripples as muscles form all over its body.

The Alien stands up and towers over Dan's limp body.

Close to death, Dan watches in horror as the Alien takes on his own shape and features.

It is Dan now, only taller, stronger and a shade more green.

The Alien lowers his head towards Dan and takes a bite from his shoulder.

It seems to like the taste and dives down for another bite.

The screen fades to black as the opening chords of BORN IN THE USA begin to play...

SUPER: THE END

The sound of APPLAUSE, WHISTLES and LAUGHS.

Born down in a dead man's town...The first kick I took was when I hit the ground...

SUPER: AND THE BEGINNING

INT. ROXY THEATER

The theater is packed, the audience are on their feet wild with excitement, claps and cheers wrestle with the sound of The Boss...

...You end up like a dog that's been beat up too much...'Till you spend half your life just covering up...

Everyone in the theater is a shade of green, webbed fingers clap in appreciation of the movie.

...Born in the USA...I was born in the USA...

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

The cinema doors fly open and the Aliens fill the streets... they talk, laugh and joke with each other.

Above them the large sign glows bright in the night sky...

ROXY THEATER - WORLD PREMIER

BIRTH OF A NATION - HOW WE SOLVED OUR FOOD SHORTAGE

COMING NEXT WEEK: JACK AMSTERDAM - THE DIRECTORS CUT

...Born in the USA...I was born in the USA... The CHATTER and LAUGHTER carry on as we... FADE OUT: