

PACIFIC NORTH

By

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INT. BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

The prime minister of Queensland, MR. BERNARD LEHMAN (65), speaks on a podium about an upcoming plan his country is committing to. Next to him on either side are TRICOLOR FLAGS representing his country, three horizontal bands colored blue white and green. Filling the room are REPORTERS listening to his speech. Standing behind him are the VICE PRESIDENT and the SECRETARY OF STATE.

PRIME MINISTER

Thank you for joining us.

Throughout our country's history we have endured many obstacles and overcome many challenges, but none is greater than the one we are facing today... our ever increasing demand for energy, coupled with the fast dwindling supply of it.

(pause)

We are a nation of achievers and great thinkers, and no achievement will be greater than being able to find a creative solution to our problem of not having a sustainable source of clean and reliable power. That is why we are setting ourselves the goal of launching a probe into the biggest source of energy that we know of -- our sun. We are planning on finding more efficient ways to extract solar energy directly from the sun, without the constraints and obstacles imposed by the earth's atmosphere, such as clouds and the ozone layer. We have named this mission "Project Metropolis".

(MORE)

PRIME MINISTER (CONT'D)

By the end of this year, we hope to launch a satellite equipped with special capabilities to harness the sun's energy and safely bring it back to earth. This will not be an easy task and it will require a lot of dedication. However, we firmly believe that it is worth the effort --

CUT TO:

INT. RESEARCH CENTER - DAY

SCOTT GINSBERG (48) and his colleague COLIN BARNETT (45) are in a research room along with several other researchers. They are surrounded by COMPUTER MONITORS displaying VARIOUS IMAGES OF THE SUN, GRAPHS and STATISTICS. We can hear in the background the prime minister's speech being televised.

PRIME MINISTER'S VOICE

...Not only for our great country,
but for the good of mankind, and
for generations to come.

(pause)

Thank you all very much.

Scott and his colleague are both intensely looking into the same monitor screen containing a SIMULATION OF THE SUN, immersed in their research.

COLIN

Get a load of that.

SCOTT

You have to be insane to think
that this can be done in a year.

COLIN

He's a politician. What do you expect?

SCOTT

From the way he makes it sound, my thirteen year old can do this.

Colin turns to Scott, surprised by his comment.

COLIN

We've known each other for three years and not once did you tell me you had a son.

SCOTT

(dismissive)

You never asked.

COLIN

I guess you're right. But, still... Anyway, have you looked at the data for the charged particles?

SCOTT

(flips over documents)

Yeah. Two million miles per hour.

COLIN

Whoa... good luck putting a satellite anywhere near that thing.

SCOTT

I reckon the flares will be a problem.

COLIN

Damn right they will.

SCOTT

So, when are they gonna build that thing?

COLIN

I don't know... I think they're waiting for approval.

SCOTT

From who?

COLIN

The administrator.

Scott looks at Colin, confused.

SCOTT

Don't you mean the director?

COLIN

What did I say?

SCOTT

Administrator.

COLIN

I meant the director.

Scott yawns and stretches his arms.

SCOTT

It's been a long day.

COLIN

Go get some rest.

SCOTT

What about you?

COLIN

I'll be here for a while.

Scott picks up his coat from the back of his chair and puts it on.

SCOTT

I'll see you tomorrow.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

LENNY (13) is playing catch in the snow with his friend TRENT (13) in a rural residential street. There is at least six inches of snow blanketing the street. The two boys THROW A FOOTBALL back and forth to one another at an ever increasing distance. They are having a blast. Lenny throws the ball a little too far and it winds up going over the fence into the house of his neighbor PHIL FAIRFAX, a balding thirty-something year old man with childlike qualities.

LENNY

Damn it!

TRENT

What are we gonna do?

LENNY

We have to go get it.

TRENT

Oh, man... I don't like this guy.

LENNY

Me neither...

TRENT

Remember what happened last time?
He said if we ever go near his
house, he's gonna call the cops on
us.

LENNY

Screw him. He's probably not home.
I'll go.

Lenny CLIMBS over the SHORT PICKET FENCE, while Trent stays on the lookout.

EXT. PHIL'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Once inside of Phil's property, Lenny cautiously walks around looking for the football. The ball is within sight when out of nowhere a GERMAN SHEPARD comes BARKING toward him. Lenny frantically tries to escape, but SLIPS and FALLS on ice.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Scott is driving home on his way back from work, listening to calm classical music. Snow is falling heavily and the road is covered in it.

CUT TO:

EXT. PHIL'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

The dog is barking loudly and about to bite Lenny when Phil calmly comes out of his house.

PHIL

Aria, come here.

The dog goes running to its owner.

PHIL (CONT'D)

The main lesson to be learned here is -- don't go into other people's property.

LENNY

(distracted, brushing off snow)
Have you ever heard of a leash?

PHIL

If anybody needs a leash, it's you.

LENNY

I don't know who's worse, you or your dog.

PHIL

Watch it, you little prick.
Remember, I'm the one who saved
your life.

LENNY

I doubt it...

PHIL

Why are you in my house?

LENNY

I need my ball.

PHIL

I don't know what to tell you. I
don't have your ball.

LENNY

I saw it just a minute ago. What
did you do to it?

PHIL

You must've been hallucinating.
Get out of my house.

LENNY

(aggravated)

No, I need my ball!

EXT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Scott pulls into the driveway of his modest house and exits
his truck. He sees Trent standing nearby with a look of
despair.

SCOTT

Hey, Trent. Where's Lenny?

TRENT

We accidentally threw a ball into
Phil's house.

Alarmed, Scott goes to Phil's house.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - CONTINUOUS

He sees Lenny and Phil struggling over the fence. Lenny is attempting to push past Phil in order to retrieve his ball, but Phil is stubbornly blocking his way.

LENNY
(yells, angry)
Give me the ball!

Scott interrupts.

SCOTT
(to Phil)
Hey!

Surprised, Phil looks up at Scott.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Give him his ball.

Phil begrudgingly gives back Lenny his ball.

SCOTT
Lenny, come over here.

Lenny hops the fence out of Phil's backyard and goes to his dad.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
What did I tell you about going to
this guy's house?

LENNY
What was I supposed to do? I
needed my ball.

SCOTT
I can always buy you another ball.
All you have to do is ask.

LENNY
(remorseful)
Sorry, dad.

SCOTT

(jokes)

You should learn how to throw.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER NIGHT

Scott and Lenny are having dinner and talking about their day.

SCOTT

Did you watch the news?

LENNY

No. Why?

SCOTT

The prime minister gave a speech today... about the project I'm working on...

LENNY

The mission to the moon?

SCOTT

The sun.

LENNY

Oh, yeah.

SCOTT

We're going to send a satellite to the sun so we can harness its energy. How cool is that?

LENNY

That sounds really cool.

SCOTT

This year I'll be really busy working on this project. I'm probably not going to be home a lot... I see you and Trent are getting along.

LENNY

Yeah.

SCOTT

He seems like a great kid.

LENNY

He is.

Brief silence as they chew their food.

SCOTT

So, how was school?

LENNY

It was okay. We're having the next few days off.

SCOTT

How come?

LENNY

Because of the snow.

SCOTT

What do you plan on doing?

LENNY

I don't know... ride my snowmobile, maybe..

SCOTT

Great. Your mom wants to see you this week.

LENNY

Is she coming over?

SCOTT

No. She says she can't because her car is not working. She wanted me to drive you there, but the thing is -- I don't have much time.

LENNY

How long does it take to drive there?

SCOTT

Very long. More than four hours.

INT. TRAILER HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

We are inside a cramped trailer home. A BABY CRIES in the background as a woman, STACEY PICHETTE (41), dials a number on her phone. Her overweight husband, JACK (39), tries to comfort the baby.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Scott's phone rings and he looks at the called ID.

SCOTT

What do you know? It's her.

Scott answers the call.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Hello?

INT. TRAILER HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

STACEY

Hey, Scott. How are you?

SCOTT'S VOICE

I'm fine. We were just talking about you. I told Lenny you wanted to see him.

STACEY

That's the reason I'm calling... So, are you going to be able to bring him?

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Scott briefly leaves the dining table with the phone.

SCOTT

Actually, I don't think I can. I have a really busy schedule. I'm working pretty much everyday for the next several months.

STACEY'S VOICE

Yeah, well, my car is still broken.

SCOTT

What about -- your husband?

INT. TRAILER HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stacey turns to look at her deadbeat husband, who is playing with the baby.

STACEY

He doesn't have a car.

SCOTT'S VOICE

I see... Well, I don't know. We'll figure something out.

STACEY

Is he with you right now?

SCOTT'S VOICE

Yeah, he's here. Do you want to speak to him?

STACEY

Let me talk to him.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Scott gives the phone to Lenny.

LENNY

(into phone)

Hello?

STACEY'S VOICE

How are you sweetie?

LENNY

Hey, mom. I'm doing fine.

STACEY'S VOICE

I really miss you.

LENNY

I miss you too, mom.

INT. TRAILER HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

STACEY

I really wanted to see you, but my car needs to be fixed before I can drive over there. It's a long drive.

LENNY'S VOICE

Yeah...

STACEY

It's so good to hear your voice. It's not going to be very long before I come over. I'm really excited to see you.

LENNY'S VOICE

I want to see you too, mom.

STACEY

Hang in there. Okay, sweetie? I'll find a way to get there as soon as possible.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

LENNY

Okay.

STACEY'S VOICE

Okay, sweetie. I'll see you soon.
I love you. Give the phone to your
dad.

LENNY

I love you too, mom. Bye.

Lenny hands the phone back to his father.

SCOTT

(into phone)

You can always take the bus.

STACEY'S VOICE

If all else fails, I'll take the
bus.

SCOTT

It would have been nice if you
didn't live so damn far away.

INT. TRAILER HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

STACEY

Yeah, well, what can you do? I
would have also preferred that.

SCOTT'S VOICE

Well, it was great talking to you,
Stacey.

STACEY

Yeah, you too.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SCOTT

Stop by whenever you can.

STACEY'S VOICE

Okay. Will do.

SCOTT

Alright. Bye.

Scott hangs up the phone.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - GARAGE - LATER

Scott watches Lenny as he inspects a SNOWMOBILE. He sees Lenny kneeling down to closely examine the track.

SCOTT

What's wrong with it?

LENNY

The track. It's torn.

Upon closer look, Scott can see that several lugs are torn off the track of the snowmobile.

SCOTT

I have a solution.

Scott reaches into a TOOL BOX and pulls out a RUBBER CEMENT TUBE.

LENNY

What's that?

SCOTT

Shoe glue. It's flexible and it won't crack.

Scott uses a FLOOR JACK to lift the rear of the snowmobile and applies the glue on the torn areas of the track.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Let it dry overnight.

Scott and Lenny turn the light off and leave the garage.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

The sound of a PHONE ALARM wakes Scott from his sleep.

He reluctantly gets up from his bed and walks to the bathroom.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Scott brushes his teeth and rinses his mouth in front of a mirror.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dressed for work, Scott checks on Lenny in his room, but he's not there.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

With a corrugated coffee cup in hand, Scott walks in the garage and sees Lenny working on his snowmobile. He takes sips from the cup periodically.

SCOTT

Good morning.

LENNY

Hey.

SCOTT

Did it dry?

LENNY

Yeah.

SCOTT

Good. I'm off to work.

LENNY

Okay.

SCOTT

Will you be okay?

LENNY

Yeah, I'll be fine.

SCOTT

Are you going to ride your snowmobile today?

LENNY

Yeah. Probably.

SCOTT

Don't go too far, okay?

LENNY

I won't.

SCOTT

If you need anything, give me a call.

LENNY

Okay, dad.

SCOTT

Okay, I'll see you later.

LENNY

Later.

Scott leaves the garage. Through the open garage door, Lenny watches him pull out of the driveway and drive away.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - LENNY'S ROOM - LATER

Lenny fills a BACKPACK with SNACKS, several WATER BOTTLES, a FOLDED BLANKET, a FIRST AID KIT, a MULTI-TOOL and a COMPASS. He unfolds a PIECE OF PAPER CONTAINING A MAP and studies it. He folds it back and puts it into the bag. He puts on a winter coat and a pair of gloves.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

While wearing the backpack, he takes his snowmobile out of the garage.

EXT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

He closes the garage door. He turns around and sees Trent standing in front of him.

TRENT

Where are you going?

LENNY

I'm going to my mom's house...

TENT

(confused)

Your mom's house?

LENNY

Yeah. I didn't tell my dad because he might freak out. If he asks, tell him I'm okay and I'll be back soon.

TRENT

You're crazy. What if you get lost?

LENNY

No, I won't get lost.

TRENT

I would go with you, but my parents would kill me.

LENNY

It's okay. You have no reason to go. Your parents don't live hundreds of miles from each other.

TRENT

I wish I could tell you that I understand what you mean, but --

LENNY

Your parents aren't divorced.

TRENT

Yeah...

LENNY

I'll be back in a few days.

TRENT

Okay, man. Take care of yourself.

LENNY

I will.

Trent watches Lenny drive his snowmobile far into the distance.

CLOSE-UP. TV SCREEN

A crowd erupts in cheer as a male game show HOST appears on a stage. Searchlights illuminate the arena, in a disco-like atmosphere. A panel of THREE JUDGES sits in front of the stage and ROWS OF SPECTATORS fill the auditorium.

HOST

(exclaims)

Tonight, you have the power to decide who leaves and who stays. Our contestants are here to give it all they've got, because they have come here to answer the question..."who wants to be a star?"!

The crowd cheers as the title of the show "WHO WANTS TO BE A STAR?" is displayed across the screen.

HOST (CONT'D)

Tonight, our first contestant, a young woman from a small town who always dreamt of making it big, gifted with a beautiful voice and an incredible drive, please give it up for Kristen Hedin!

The crowd gives a round of applause as a FEMALE CONTESTANT comes to the stage. She is slightly nervous but powers through. She waits for the judges to give her the go-ahead.

FIRST JUDGE

So, what are you going to perform for us tonight?

FEMALE CONTESTANT

I will be singing "Rain or shine"
by Abelle.

FIRST JUDGE

That sounds great.

SECOND JUDGE

Before we start, I want to ask:
why do you want to be a star?

FEMALE CONTESTANT

I want to be a star because I want
people to like me. Plus, I want to
be rich.

The woman giggles and the crowd laughs.

SECOND JUDGE

Okay. Show us what you've got.

The contestant begins signing in a beautiful voice,
captivating the audience.

FEMALE CONTESTANT

(sings)

When the bright lights go out
And I am alone in the night
I know that you're here with me
That you'll always be by my side
No matter the distance
Whatever the weather
You'll always be my lover
And you won't break my heart
Rain or shine
You're my lover
Rain or shine
You're in my heart

INT. RESEARCH CENTER - DAY

Scott arrives at work to find Colin already there, fixated on a computer screen displaying pie charts and various statistics. Scott takes off his coat and puts it on the back of his chair.

SCOTT

Jesus, you've been up all night?

COLIN

No. I just got here, actually.
Check this out.

Colin points to data on the computer screen.

COLIN (CONT'D)

There's been a massive explosion
on the surface.

SCOTT

How strong?

COLIN

A hundred million K.

SCOTT

Whoa... that's incredible. Will it
damage the satellite?

COLIN

Most certainly. The X ray and
gamma ray particles will.

SCOTT

So, we have very little option.
Either have it far away or we have
to find a way for it to be
protected from these elements.

COLIN

Exactly.

SCOTT

And we absolutely can't afford to lose energy. That leaves only one choice...

COLIN

Protect from radiations.

As he turns to the monitor, Scott notices a tab on a browser and clicks on it. A WEBSITE CONTAINING THE PHOTO OF A MAN IN A LAB COAT WEARING GLASSES AND AN ARTICLE appears. Scott reads the content out loud.

SCOTT

(reads)

"Dr. Ross Bugarin, theory of Dianexus."

He turns to Colin. Colin is somewhat apprehensive.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

What's this?

COLIN

It's nothing. I'm taking a psychology class.

SCOTT

Oh, right on.

Scott promptly exits the website and begins his research. He speaks as he types.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

You won't believe who called me yesterday.

COLIN

Who?

SCOTT

My ex-wife.

COLIN

What the hell for?

SCOTT

Apparently she wants to see her son. She says her husband doesn't have a car and she wants me to drive him there. Five hour drive.

COLIN

What did you say?

SCOTT

I said no way. Would you?

COLIN

(adamant)

Hell no.

SCOTT

She's planning on coming over in a few days. Oddly enough, I kind of want to see her. But I'm sure not as much as my son.

CUT TO:

EXT. SNOWY ROAD - DAY

Lenny drives his snowmobile through a desolate and snowy landscape. There is nothing around him except snow covered trees and his own shadow.

CLOSE-UP. TV SCREEN

The theme music for "WHO WANTS TO BE A STAR?" plays. The host appears on stage after the last performance.

HOST

Our next contestant is a gentleman who believes - through his moves - has what it takes to become a star. Please welcome Hong Liu!

A frail looking young man steps onto the stage.

SECOND JUDGE

So, Hong, what made you want to be
a star?

MALE CONTESTANT

I grew up watching music videos
and I've always wanted to be a
good dancer.

THIRD JUDGE

It sure won't hurt with the
ladies, am I right?

MALE CONTESTANT

(chuckles)
That's right.

SECOND JUDGE

Okay, off you go.

Electronic dance music begins playing and the contestant starts to perform well choreographed robotic dance moves. The crowd cheers him on and the judges all have smiles on their faces.

INT. OLD SEDAN - DAY

Stacey is inside of her old beat-up sedan attempting to start the engine, which only results in a faint clicking sound. She attempts repeatedly, but fails. Through the window, we can see her husband standing next to the car with their baby in his arms. Frustrated, she HITS the steering wheel with her fist, accidentally honking the horn.

STACEY

Dammit!

She notices her husband wanting to speak to her and she cracks open the door.

JACK

Check the battery.

STACEY

It's not the battery. I already checked.

JACK

Let me try.

EXT. TRAILER HOME - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Stacey steps out of the car and after handing her the baby, Jack goes in.

INT. OLD SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Jack repeatedly attempts to start the car, but is unable. He suddenly comes to a realization.

JACK

It's the starter.

EXT. TRAILER HOME - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jack is underneath the car with the car lifted on jack stands. Using a ratchet he removes several bolts and takes out the RUSTY STARTER MOTOR.

INT. TRAILER HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack tosses the rusty starter on the table, in front of Stacey.

JACK

We need a replacement.

STACEY

Who's gonna buy it?

JACK

I was hoping you would.

STACEY

That's sad. You can't even afford something that costs a hundred bucks. Maybe if you had a job, you wouldn't have this problem.

Jack is noticeably upset by Stacey's remarks.

JACK

That's very rude of you. I'm trying to help you here. I'm trying to fix your car.

STACEY

I'm trying to help you too, Jack. I can't stand to see you like this.

JACK

You really hurt my feelings, you know that?

STACEY

I'm sorry, Jack. I didn't mean to.

Stacey briefly goes to the bedroom and returns with a wad of cash in her hand, which she hands him.

STACEY (CONT'D)

Here. Go buy it.

EXT. SNOWY ROAD - DAY

Lenny stops his snowmobile in the middle of nowhere and unzips his backpack. He takes out the map and looks over it carefully, and looks at his surroundings to make sure he's on the right path. HE LOOKS AT HIS PHONE AND REALIZES THE BATTERY IS DEAD. He eats some snacks, drinks water and continues his journey.

INT. RESEARCH CENTER - DAY

Scott and Colin are chatting away their hours, paying little attention to their work.

COLIN

The prime minister is making a surprise visit.

SCOTT

That bastard! When?

COLIN

It's a surprise. It could be next week or in two weeks. We're supposed to be on top of our game, if you will.

SCOTT

Yeah. They want us to wither and die.

COLIN

They don't pay us enough.

SCOTT

No. Not at all.

(beat)

So, what the hell does he want?

COLIN

He wants to check our progress.

SCOTT

Why doesn't he do it himself?

COLIN

(sarcastic)

That's asking too much.

Colin notices movement in the simulation on the computer screen. He quickly reads the data.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Sixteen Z for the arrival of the CME.

Scott takes a look at the data on the screen.

INT. TRAILER HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jack enters the trailer home with a small package in his hand. Stacey greets him with the baby in her arms, whom she's feeding milk with a baby bottle.

JACK

Here it is. A brand new starter.

STACEY

Well, are you gonna install it?

JACK

Yes, I am.

EXT. TRAILER HOME - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jack lays underneath the car and installs the new starter.

INT. OLD SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

He gets in the driver's seat and turns the ignition key. The car ROARS TO LIFE. Through the windshield, he can see Stacey by the door looking on with excitement. He turns the ignition off.

EXT. TRAILER HOME - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Satisfied, he exits the car and hands the key to Stacey.

JACK

There you are.

STACEY

Thank you so much.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Scott pulls into his driveway and powers off the engine. He stays in the car for a while gathering his thoughts. He looks out the window and can sense something is amiss.

EXT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

He exits his truck and enters the house.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Scott looks around the living room and Lenny is nowhere to be seen. He calls out his name.

SCOTT

Lenny?!

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

He checks Lenny's room and discovers he's not there.

EXT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

He comes out to the backyard, but can't find him there either.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He calls Lenny's phone repeatedly, but it goes straight to voicemail. Finally, he decides to call Trent.

INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Trent is in his room playing the drum when his phone rings. He answers the call.

TRENT

Hello?

SCOTT'S VOICE

Trent. This is Scott.

TRENT

Oh, hey Scott.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SCOTT

Have you seen Lenny?

TRENT'S VOICE

Yeah. I talked to him earlier.

SCOTT

What did he tell you?

There is a look of horror on Scott's face as he listens.

TRENT'S VOICE

He said he was going to his mom's house. He said not to worry and he'll be back in a few days.

SCOTT

Okay. Thanks, Trent. I'll talk to you later.

TRENT'S VOICE

Okay.

Scott hangs up the phone and immediately calls Stacey.

INT. TRAILER HOME - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stacey is having lunch with Jack and their baby is sitting in a rocker between them. Her phone vibrates.

JACK

Who's that?

Stacey looks at the called ID.

STACEY

It's Scott.

JACK

What does he want?

STACEY

No idea.

Stacey answers the call.

STACEY

Hey.

SCOTT'S VOICE

Hey, Stacey. Listen, there's a problem.

STACEY

What's that?

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Scott anxiously paces back and forth, with one hand behind his head.

SCOTT

Lenny decided to go to your house on his own. He won't answer his phone.

STACEY'S VOICE

Oh my god...

SCOTT

Yeah...

STACEY'S VOICE

When did he leave?

SCOTT

I don't know. I think he left this morning, while I was at work.

STACEY'S VOICE

You need to call the cops.

SCOTT

What am I gonna tell them?

STACEY'S VOICE

That he's missing.

SCOTT

Well, he's not really missing. We know where he is. He's on his way to your house.

INT. TRAILER HOME - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

STACEY

(distraught)

He's not gonna make it. He'll die.

SCOTT'S VOICE

Let's hope not.

STACEY

You have to do something!

SCOTT'S VOICE

I'm gonna go look for him.

STACEY

Okay. You look for him and me and Jack will do the same.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

SCOTT

How?

STACEY'S VOICE

My car is fixed.

SCOTT

Okay. Great.

STACEY'S VOICE

If one of us doesn't find him, the other one will.

SCOTT

I really hope so.

INT. TRAILER HOME - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

STACEY

It's okay. It's not the end of the world... We'll be on our way soon.

SCOTT'S VOICE

Keep me posted.

STACEY

Okay, we will.

Jack notices the distress on Stacey's face as she hangs up the phone.

JACK

What's the matter?

STACEY

Lenny had decided to come here on his own.

JACK

You gotta be kidding.

STACEY

No.

JACK

He's gonna freeze to death!

Stacey frowns at Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)

Sorry. So, what are we gonna do?

STACEY

We're gonna go look for him. Get your stuff.

EXT. SNOWY ROAD - DAY

Lenny is plowing through the snow, when all of a sudden the snowmobile GRINDS TO A HALT. He gets off the snowmobile to inspect the problem and realizes the track is still intact. He pries open the side panel and notices the drive belt is broken. Frustrated, he KICKS the snowmobile and the entire side portion breaks. He looks around in despair, but there is no sign of life. He leaves his snowmobile behind and continues his journey on foot.

INT. TRAILER HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Stacey frantically gathers her belongings and rushes out the door. Jack follows her with the baby.

EXT. TRAILER HOME - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

They get into the car and drive away.

EXT. SNOWY ROAD - DAY

Scott is driving his truck while constantly on the lookout for Lenny on the road.

CLOSE-UP. TV SCREEN

A PRESENTER'S voice concludes "WHO WANTS TO BE A STAR?" with an announcement. Giant blocks of the phone number 1-800-452-2765 and a reward amount of \$1,000,000 are displayed across the screen.

PRESENTER

Think you have what it takes to be a star? Call this number and we'll send you an application to become our next contestant. You will have a chance to win one million dollars and the opportunity of a lifetime to become a star!

INT. PHIL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY [CONTINUOUS]

Phil is watching the programme and contemplating when he hears his dog BARK.

EXT. PHIL'S FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

He goes outside and sees Trent attempting to quickly retrieve a football from his property. Another boy stands outside the fence waiting for Trent. Caught off guard, Trent is petrified when he sees Phil and wants to run away. Phil calls out to him.

PHIL

Hey, you!

Trent pauses and turns, expecting the worst.

PHIL (CONT'D)

Do you have any talents?

Trent is relieved to hear the non-threatening tone of Phil's voice.

TRENT

What's it to you?

PHIL

I just wanna know. I mean, are you good at sports or can you sing and dance?

TRENT

No...

PHIL

What are you good at?

Trent pauses to think.

TRENT

I can play the drums.

PHIL

You can play drums? How good are you?

TRENT

Pretty good.

PHIL

Good enough to win a competition?

TRENT

Yeah. I've been to talent shows.

PHIL

Is that right? How would you like
to be on a game show?

TRENT

What kind of game show?

PHIL

"Who wants to be a star?"

TRENT

I would if I could, but I doubt my
parents will let me.

PHIL

No problem. I'll be your
chaperone.

TRENT

(hesitant)

I don't know. I have to think
about it.

PHIL

Just imagine if you win. You'll
become rich... and famous.

There is a twinkle in Trent's eye as he considers the
offer.

EXT. SNOWY ROAD - NIGHT

Lenny wanders through the dark and desolate landscape,
occasionally calling out for people, but there is no
response. He is becoming more desperate and afraid. We can
hear the eerie calls of night owls and the chirping of
crickets. As he continues his journey, he sees light in the
far distance. A sign of civilization.

EXT. FREEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

After some walk he makes it onto a main road.

Cars occasionally pass him by with their headlights glaring in the dark. He continues along the side of the road until he reaches a detour, leading into a long TUNNEL.

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

After walking some distance in the tunnel he reaches a dead end. There is a SIGN WITH AN ARROW POINTING LEFT, into a PARKING GARAGE. He follows the sign.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

There are no cars parked in the garage. He sees the HEAVY STEEL DOOR of a building adjoined to the parking garage. The door has a sign which reads: "ENTER". He manages to open the door and enters the building.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

He finds himself inside a very large and dimly lit cavern about the size of fifty football fields. We can hear the sound of WATER SPLASHING and the MURMURS OF A LARGE CROWD.

Spanning across the middle of the cavern is a LARGE STEEL DRAWBRIDGE. On the opposite end of the bridge in the far distance is what looks like a small village full of light. On either side of the bridge there are large waterfalls, constantly pouring water into the gorge underneath the bridge, accompanied by lush vegetation. Lenny is mystified by the scenery. He turns to look at the heavy steel door from which he entered and realizes it's LOCKED.

EXT. SNOWY ROAD - NIGHT

Scott's truck stops in front of Lenny's abandoned snowmobile. Scott exits his vehicle and sees that the snowmobile's drive belt and side panel are broken. Alarmed, he calls Stacey.

INT. OLD SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Stacey is driving while Jack is in the passenger seat holding the baby on his lap. Her phone rings and she answers.

STACEY

Did you find him?

EXT. SNOWY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

SCOTT

I found his sled.

STACEY'S VOICE

Just his sled?

SCOTT

Yeah. It's broken.

STACEY'S VOICE

Well, where is he?

SCOTT

I don't know.

INT. OLD SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

STACEY

This isn't good, Scott.

SCOTT'S VOICE

I know. I don't know what to do.

STACEY

What do you think happened?

SCOTT'S VOICE

I don't know. Maybe he continued
on foot.

STACEY

You need to file a report.

EXT. SNOWY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

SCOTT

They're gonna tell me to wait
until tomorrow. We have to wait
and see. We have no other choice.

STACEY'S VOICE

What if he doesn't come?

SCOTT

Then I'll file the report. I'm sure he'll find a way. He probably hitched a ride.

INT. OLD SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

STACEY

What if he was picked up by a predator?

SCOTT'S VOICE

Please, let's not think the worst.

STACEY

So, we should probably head back to the house.

SCOTT'S VOICE

Yeah. Go back to the house and wait for him.

STACEY

What about you?

EXT. SNOWY ROAD - CONTINUOUS

SCOTT

I'll be fine. I'll find somewhere to rest.

STACEY'S VOICE

Be careful.

SCOTT

Yeah. I will.

STACEY'S VOICE

Talk to you later.

SCOTT

Bye.

Scott hangs up the phone and takes one last look at his surroundings before heading back into his truck.

INT. OLD SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Stacey makes a U-turn and drives back in the opposite direction. Jack looks at her funny.

JACK

That was a bit long.

STACEY

What was?

JACK

The conversation.

STACEY

Of course. What are you suggesting?

JACK

Nothing. Just putting it out there.

STACEY

(scoffs)

What are you thinking? That I'm cheating on you with my ex-husband?

JACK

(defensive)

I never said that.

STACEY

This is about my son, Jack.

JACK

I know that.

STACEY

This isn't some joke.

JACK

I never said it was.

Long silence.

JACK (CONT'D)

Maybe he found a place to spend the night. He's probably having soup right now.

Stacey looks at him in disbelief.

JACK (CONT'D)

What? I'm serious. You've never seen movies where people welcome strangers into their homes and treat them with kindness?

STACEY

This isn't a movie, Jack. You know what? Let's just stop talking.

JACK

Fine.

INT. CAVERN - NIGHT

Lenny walks around the cavern looking at the various individuals in the crowd. There are men and women, mostly adults. He approaches some of them in order to initiate a conversation, but none of them pay him attention. MEN DRESSED IN ALL BLACK UNIFORMS approach the crowd. They are armed and carrying batons. These are the MODERATORS. One of the moderators, JEFFREY STEFFAN (40), speaks into a megaphone.

JEFFREY

Okay, everyone. It's bedtime.

(MORE)

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

In an orderly fashion slowly make
your way to your tent. No more
than two individuals per tent.

Jeffrey points the crowd to the HUNDREDS OF SMALL TENTS set
up throughout the cavern, while other moderators herd the
crowd to them. Lenny looks on with confusion as Jeffrey
approaches him, no longer speaking on his megaphone.

JEFFREY

Didn't you hear the order?

LENNY

I'm sorry, I don't know where I
am.

JEFFREY

That's not my problem, kid.

LENNY

What is this place?

JEFFREY

You'll find out. Now go over there
and sleep.

Jeffrey points to the tents.

LENNY

But, I don't want to be here.

JEFFREY

I don't think you have any choice.

LENNY

(distracted)

I wanna get out of here.

JEFFREY

(snickers)

There is no getting out. Once
you're here, you either make it or
you don't.

LENNY

Make it where?

Out of patience, Jeffrey DARGS Lenny by the arm and tosses him in one of the tents.

JEFFREY

You'll figure it out...

INT. CAVERN - LENNY'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

Inside the tent Lenny finds an OLD MAN lying on a sleeping bag. There is an empty sleeping bag next to him. The old man is blankly staring into the ceiling, barely noticing Lenny's presence. Lenny introduces himself.

LENNY

Hi, I'm Lenny.

The old man slowly tilts his head to look at Lenny. He speaks in a very low monotone voice, barely audible.

OLD MAN

Hi.

LENNY

What's your name?

OLD MAN

Bruce.

LENNY

Hi, Bruce.

Lenny removes his backpack and lays on the empty sleeping bag.

LENNY (CONT'D)

How long have you been here?

OLD MAN

A while.

LENNY

Do you know why you're here?

OLD MAN

No.

LENNY

I don't know why I'm here, either.
What is this place?

OLD MAN

I don't know.

There is brief silence. Lenny wants to ask something, but is hesitant. He decides to ask anyway.

LENNY

How did you get here?

OLD MAN

I got lost.

LENNY

(surprised)

You got lost? So did I!

Lenny unzips the sleeping bag and gets inside.

LENNY (CONT'D)

I can't wait to get out of here.

The old man slowly turns his head and looks at Lenny like he's crazy, then goes back to staring at the ceiling. Lenny closes his eyes and sleeps.

INT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Scott is asleep in his truck.

INT. CAVERN - LENNY'S TENT - DAY

Lenny wakes up from sleep and clears up his foggy eyes. He looks at the old man for a while and notices he's not moving. Concerned, he calls out his name.

LENNY

Bruce?

He gets no response.

LENNY (CONT'D)

Bruce, wake up.

Still no response. He SHAKES his body, but the old man is unresponsive. He checks for a pulse, but doesn't find any.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Lenny RUNS out of the tent looking for help.

LENNY

Somebody, help!

Moderators come rushing to the tent.

INT. CAVERN - LENNY'S TENT - CONTINUOUS

One of the moderators checks for a pulse on the old man's arm and shakes his head at another moderator.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

The moderators carry the old man's body out of the tent and dump it into the gorge. Lenny looks on in horror.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

While parked in his truck, Scott calls the police to report Lenny missing.

DISPATCHER'S VOICE

911. What is the nature of your emergency?

SCOTT

My son is missing.

INT. TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Scott calls Stacey while driving.

INT. TRAILER HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stacey answers her phone. We hear Jack's loud snoring in the background.

STACEY

Did you find him?

SCOTT'S VOICE

No. I was hoping you'd say "he's here".

STACEY

Well... He's not...

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

SCOTT

I filed the report... They said they'll look for him.

STACEY'S VOICE

Now I'm really getting worried.

SCOTT

Yeah, so am I. What a nightmare.

STACEY'S VOICE

Is his phone still off?

SCOTT

Yeah. That's one of the reasons why I'm so concerned. If he was at a house somewhere, I'm sure he would've charged his phone and let us know he's okay.

INT. TRAILER HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

STACEY

I didn't get any sleep last night.

SCOTT'S VOICE

(distraught)

It's all my fault. I shouldn't have left him home alone. I give him too much credit, you know?

STACEY

What else could you have done?

SCOTT'S VOICE

I should've kept a close eye on him.

STACEY

Scott, it's not your fault.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

SCOTT

Anyway, I'm heading to work. I have no choice.

STACEY'S VOICE

Yeah... go to work. I'm sure he's fine. He'll be home by night.

SCOTT

I'm praying for that.

STACEY'S VOICE

Like you said, we shouldn't think the worst.

SCOTT

Yeah, you're right.

STACEY'S VOICE

Let me know what happens.

SCOTT

Okay. I will.

Scott hangs up the phone and continues driving.

INT. CAVERN - DAY

A moderator BLOWS A WHISTLE and everyone begins SCRAMBLING for FOLDING CHAIRS AND TABLES stacked in a corner of the cavern. The moderator looks at his timer as the crowd rushes back and forth picking up the chairs and tables and setting them in the middle of the cavern. Lenny looks on with confusion until he realizes what he must do. He runs to the corner and grabs a folding chair and places it at a table that has already been prepared. All of the chairs and tables have been unfolded and placed in the middle of the cavern, with a person standing over each chair. Everyone looks at the moderator for further instruction. The moderator gives the signal to be seated and everyone sits.

A group of moderators come out of a large tent with FOOD TRAYS and begin serving food to everyone on each table. It is breakfast time. The food looks stale and bland. Lenny is seated at a table with four other individuals, TWO MEN and TWO WOMEN. He listens to their conversation.

FIRST WOMAN

(counts)

Tier one, tier two, tier three...
one more to go...

SECOND WOMAN

I'm only on tier two.

FIRST MAN

(to second woman)

You have a long way to go.

SECOND MAN

Remember, it gets harder and
harder.

FIRST WOMAN

But it's worth it. Once you reach
tier five, you'll be on the other
side. I can't wait.

Lenny is intrigued but at the same time puzzled by their discussion. He leans in and casually interrupts.

LENNY

What's a tier?

FIRST MAN

It's a level. Once you pass certain tests, you'll go up a level.

SECOND MAN

You must be new.

FIRST WOMAN

You're on tier one.

Everyone laughs at Lenny.

LENNY

How do I get to tier two?

FIRST WOMAN

You have to wait. They will assign you it once you've passed the tests.

LENNY

Who will?

FIRST MAN

The moderators.

LENNY

I don't know what I'm doing here.

They all look at him weird.

FIRST MAN

Don't worry about that. Your job is to do everything you can to get to the other side.

LENNY

The other side?

FIRST MAN

Yeah. That's where everything is better.

SECOND MAN

The food is better, there is more space, you get your own house, you can watch TV, you can do anything there.

LENNY

How do I get there?

FIRST WOMAN

You have to reach tier five. Then, you'll be allowed to cross the bridge.

LENNY

What if I wanted to leave?

They all look at him with pity.

FIRST MAN

You can't. This is all you've got. You have to make the most of it.

LENNY

I'm stuck here for the rest of my life?

SECOND MAN

You don't want to be stuck on tier one for the rest of your life. Now, that would be really bad. From the way you sound, it looks like you will.

INT. SUV - DAY

Phil is driving on a freeway with Trent sitting in the passenger seat.

PHIL

So, how long have you been playing the drum?

TRENT

Since I was about seven.

PHIL

So, you're pretty good, huh?

TRENT

Yeah. I guess.

PHIL

Do you think you'll win?

TRENT

I don't know. Hopefully.

PHIL

You gotta give it your all...

A GPS device instructs Phil to take the next exit. He exits the freeway and enters a long and dark tunnel, the same one Lenny had entered. He continues driving until he reaches a dead end. He sees a sign with an arrow pointing left.

PHIL

This must be it.

Phil follows the sign and makes a left turn. He is led into an eerily quiet parking garage.

PHIL

We must be early.

Phil parks the SUV and he and Trent exit.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

They walk toward a heavy steel door with a sign which reads: "ENTER". After looking at each other with curiosity, Phil opens the door and they enter.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

As they walk through the entrance, a 3D LASER SCANNER captures their movement.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Inside a makeshift tent serving as a command center, a moderator sits in front of a computer screen containing a SPLIT SCREEN PROFILE OF PHIL AND TRENT, complete with their PHOTOGRAPHS AND PERSONAL INFORMATION. He turns to another moderator with excitement.

MODERATOR

We have new arrivals...

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Phil and Trent find themselves inside of a large cavern with water splashing noises. They turn around and notice the door is locked.

EXT. RESEARCH CENTER - PARKING LOT - DAY

As Scott exits his truck after arriving at work, Colin comes out with a warm drink in hand.

COLIN

You're late.

SCOTT

Yeah, I know.

Colin notices Scott's distress.

COLIN

What's the matter?

SCOTT

(sighs)

My son has gone missing.

Colin gives Scott a serious look.

COLIN

You can't be serious.

SCOTT

Sadly, I am...

Colin opens the door for Scott and they enter the research center building.

INT. RESEARCH CENTER - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Scott and Colin speak as they walk to their department.

COLIN

Where did he go?

SCOTT

No idea. He was on his way to his mother's house...

COLIN

Did you contact the police?

SCOTT

Yeah. They said they'll look for him... It's been a really bad day. I'm still in shock.

COLIN

Don't worry. He's probably out playing with his friends somewhere.

SCOTT

No. I talked to his friend. He's not with him... I fear the worst.

COLIN

Don't. He'll be fine.

INT. CAVERN - DAY

Lenny, along with everyone in the cavern, is doing JUMPING JACKS in a formation. In front of them are several moderators guiding them through the grueling exercise. Everyone is sweating and running out of breath.

Some of the older people are sitting on the ground, unable to continue. Lenny is counting to himself as he does the jumping jacks.

LENNY

(counts, out of breath)

Four ninety five, four ninety six,
four ninety seven, four ninety
eight, four ninety nine...

At five hundred, everyone stops. Extremely tired and gasping for air, they all sit on the ground while the moderators go around passing out TWO WATER BOTTLES to some individuals, but NONE to others. To his relief, Lenny is handed two water bottles. He notices the man next to him has not been given any. He looks at the moderators in dismay. Other moderators walk around with a PORTABLE DEVICE in their hands observing the actions of all the individuals. Lenny chugs a whole bottle of water and gives the other bottle to the man sitting next to him. The man takes the water bottle gladly and drinks it. Jeffrey notices Lenny's kind gesture and records it in his device. Other moderators observe and record people who drink both water bottles without sharing, as well as those who share.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Jeffrey and the main moderator, referred to as the ADMINISTRATOR, about 50, go over the results of the experiment. Jeffrey reads from his portable device while the administrator registers the information in a DATABASE.

ADMINISTRATOR

What's the average?

JEFFREY

Thirty percent share.

ADMINISTRATOR

Same as last time.

JEFFREY

Yep.

ADMINISTRATOR

Predictable.

JEFFREY

Yeah, but it's good to have data.

ADMINISTRATOR

What about the new boy?

JEFFREY

Share.

ADMINISTRATOR

What are the variables?

JEFFREY

Under twenty, forty percent share.
Twenty to fifty, thirty percent
share. Over fifty, twenty percent
share.

ADMINISTRATOR

Gender?

JEFFREY

Female, sixty percent share. Male,
forty percent share.

ADMINISTRATOR

Okay. Prepare the stats for the
commissioner.

INT. PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE - DAY

The prime minister sits behind a large desk with his arms crossed. His male ADVISER (40) stands over him, along with two of his aides, one male and one female.

PRIME MINISTER

We need to figure this thing out quick.

ADVISER

It's going to take a lot of due diligence.

PRIME MINISTER

(frustrated)

What do you mean? No. I want this thing to be completed as soon as possible. We have to get it passed.

ADVISER

Five trillion dollars is a lot of money to ask for.

PRIME MINISTER

So what? This is for the good of the people, dammit. We have to get this budget passed and send the goddamn satellite.

ADVISER

The people want this project, I'm sure. But... we might need to lower the price somehow. I've spoken with the director of the program and he says we can do certain things to reduce cost, without compromising efficiency.

PRIME MINISTER

Your job is to help me say the right things. I need to convey the right message to the public.

ADVISER

Okay...

PRIME MINISTER

I need a speech... and a damn good one.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

A face appears on a large WALL-MOUNTED SCREEN. The face is that of the COMMISSIONER. An imposing man with an authoritative voice, about 60. In front of the screen stands Jeffrey.

JEFFREY

Hello, commissioner.

COMMISSIONER

Good evening.

JEFFREY

I have all the data transferred to your files.

COMMISSIONER

Thank you. I appreciate it. How are things going?

JEFFREY

Everything is going smoothly.

COMMISSIONER

Any losses?

JEFFREY

We had one yesterday. We took care of it.

COMMISSIONER

Make sure to remove the loss from
the database.

JEFFREY

Yeah. We're on it.

COMMISSIONER

Don't let it get too crowded in
there.

JEFFREY

No. The next crossing is tomorrow.

COMMISSIONER

Good. It was nice speaking with
you, Mr. Jeffrey.

JEFFREY

You too, sir.

COMMISSIONER

I'll talk to you later.

The screen goes black.

INT. COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The commissioner is sitting in his office with his elbows
resting on his desk and his hands clenched in front of his
face. On his desk is a GOLD NAME PLATE which reads:
"COMMISSIONER HERSCHEL GABLE". The phone rings and he picks
it up. On the line is the prime minister's adviser, who
begins speaking immediately.

ADVISER'S VOICE

(irritated)

The prime minister is on my ass
about that stupid budget. It's
completely unrealistic.

The commissioner patiently listens.

ADVISER'S VOICE (CONT'D)

I need your help.

COMMISSIONER

What do you want me to do?

ADVISER'S VOICE

I need some ideas. How do you convince people something that's not true?

COMMISSIONER

...I will look into it.

CUT TO:

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT`

Jeffrey is surprised to see the commissioner's face appear on the screen again.

COMMISSIONER

I just spoke with the adviser.

JEFFREY

What did he say?

COMMISSIONER

There's been a change of plan. We're gonna be doing some deception experiments. We need to crack the human psyche. How does it react to different suggestions? How do you win it over...?

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Scott is lying in bed staring at the ceiling. The phone rings and he excitedly answers it.

SCOTT

Lenny?!

STACEY'S VOICE

It's me.

Scott is visibly disappointed.

STACEY'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Don't tell me he's not home.

SCOTT

(deflated)

He's not...

STACEY'S VOICE

Oh my god. What are we gonna do?

SCOTT

I don't know... I think something
might've happened to him.

INT. TRAILER HOME - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Stacey is alone washing dishes while cradling a phone on
her shoulder.

STACEY

If something happened, don't you
think we'd know?

SCOTT'S VOICE

I don't know. He could've been
kidnapped.

STACEY

Who on earth would want to kidnap
him?

Brief silence.

STACEY (CONT'D)

Oh my god, Scott. This is looking
really bad. Do you think he ran
away?

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

SCOTT

I doubt it. No. Where would he go?

STACEY'S VOICE

This is unbelievable. Did they
give you any updates?

SCOTT

No. They haven't found him.

Scott takes a deep breath.

STACEY'S VOICE

Well, I'm coming over tomorrow.

SCOTT

Alright...

STACEY'S VOICE

(mutters)

Oh my god...

SCOTT

Okay. See you tomorrow.

INT. CAVERN - DAY

An announcement is made on a PA system, which can be heard
throughout the cavern.

ANNOUNCER

Tier fives, please make your way
to the bridge. Tier fives, make
your way to the bridge...

Through the crowd's disarray, Lenny sees Jeffrey and
approaches him.

LENNY

What tier am I?

Jeffrey looks at his portable device.

JEFFREY

Tier two.

LENNY

Great. That means I'm closer to being on the other side.

Jeffrey looks at him with pity.

JEFFREY

Look, kid... You shouldn't be in such a hurry.

LENNY

Why not?

JEFFREY

There is nothing great about the other side.

LENNY

But my friends said everything is better on the other side.

JEFFREY

Enjoy the time you have here, because once you're gone there's no coming back.

They are interrupted by a second announcement.

ANNOUNCER

Tier ones, twos, threes, and fours... please make your way to the theater...

Several moderators can be seen setting up a LARGE TENT in the distant corner of the cavern.

Meanwhile, Lenny catches a glimpse of the woman whom he had once had breakfast with walking toward the bridge, along with other tier five individuals. She looks back at him with dread. Those who are not tier five, including Lenny, walk to the large tent, referred to as the theater.

INT. CAVERN - LARGE TENT - CONTINUOUS

There are at least two hundred individuals and everyone is sitting on the floor in rows. They are all looking directly at a PROJECTION SCREEN, waiting for a presentation.

A LOUD VIDEO starts playing, featuring PEOPLE AT THEME PARKS SCREAMING ON ROLLER COASTER RIDES.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Phil and Trent wander about the cavern in confusion.

A moderator approaches them while looking at his portable device, gathering information on their identities. He points his finger at both of them.

MODERATOR

Tier one.

He points them to the large tent around the corner.

MODERATOR (CONT'D)

Go there.

INT. CAVERN - LARGE TENT - CONTINUOUS

Phil and Trent enter the large tent and mingle with the crowd, unaware of Lenny's presence. They sit in the far back, many rows away from where Lenny is sitting and begin watching the video.

EXT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Stacey parks her car in front of Scott's house. Sitting in the passenger seat is Jack and the baby is in a car seat in the back. Stacey and Jack both exit the car.

STACEY

I'll see you later.

JACK

Give me a call.

STACEY

I will.

As Stacey walks to the house, Jack gets into the driver's seat of the car.

INT. OLD SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

He watches Scott open the door and waves his hand. Scott waves back and lets Stacey into the house. Scott closes the door and Jack drives off.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stacey puts her hands on her face and begins to sob. Scott consoles her by placing his hand on her shoulder.

STACEY

(sobs)

This is terrible...

SCOTT

It's okay. We'll find him. He'll be alright.

STACEY

How do you know?

SCOTT

I have hope. He's a smart kid.

STACEY

I don't know, Scott.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They both grab a chair and sit by the dining table.

SCOTT

There's something I need to tell you.

Stacey wipes her tears and looks at Scott with some apprehension.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

You know Lenny's friend, Trent?

STACEY

Yeah. What about him?

SCOTT

He's also missing. He hasn't been seen since yesterday.

STACEY

I don't understand. How could that happen? How could people just disappear?

SCOTT

I don't understand, either. But whatever happened to Lenny must've also happened to Trent.

INT. OLD SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Wiper blades remove snow from the windshield as Jack drives through the heavy snow. He turns up the heater and scans the radio for something to listen to. He tunes in to a news report by a FEMALE REPORTER.

FEMALE REPORTER

...Questions arise about a mysterious underground facility commissioned by the government five years ago, for the purpose of conducting scientific research related to the ongoing so-called "Project Metropolis". The highly secretive and heavily guarded facility is said to be where scientists and engineers create cutting edge aerospace technology, including rocket boosters, engines, and satellites.

(MORE)

FEMALE REPORTER (CONT'D)

Reports indicate the underground facility is understaffed and in deteriorating condition. Whether or not any technology has been produced in the facility remains unclear. The facility is closed to the general public and unauthorized personnel could be prevented from entering by lethal force...

INT. TRAILER HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER

With the baby on his lap, Jack sits in front of a LAPTOP.

CLOSE-UP. LAPTOP SCREEN

In a search bar he types the words "project metropolis facility" and a FIVE YEAR OLD ARCHIVE VIDEO appears in the search results. He clicks on the link and a video begins to play.

On the screen is a MALE REPORTER who is conducting a walking tour of the cavern while it's under construction. A large drawbridge is being put into place, artificial waterfalls are being installed and trees are being planted.

MALE REPORTER

As you can see this is where the staff will be spending most of their time. The bridge here will allow them to travel from one department to another with ease. The waterfalls and the lush vegetation will give this place an outdoor-like atmosphere, with plenty of fresh air.

The commissioner walks into the frame of the news camera.

MALE REPORTER (CONT'D)

This is the man responsible for overseeing this construction, Commissioner Gable. What is the main purpose of this facility?

The reporter points the microphone at the commissioner.

COMMISSIONER

The main purpose is to have a convenient place for scientists and inventors to be able to research and experiment without the kinds of hindrance one might encounter in the outside world. We hope this place will help us build the technology we need in order to accomplish upcoming projects in the future, be it "project metropolis" or any other endeavor which requires the maximum amount of resources and ingenuity... this is the place for that.

The camera follows the reporter as he moves onto the next interviewee. A slightly younger Colin appears in the frame.

MALE REPORTER

This is Colin, a coordinator for this construction site and a scientist. Please tell us, what made you decide to be involved in this project?

The reporter points his microphone at Colin.

COLIN

I wanted to be in this project because I have always been a fan of science and development, especially aeronautics and things

(MORE)

COLIN (CONT'D)

of that nature... It's always been my dream to be involved in something like this, something grand. I hope and I believe that in the future, this place will serve as a linchpin for all technical achievements which are crucial to our society... I'm really excited to be a part of it... In the words of doctor Bugarin, science is the only solution to our problems.

A television crew helicopter hovers over a tunnel entrance next to a freeway. On board is the reporter, along with his cameraman. He speaks loudly over the rotor blades.

MALE REPORTER

As you can see there is a tunnel leading to the underground facility. There are said to be tens if not hundreds of these kinds of tunnels throughout the city, all directly leading to the facility. The purpose of these tunnels is for staff members to be able to go in and out of the facility with ease, from whichever direction they might be coming from.

INT. CAVERN - LENNY'S TENT - NIGHT

Lenny is sleeping in his tent when he is awakened by a murmur.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

He sneaks out of his tent and quietly follows two moderators to an exit door.

He hides behind a wall and watches one moderator leave the cavern and the other moderator lock the door and return. In the hand of the moderator he notices A KEYCHAIN as it makes clinking noises.

INT. CAVERN - DAY

A moderator makes an announcement using a megaphone. A large GOLD BAR can be seen displayed front and center.

MODERATOR

Okay, everyone. Today we will be playing a game of checkers. Whoever wins gets the gold bar... For any reason, you can choose not to participate in this game.

Moderators pass out CHECKERBOARDS to hundreds of individuals seated at different tables. On each table, two people sit adjacent to one another and begin playing against each other.

In a process of elimination, when a person on one table loses, another person from a different table who has won comes and plays with the winner. Gradually, more tables become empty and fewer players are left. Ultimately, only three tables remain with six contestants. One of them is Lenny. He chats with his OPPONENT as he squares off.

LENNY

I don't get it... Why are they making us play these stupid games?

OPPONENT

Because this is part of the test. If you win, you will get the prize.

LENNY

What if it's not real?

OPPONENT

What's not real?

LENNY

The gold.

OPPONENT

Of course it's real.

LENNY

How do you know?

OPPONENT

Why wouldn't it be real?

Lenny beats his opponent and moves to another table to play against his NEXT OPPONENT. There are now only four competitors and two tables left. Lenny stops to think for a moment before he begins playing.

Trent and Phil watch from the sidelines, along with the rest of the crowd.

Lenny continues to play, but stops halfway.

LENNY

You know what? I don't wanna play.

NEXT OPPONENT

You're quitting?

LENNY

Yeah.

NEXT OPPONENT

Sweet!

Trent notices Lenny on one of the tables.

TRENT

(to Phil)

That's Lenny!

PHIL

(sarcastic)

Oh, brother...

Trent calls out Lenny's name.

TRENT

(yells)

Lenny!

Lenny looks up at the crowd and immediately recognizes Trent and Phil. He smiles with joy and walks over to them. We hear in the background a moderator making an announcement.

MODERATOR

Ladies and gentlemen. There are now two more contestants left... Whoever wins gets the prize...

Lenny approaches Trent and Phil.

LENNY

What are you guys doing here?

TRENT

We were on our way to "who wants to be a star?" and somehow we ended up here.

LENNY

This is a bad place. We need to get out of here.

TRENT

How? All the doors are locked.

LENNY

(whispers)

There's a key.

Phil is not in on the discussion.

PHIL

What are you two idiots blabbering about?

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

A MOTORCADE escorts the prime minister's car as it exits a freeway and enters a tunnel.

INT. CAVERN - MOMENTS LATER

A door opens and the prime minister enters, along with his aides and the commissioner. Lenny, Trent, Phil, and several other spectators look on as the prime minister and his entourage are given clearance to go on the bridge. The prime minister can be seen chatting with the administrator on the bridge.

LENNY

How come he gets to go on the
bridge?

PHIL

Because he's the prime minister,
Duh!

The prime minister is led by moderators across the bridge to the other side of the cavern, disappearing from view.

INT. CAVERN - LATER

Everyone is eating lunch. Lenny is seated with Trent, Phil, a MAN he met in the past, as well as a new individual, a WOMAN.

MAN

It's my time fellas. I'm a fiver.

PHIL

Are you excited?

MAN

Of course I am.

PHIL

I hope you'll save a spot for me
on the other side, because I'll be
there soon.

MAN

Trust me, I will. I'll also get to see Brenna.

LENNY

Who's Brenna?

MAN

The woman who was here last time. I'm sure she's having a blast.

LENNY

I'm happy for you. I still have three more to go.

MAN

That's okay. You'll get there. You've actually progressed really fast... How long have you been here?

LENNY

A week.

MAN

I've been here for three weeks. Some people have been here for years.

Lenny notices the new woman. She seems quiet and timid.

LENNY

Hi, are you new?

The woman is hesitant to speak, but she opens up.

WOMAN

Yeah. I came here yesterday. I don't know how I got here.

LENNY

Do you remember being in a tunnel?

WOMAN

Yeah. I was on my way to work. I took a different route than I normally take, next thing I know I'm in a parking garage, which led me here...

PHIL

That's how we got here!

WOMAN

I want to get out of here. I'm really confused.

LENNY

Don't worry. You'll find a way out.

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK - DAY

In the downtown area, Stacey and Scott tape a MISSING PERSON FLYER with Lenny's name and photograph to a power pole. They move onto the wall of a building and tape another one there. Scott points at an empty spot on the wall.

SCOTT

Put one there.

As she is about to tape the flyer, Stacey's phone rings and she answers the call. Scott looks at the surprised reaction on her face as she listens to the person speaking on the phone. She momentarily pauses the conversation to give him an update.

STACEY

It's Jack. He says he has something to show us.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAILER HOME - DRIVEWAY - LATER

Stacey and Scott pull into the driveway of her house.

INT. TRAILER HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They walk into the house and find Jack sitting in front of a laptop.

INT. SAME - MOMENTS LATER

They all huddle together and watch the video clips containing the so-called underground facility.

JACK

Do you think this might have anything to do with Lenny's disappearance?

SCOTT

Why do you say that?

JACK

I don't know. I mean, where else could he be?

SCOTT

But, this is a government building.

JACK

Exactly. What if it's a cover-up? Think about it... who else has the power to make these many people disappear without a trace?

SCOTT

But why would the government kidnap people?

JACK

That's what we have to find out.

Scott sees a clip of his colleague, Colin, in the video.

SCOTT

Pause right there.

Jack pauses the video. Colin's face is frozen in frame.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

That's Colin!

INT. ADVISER'S OFFICE - DAY

The prime minister's adviser is alone in his office when he hears a door knock.

ADVISER

Come in.

The commissioner enters the office with a document in hand.

COMMISSIONER

I have come to personally give you this information. As you might be aware we have conducted research regarding the human mind and its response to misinformation. Well... I have received the report.

ADVISER

What are the results?

The commissioner hands the adviser the document. The adviser flips through the paperwork as he listens.

COMMISSIONER

Deception is guaranteed. The masses will not ask questions as long as they are incentivized.

The adviser looks up at the commissioner with a smirk.

ADVISER

That's a very interesting finding. I will share it with the prime minister.

INT. CAVERN - DAY

A moderator approaches Lenny while he is washing his face using water from a bucket.

MODERATOR

Congratulations. You've reached tier three.

Lenny is happy and grateful.

LENNY

Really? Thanks.

MODERATOR

You're doing exceptionally well. Keep up the good work and you'll be a fiver in no time.

Jeffrey overhears the conversation from a distance and looks on with unease.

INT. CAVERN - MOMENTS LATER

A public announcement is made on the PA system.

ANNOUNCER

Tier fives, please make your way to the bridge. Everybody else, please go to the theater.

Lenny, Trent and Phil, along with all non-tier fives, walk toward the large tent. On his way, Lenny waves goodbye to the man whom he had talked to earlier.

INT. CAVERN - LARGE TENT - CONTINUOUS

Everyone who is not a tier five sits inside the large tent as a loud video of people screaming at an amusement park begins to play.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

The drawbridge RISES at a very steep 90-degree angle, causing most people on it to FALL OFF immediately.

Others desperately cling onto the handrails before eventually falling off. Everyone SCREAMS in terror as they FALL INTO THE GORGE AND DROWN.

INT. RESEARCH CENTER - DAY

Scott arrives at work and is warmly greeted by Colin.

COLIN

My man!

Scott is suspicious of Colin, but doesn't let on.

SCOTT

Hey, how's it going?

COLIN

Same ole same ole. How's the search?

SCOTT

Very little progress... We've been putting out flyers.

COLIN

That's a great idea. Somebody somewhere knows something.

SCOTT

Yeah, absolutely.

Scott changes the subject.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

The prime minister is coming today?

COLIN

Yeah. He'll be here in a while. Everything is set up and ready to go. Anyway, he's not gonna comprehend most of this stuff.

SCOTT

I'm hardly in the mood to be teaching the prime minister astrophysics.

COLIN

He won't be here for long... We just have to show him a few simulations and that's it.

SCOTT

(sarcastic)

Yeah. Feed his ego, right?

COLIN

And make him fantasize.

Scott chuckles.

As they are talking, the prime minister, along with his entourage, walks into the room.

Everyone stops what they're doing and immediately welcomes the prime minister with a handshake while taking turns. The prime minister smiles as he goes around the room chatting with different researchers about their work. Scott and Colin talk to each other under their breath.

COLIN

Don't worry. He won't understand. He'll just pretend.

SCOTT

It's too bad we can't pretend.

COLIN

Yeah. They don't pay us to pretend. I'm not saying they shouldn't...

The prime minister suddenly appears in front of Scott and Colin while they are talking behind his back.

They quickly get their acts together and introduce themselves. Colin shakes the prime minister's hand.

COLIN

Hello, prime minister. My name is Colin Barnett and I'm the project manager.

The prime minister stares intensely at Colin.

PRIME MINISTER

Don't I know you from somewhere?

COLIN

(rattled)

I -- I don't know...

Scott shakes the prime minister's hand.

SCOTT

Hi, I'm Scott. Research scientist.

The prime minister turns his attention to the computer screen.

PRIME MINISTER

Okay. So, what have you got?

COLIN

Today, sir, we're gonna take you through a simulation of what the actual satellite is going to look like and how it's going to function.

PRIME MINISTER

Wonderful.

Colin starts a SIMULATION VIDEO on the computer which shows a SPECIALLY DESIGNED SATELLITE MOVING TOWARD THE SUN AND EXTENDING LARGE SOLAR PANELS TO ABSORB SOLAR ENERGY. The prime minister is impressed by what he sees.

PRIME MINISTER

Fantastic! Now, can it actually be done?

COLIN

We hope to have the prototype ready by the end of this year.

PRIME MINISTER

You're not just getting my hopes up, are you?

COLIN

We're working very hard to meet this deadline and we promise not to break our promise.

Scott lets out a quiet nervous laughter.

The prime minister pats Colin on the back. He turns to Scott and smiles, Scott smiles in return. He looks at everyone working at the lab and gives a parting speech.

PRIME MINISTER

Everyone... I'm really happy with what I see. Keep up the good work and hopefully everything goes according to plan. I will see you all again.

The prime minister exits the building, followed by his entourage.

INT. CAVERN - DAY

Lenny, Trent, Phil and two other individuals are having breakfast. Phil is fidgety and restless.

PHIL

(mutters)

There's got to be a way...

Lenny overhears Phil's utterance and is curious.

LENNY

For what?

Phil looks up at Lenny.

PHIL

A shortcut.

LENNY

A shortcut for what?

PHIL

To tier five.

LENNY

Don't waste your time. Everything is programmed and only the moderators have access to the computers.

PHIL

What if I snuck into the command center and put the information there?

LENNY

Well... you'll need a password.

Momentary silence as everyone eats.

LENNY (CONT'D)

I have a better idea. Why don't we steal the key?

Phil speaks with his mouth full.

PHIL

Don't be stupid. You'll get caught.

Trent considers Lenny's suggestion.

TRENT

I'm willing to try.

CUT TO:

INT. CAVERN - MOMENTS LATER

Lenny and Trent quietly walk toward the command center and PEER inside. They see a set of keys left on a desk next to a computer. They make sure that nobody is around before Lenny quietly walks in. Trent remains outside as a lookout.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON Lenny's hand as it is about to grab a keychain. A hand suddenly GRABS his arm. TILT UP to show Jeffrey's face, sternly looking at Lenny. Lenny is startled and frightened.

JEFFREY

You didn't think I'd catch you,
did you?

As Lenny struggles for an answer, the administrator WALKS into the command center.

ADMINISTRATOR

What's going on?

Jeffrey quickly covers the keychain with his fist to hide it from the administrator.

JEFFREY

Nothing. I was just showing this
kid around.

ADMINISTRATOR

You know we're not supposed to
have non-faculty members here.

JEFFREY

Yes. I know, sir. I apologize.

Jeffrey abruptly takes Lenny out of the command center and lets him go.

LENNY

Thanks...

JEFFREY

Next time, you won't be so lucky.
Do you understand?

Lenny nods.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

From a distance, Scott watches Colin enter his car and drive away from the research center parking lot. He follows him.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Colin pulls into the parking lot of a NONDESCRIPT OFFICE BUILDING.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Parked across the street in a DIFFERENT PARKING LOT, Scott watches Colin enter the office building.

EXT. DIFFERENT PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

He exits his car and follows Colin into the office building.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

There are several individuals in suits walking around, while others lounge on sofas. None of them give any attention to Scott.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Colin swipes a clearance card and enters a room, but leaves the door ajar.

INT. COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Inside the room is the commissioner, sitting behind a desk.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Scott follows Colin through the hallway and puts his ear against the door to eavesdrop on the conversation.

COLIN (O.S.)

Does the prime minister know about my position?

COMMISSIONER (O.S.)

With all due respect, I don't think you're that important.

INT. COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Colin smirks at the commissioner, slightly offended.

COLIN

I thought he recognized me earlier. What about the facility, does he know?

COMMISSIONER

Obviously. He goes there frequently.

COLIN

Really? I'd never seen him there.

COMMISSIONER

Maybe it's because you're not looking... Listen, let's cut to the chase. We need to reduce expenditure. We need cheaper experiments.

COLIN

We can minimize the use of equipment and do more improvisation.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Scott, with his ear glued to the door, continues to listen.

COMMISSIONER (O.S.)

What about food?

COLIN (O.S.)

Subjects are given the minimum nutrition. It's safe to say we don't spend too much on food.

INT. COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

COMMISSIONER

Excellent. Well, it was nice speaking with you, moderator.

COLIN

It's been a pleasure...

Both the commissioner and Colin HEAR A NOISE coming from outside, piquing their interest. Colin opens the door but doesn't see anyone.

CLOSE-UP. LAPTOP SCREEN

In a search bar someone types in the words "doctor bugarin" and finds an article titled: "DR. ROSS BUGARIN, THE SOCIAL STUDIES PIONEER". The person clicks on the article.

INT. TRAILER HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT [CONTINUOUS]

Jack reads out loud part of the article to Stacey while she sits on a couch nearby cradling the baby.

JACK

(reads)

"A doctor suggests human behavior can be studied in broad social experiments. The controversial doctor believes analyzing this data can help governments better control their citizens and influence their actions. His name is Ross Bugarin."

INT. CAVERN - LENNY'S TENT - NIGHT

Lenny is awakened by a noise and sees a flashlight glaring through his tent. Next to him in another sleeping bag is Trent, fast asleep. He opens the tent and is surprised to see Jeffrey outside. He steps out of the tent.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

LENNY

Hey.

Jeffrey signals for Lenny to lower his voice and proceeds to talk to him in a whisper.

JEFFREY

(whispers)

Hey. Listen, kid. I know you've been wanting to get out of here.

Lenny is very interested.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

I think I can help you. But you have to keep this a secret.

Lenny now speaks in a much quieter voice, but still louder than Jeffrey's.

LENNY

Okay. But why do you want to help me?

Jeffrey looks at him with compassion.

JEFFREY

Trust me. You don't wanna know. You don't wanna be in this place. You have a good heart, kid. You have your whole life ahead of you...

LENNY

But, how am I gonna escape?

JEFFREY

When the time is right, I will
give you a key. So you and your
friend can get out of here.

The suspicious administrator comes out of the command center. He overhears the murmurs of Jeffrey's and Lenny's conversation, but stays hidden.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Be ready for the signal... Now go
back to sleep.

LENNY

Okay.

Jeffrey walks away and Lenny goes back into his tent.

INT. TRAILER HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack continues reading to Stacey from the online article.

JACK

(reads)

"...A big part of Dr. Bugarin's
teaching revolves around the
concept he refers to as
'dianexus', a combined greek and
latin word which loosely
translates to 'connection
between', in this case between
individuals. In his theory, Dr.
Bugarin describes how all people
share a common consciousness which
behaves in more or less
predictable ways. He argues that
it is possible to program
different minds in order for them
to act in unison, in ways deemed
most appropriate by authorities.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

This, in his view, will reduce crime, increase prosperity and equality, create longevity, among countless other benefits. Dr. Bugarin has established the sociodynamics institute for the sole purpose of pursuing the realization of this vision and introducing dianexus to the world. He hopes that governments will use it to improve the condition of mankind and create a utopian society, without all the sufferings which plague humanity."

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Jeffrey puts on his jacket and prepares to leave the facility for the night. The administrator appears out of nowhere, unusually friendly.

ADMINISTRATOR

Jeffrey, going home?

JEFFREY

Yeah. All the reports are filed and the systems are logged off.

ADMINISTRATOR

Good. Good. Well, I will see you tomorrow.

JEFFREY

Goodnight, sir.

Jeffrey walks to an exit door, accompanied by another moderator. The moderator unlocks the door for him and Jeffrey leaves. The moderator closes the door and locks it.

INT. TUNNEL - NIGHT

From a distance and with his headlights turned off, Scott FOLLOWS Colin through a tunnel and into a parking garage.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Scott watches Colin park his car and get out in a black uniform, identical to that of the moderators, and walk into the cavern.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Colin enters the cavern and walks directly to the command center.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Colin is greeted by the administrator.

ADMINISTRATOR

Good evening.

COLIN

Evening, sir.

ADMINISTRATOR

Don't forget to log in.

Colin goes to the computer and logs in for the night shift. He speaks to the administrator while doing so. Their conversation reverberates throughout the quiet cavern.

COLIN

I spoke with the commissioner.

ADMINISTRATOR

And...?

COLIN

He's worried about costs regarding experiments. He wants something more economic.

ADMINISTRATOR

Did you tell him we're doing all we can?

COLIN

Yes. But, we never discussed salary.

ADMINISTRATOR

No compromises there. Everyone gets paid the maximum.

COLIN

That's what I thought... Hopefully he's not in disagreement.

ADMINISTRATOR

Of course not!

INT. TRAILER HOLE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stacey is leaning over Jack as he reads, listening with keen interest.

JACK

(reads)

"...Commissioner Gable had been tasked by the previous administration with bringing Dr. Bugarin's vision to reality by implementing his social experiments in a controlled environment, in order to gather valuable information for use by the government and for the purpose of enhancing the rule of law."

INT. CAVERN - DAY

Lenny, Trent, Phil and two other individuals are having breakfast. The administrator approaches their table and pulls Phil aside. He smirks at Lenny and gives him the eye. He and Phil retreat to a corner where they can't be heard.

ADMINISTRATOR

I hear you're eager to become a fiver?

Phil can't believe his luck.

PHIL

Yeah. Absolutely.

ADMINISTRATOR

I can make that happen for you. In fact, It's very easy. All I have to do is punch in a few numbers on the database and voilà!

PHIL

I would love to be on tier five.

ADMINISTRATOR

Very well. But I want you to do me a little favor in return.

PHIL

Sure. Anything.

ADMINISTRATOR

I want you to keep an eye on that boy -- Lenny. I want you to listen to what he says. What his plans are. And I want you to tell me.

PHIL

You want me to spy on him?

ADMINISTRATOR

For a lack of a better word, yes. Ask him what he did last night. Ask him about his relationship to Mr. Jeffrey.

PHIL

The moderator?

ADMINISTRATOR

Yes... Complete this task and in no time you will be crossing the bridge.

INT. ADVISER'S OFFICE - DAY

The prime minister's adviser and two of his aides are drafting a speech. The adviser walks around the room dictating the draft while one of his aides writes.

ADVISER

(dictates)

...Ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for your time. Today's subject is about progress and sustainability, both of which are a fundamental part of the survival of a civilization, including our own. This is why I am speaking to you today about the proposed budget which will allow us to achieve these necessary goals, and more...

INT. CAVERN - NIGHT

Dinner is over and people are stacking their trays on racks. Lenny places his empty tray on a rack and as he turns to leave he sees Phil standing in front of him, who begins a casual talk.

PHIL

You know what would be great? If we could find a way out of here.

LENNY

So, you finally changed your mind?

PHIL

No. I've always wanted to leave. But I never thought it'd be possible... Is it?

Lenny thinks for a while, somewhat suspicious.

LENNY

Promise me you'll keep a secret.

PHIL

I promise.

LENNY

Okay. You know Jeff?

Phil nods his head, barely able to contain his excitement.

LENNY (CONT'D)

He's giving me a key. He and I are friends.

PHIL

Wow... That's great. Can I come?

LENNY

I'm not sure. He told me Trent can come along. But I have to ask him first.

Phil's face suddenly becomes tense.

PHIL

Don't ask him. I'll be fine.

LENNY

Are you sure?

PHIL

Yeah. I'm sure. I'll find a way out somehow.

LENNY

If you say so...

PHIL

Thanks for talking with me. I really appreciate it.

LENNY

Yeah. No problem.

INT. RESEARCH CENTER - DAY

Scott is already at work on the computer when Colin shows up. Scott greets him enthusiastically.

SCOTT

Colin! How's it going? Same ole same ole?

COLIN

You sure seem happy today... Did you find your son?

SCOTT

No... I'm just in a good mood today. I don't know why.

COLIN

Well... that's great.

SCOTT

Listen. I wanted to ask you about something.

COLIN

Shoot.

SCOTT

Do you know where I could find work?

Colin is slightly surprised by the question.

COLIN

What about this one?

SCOTT

I mean, a second job. My bills are way too high and I need more income. As you know, I'm divorced.

Colin adjusts to his workspace.

COLIN

Why don't you try working at a
fast food restaurant?

Scott forces a laugh.

COLIN (CONT'D)

I'm serious. No qualifications
needed. Only part time. Very
little stress. What more do you
need?

SCOTT

What about you? Do you have a
second job?

Colin is taken aback by the question.

COLIN

Why do you say that?

SCOTT

I'm just curious.

COLIN

No. This is my only one, and it's
more than I could ask for.

SCOTT

You don't happen to know anything
about an underground facility, do
you?

Colin is shocked. He briefly stares at Scott in dismay and
abruptly leaves.

COLIN

Excuse me.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Phil and the administrator are secretly talking to each other while everyone sleeps.

PHIL

Mr. Jeffrey is planning on giving Lenny a key so he and his friend can escape.

ADMINISTRATOR

Did he say when the time will be?

PHIL

No... but it's supposed to be soon.

ADMINISTRATOR

My suspicions have been confirmed...

The administrator puts his hand on Phil's shoulder.

ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)

Good work... You have been officially elevated to tier five. Congratulations.

PHIL

(jubilant)

I don't know what to say. Thank you so much.

ADMINISTRATOR

Absolutely. You've earned it. Tomorrow you will be among those who will cross the bridge.

Phil is overwhelmed with joy. He leaves the command center completely satisfied.

INT. TRAILER HOME - DINING ROOM - DAY

Jack and Stacey are finishing breakfast. Stacey bottle feeds the baby while Jack puts on his jacket as he prepares to leave the house.

JACK

Whatever is going on, it's connected to the doctor.

STACEY

You think he was abducted by a doctor?

JACK

Not exactly. I think there's a government conspiracy involving the doctor and the underground facility. He is the reason why they built that place.

STACEY

So, where is this doctor?

JACK

I'm gonna find out.

Jack gives Stacey a quick kiss and exits the house.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - DAY

The administrator is working on the database when, suddenly, the face of the commissioner appears on the wall-mounted screen.

ADMINISTRATOR

Mr. Gable, I'd been expecting you.

COMMISSIONER

Hello, administrator. I wanted to make sure you had received the review.

ADMINISTRATOR

Yes, I have. We have yet to determine the appropriate measure regarding the financial situation... We have been considering cutting back on experiments, as suggested. But we strongly believe salaries must be increased.

COMMISSIONER

I will have to speak with the prime minister about that. That's entirely his decision to make. Perhaps he will take that into account and include it in his budget. How are we doing with supplies?

ADMINISTRATOR

We're running short on medical equipment. Diagnostic, DME, treatment, analyzers... also computers.

COMMISSIONER

That's quite a list.

ADMINISTRATOR

Without them it would be difficult for us to do our job, sir.

COMMISSIONER

I will stop by the institute and make a few orders. You should have the supplies by the end of the month.

ADMINISTRATOR

Great. I really appreciate it.

COMMISSIONER

No problem.

Before finishing the conversation, the administrator remembers something.

ADMINISTRATOR

One more thing... What do you reckon is the best way to deal with dissidents, of the highest order?

COMMISSIONER

You mean insiders?

ADMINISTRATOR

Yes. We suspect one of our own is plotting to undermine our operation.

COMMISSIONER

You deal with the problem swiftly and accordingly. Leave no trace.

ADMINISTRATOR

That was also my opinion... Well, Mr. Gable, I really appreciate you taking your time to speak with me.

COMMISSIONER

You betcha. Keep up the good work. You are doing really well and so far I see no reason for concern. We are with you one hundred percent.

ADMINISTRATOR

I'm quite flattered. I'm grateful for all the help.

(MORE)

ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)

I hope that our work will go on to have a tremendous impact on the world for generations to come, just as the doctor had envisioned.

COMMISSIONER

Absolutely. That's always been the focus... Well, it's been a pleasure speaking with you. Have a nice day.

ADMINISTRATOR

You too, Mr. Gable.

The screen goes black and the administrator happily resumes his work on the database.

INT. CAVERN - DAY

Lenny, Trent, Phil and two other people are eating lunch, the same stale food as before. Out of nowhere Phil blurts out with excitement.

PHIL

I'm on tier five!

LENNY

(baffled)

How?

PHIL

I guess I'm just really good. I passed all the tests.

LENNY

But you've been here for barely a week.

PHIL

I know. I did really well. I will see you fellas on the other side, whenever you're allowed...

TRENT

There's something fishy going on.

PHIL

I think you're just jealous.

TRENT

Whatever... We don't want you here anyway.

PHIL

Good luck on your plans to escape. I'm sure you two will have a hell of a time.

In the background, we hear an announcement being made.

ANNOUNCER

Tier fives, please make your way to the bridge. Non-tier fives, please make your way to the theater...

PHIL

So long, ladies. I think that's for me.

Phil leaves in a hurry and joins other tier fives at the bridge.

Trent, along with other non-tier fives, begins to make his way to the large tent when he notices Lenny lagging behind.

TRENT

Aren't you coming?

LENNY

I'll be there in a bit...

Trent goes on without him.

When no one is looking, Lenny HIDES behind a wall nearby, from where he has a clear view of both the large tent and the bridge.

As the video begins playing in the large tent, he sees all tier fives walking onto the bridge and the bridge tilting upwards, causing everyone on it to fall into the gorge. Everyone SCREAMS in terror but nobody in the theater is able to hear. THE SCREAMINGS IN THE VIDEO AND FROM THE PEOPLE FALLING OFF THE BRIDGE COINCIDE IN A PERFECT SYNCHRONIZATION. Lenny looks on with shock and horror.

EXT. INSTITUTE PARKING LOT - DAY

Jack pulls into the parking lot of a public building. The building has a sign written in large block letters which reads: "SOCIODYNAMICS GROUP".

INT. INSTITUTE - CONTINUOUS

Jack calmly walks into the building and is greeted by a FEMALE RECEPTIONIST in the entry hall.

JACK

Hi. I'm here to speak to Dr. Ross Bugarin.

The receptionist looks at him in dismay.

FEMALE RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry, sir. I'm afraid that wouldn't be possible.

JACK

How come?

FEMALE RECEPTIONIST

Dr. Bugarin has been dead for more than three decades.

Jack is surprised to hear.

JACK

Oh, I didn't know that... Thanks for your help.

FEMALE RECEPTIONIST

Absolutely.

Just as he turns to leave, he BUMPS into someone. It is the commissioner. Jack stares at him in disbelief.

The commissioner's coffee is spilled all over his coat and he's extremely upset.

COMMISSIONER

Hey, watch where you're going!

JACK

I'm sorry. I didn't see you.

The receptionist sees the incident and rushes to the commissioner's aid.

She gives him a paper towel to wipe himself and he hands her his stained coat. The commissioner looks at Jack with contempt as he exits the building. He laments to the receptionist.

COMMISSIONER

Can you believe this prick?

EXT. INSTITUTE PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Before entering his car, Jack catches a glimpse of the nondescript office building nearby, where the commissioner's office is located. After a few seconds' thought, he gets in his car and drives away.

INT. INSTITUTE - CONTINUOUS

The commissioner is leaning over the receptionist's desk as he speaks to her, almost flirtatious.

COMMISSIONER

There's been a request.

The commissioner slides a piece of paper across the desk toward the receptionist, which she accepts and starts looking over.

COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)

I've promised the administrator it
will be there before the end of
the month, so no delays.

INT. CAVERN - LENNY'S TENT - NIGHT

Lenny walks into his tent and finds Trent asleep. He nudges
him to wake him up.

LENNY

Trent, we have to get out of here.
Otherwise, they'll kill us!

TRENT

(groggy)
What are you talking about?

LENNY

I saw what happens on the bridge.
It's a death trap.

TRENT

What do you mean?

LENNY

As soon as people are on it, it
tilts up and everyone falls off.
That's what happened to Phil. Now
he's dead.

Trent is skeptical.

LENNY (CONT'D)

I know it's hard to believe, but
it's the truth. Believe me. If we
don't escape, we're next.

INT. CAVERN - NIGHT

A cavern door SWINGS OPEN and Colin comes RUSHING in. He
walks directly to the command center, where he's received
by the administrator.

COLIN

(upset)

How does he know?

ADMINISTRATOR

Excuse me?

COLIN

My coworker. How does he know I
work here?

ADMINISTRATOR

You tell me.

COLIN

He asked me if I knew about this
place. Somebody must've told him.

ADMINISTRATOR

Who's your coworker, if I may ask?

COLIN

Some guy named Scott.

ADMINISTRATOR

Scott who?

COLIN

Scott Ginsberg.

The administrator pauses for a moment.

ADMINISTRATOR

That sounds familiar...

COLIN

Yeah, well... we might have a
mole.

ADMINISTRATOR

Actually, I've been suspecting
that. In fact, I'm sure of it.

Colin looks at the administrator, baffled.

ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)

Don't worry about it. Everything is under control. Make sure you're not being followed.

Colin is reassured.

ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)

Why don't you go ahead and feed the dissidents?

Colin stares at the administrator for a while before walking out of the command center.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Pulling a utility cart with one hand and holding a flashlight with the other, Colin walks into a dark DUNGEON located in a far corner of the cavern. The cart is stacked with food.

INT. CAVERN - DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

We see several prison cells with bars. Inside the cells there are individuals chained to walls, where they languish in misery and despair. Colin goes to each cell handing out food trays through slots. The prisoners can move just enough to reach the food, before their clanking chains restrain them from going further.

INT. PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The adviser hands the prime minister a sheet of paper. The prime minister glances over the paper and immediately hands it back to the adviser.

PRIME MINISTER

Needs more work. Not convincing enough.

ADVISER

I'll make some adjustments...

PRIME MINISTER

Please do.

(pause)

Did you get help from the
commissioner?

ADVISER

Yes. I used all available
documents. Everything that was
researched has gone into this.

PRIME MINISTER

Well, it's not good enough. If you
ask me, this whole thing is
looking like a goddamn waste of
time.

ADVISER

What thing?

PRIME MINISTER

(frustrated)

This goddamn dianexus bullshit.
You know what I think? That good
for nothing doctor didn't have a
goddamn clue what he was talking
about. Now we have suspicion
surrounding that place... The
public wants to know just what the
hell goes on in there, and you
know what? I don't blame them.

INT. CAVERN - DAY

Lenny, Trent, and three other individuals are having
breakfast. Lenny sees Jeffrey from afar and goes running to
him.

LENNY

(out of breath)

I know what happens on the bridge.

Jeffrey is saddened by the news.

JEFFREY

I'm sorry...

LENNY

But, why?

Jeffrey looks around to make sure no one can hear and leans closer to Lenny.

JEFFREY

The last thing they want is for people to leave this place and tell the world about it. Once they're done with you, they'll get rid of you.

LENNY

But why don't you tell the world?

JEFFREY

Because nobody will listen.

Jeffrey looks at Lenny with sympathy.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

Listen, kid. The clock is ticking. Tomorrow you will find me by the bridge and I'll give you the key. Once I give you the key, wait for my signal to leave. Be careful.

LENNY

I will.

Jeffrey puts his hand on Lenny's shoulder.

JEFFREY

Good luck.

INT. RESEARCH CENTER - DAY

Scott is at work and the chair Colin normally sits on is empty. Scott casually approaches a COWORKER on the other side of the room.

SCOTT

Hey, Brent, where's Colin?

COWORKER

I'm not sure... I think he called in sick this morning.

SCOTT

Funny. He never told me. He usually tells me everything.

COWORKER

Maybe you don't know him as well as you think.

SCOTT

What do you mean?

COWORKER

I mean, you've only been here for three years. I've known him for much longer than that...

SCOTT

Tell me, what kind of things do you know about him?

COWORKER

I know he used to work as a recruiter for some underground project...

Scott's ears perk up, but he plays it cool.

COWORKER (CONT'D)

It's a secret facility built by the government, supposedly to carry out scientific research. A lot of people who work there were recruited from here... I was given an offer, but I respectfully declined.

SCOTT

How come?

COWORKER

Because of all the secrecy involved. I'm not into that stuff. Plus, my wife wouldn't let me.

INT. CAVERN - DAY

Colin enters the cavern and is immediately welcomed by the administrator at the door. They talk while walking to the command center. The administrator has his hand on Colin's back, guiding him gently.

ADMINISTRATOR

You're early today...

COLIN

Yeah. I thought I'd take a day off from the lab. I much prefer it here.

ADMINISTRATOR

Well, that's terrific. Because I certainly could use a hand right now...

Colin and the administrator enter the command center.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)

I need you to keep an eye on Mr. Jeffrey. Apparently he's involved in a conspiracy with one Mr. Lenny... Once you catch him in the act of handing away a key, I want you to apprehend Mr. Jeffrey and take him to the dungeon, where he belongs.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Stacey and Jack are at the front desk of a police station speaking to a RECORDS CLERK. Jack is carrying the baby in his arms.

JACK

We filed a missing person's report more than two weeks ago. We were wondering why we never heard from the police about the case...

RECORDS CLERK

What's the person's name?

JACK

His name is Lenny Ginsberg. He is thirteen years old.

The records clerk types in the information. She suddenly looks up at them with alarm.

RECORDS CLERK

I'm sorry. There are no developments in this case. There is nothing I can do for you.

Stacey is furious.

STACEY

But you're the police. You're supposed to help us!

RECORDS CLERK

Ma'am. I really wish there was something I could do, but there isn't. I'm sorry.

Stacey and Jack look at each other in disbelief. Stacey leans closer to the clerk in a somewhat threatening manner.

STACEY

Did you take my son?

The clerk gives Stacey a blank cold-eyed stare. Jack grabs Stacey by the arm, preventing further escalation.

JACK

C'mon, let's go.

EXT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Jack and Stacey exit the building.

JACK

I told you there's a cover-up.

STACEY

If the whole government is involved, who's going to help us?

JACK

We have to figure it out on our own.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Colin scrolls down a computer page.

CLOSE-UP. COMPUTER SCREEN

Pictures of various individuals from the cavern, including their tier number and full name, are displayed.

Colin arrives at the profile of Lenny Ginsberg, along with his picture and tier number, five.

INT. CAVEN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Colin looks closely at the name in disbelief and as he's doing so, his phone rings. He takes a deep breath and answers the call.

COLIN

Hello?

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Scott is sitting upright in his bed with the phone pressed against his ear.

SCOTT

Hey, Colin.

COLIN'S VOICE

Scott. What's going on? It's three in the morning.

SCOTT

Nothing. Just calling to see if you're okay. You didn't show up for work yesterday.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Colin speaks while looking at the content on the computer screen, occasionally clicking the mouse.

COLIN

Yeah... I'm not feeling too well.

SCOTT'S VOICE

You don't sound very sick...

COLIN

Stomach issues.

SCOTT'S VOICE

Oh, I see...

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

SCOTT (CONT'D)

I was wondering if you could help me out with some things concerning my son.

COLIN'S VOICE

(blurts)

You mean Lenny?

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Colin immediately regrets what came out of his mouth. A long awkward silence follows.

SCOTT'S VOICE

How do you know my son's name?

COLIN

I -- I -- You told me, remember?

SCOTT'S VOICE

When?

COLIN

A while ago, actually.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Scott is very suspicious of Colin, but does his best to hide it.

SCOTT

I don't remember ever telling you his name or you ever asking, for that matter.

COLIN'S VOICE

You probably forgot... I know his name.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Colin quickly changes the subject.

COLIN

So, what was your question?

SCOTT'S VOICE

Do you know about my son's whereabouts?

COLIN

No, Scott. I don't. If I knew, I would tell you. You know that.

SCOTT'S VOICE

Okay. I will see you at work.

COLIN

I'm probably not coming today, but you never know.

INT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

SCOTT

Well... see you whenever.

COLIN'S VOICE

Yep.

SCOTT

Get well soon.

COLIN'S VOICE

Thanks. I will.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCOTT'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT [MOMENTS LATER]

Scott RUSHES to his truck and quickly drives away.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Scott frantically drives through the heavy snow.

EXT. TRAILER HOME - DRIVEWAY - LATER DAY

Scott arrives at Stacey's and Jack's house.

INT. TRAILER HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Stacey and Jack are awakened by the incessant ringing of a doorbell. Jack goes to answer the door, still drowsy. Stacey follows him in her nightgown.

INT. TRAILER HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack opens the door and finds Scott covered in snow, agitated. He lets him in.

SCOTT

(hysterical)

He knows! Colin. He knows where Lenny is. He's in that place! We have to go!

JACK

Calm down...

Jack gives Scott some time to cool off.

JACK (CONT'D)

If we go, they'll kill us.

SCOTT

If we don't go, he'll die.

Jack looks at his wife for a sign of approval. She nods her head.

JACK

Okay. But first...

CUT TO:

INT. TRAILER HOME - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jack opens the bedroom closet and pulls out a RIFLE. He gives a HANDGUN to Scott, which he reluctantly accepts and tucks into his pants. Stacey watches with some concern.

STACEY

Please, be safe.

JACK

Don't worry. We will.

INT. TRAILER HOME - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jack kisses Stacey goodbye. Scott is in a hurry.

SCOTT

Come on, let's go.

EXT. TRAILER HOME - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Stacey watches from the doorway as Jack and Scott get into the truck and quickly drive away.

INT. CAVERN - DAY

A public announcement is made.

ANNOUNCER

Tier fives, please make your way
to the bridge. Tier fives, make
your way to the bridge.

Lenny reluctantly follows the rest of the tier five crowd to the bridge.

There is chaos as everyone clambers to be first in line to cross the bridge. Lenny looks around and a few meters away in the crowd he sees Jeffrey talking to Trent. Jeffrey then makes his way toward him.

Colin and several other moderators OBSERVE JEFFREY'S ACTIONS FROM A DISTANCE.

Jeffrey inconspicuously shakes Lenny's hand. CLOSE ON Lenny's palm to reveal a single KEY.

Armed moderators immediately STORM the area. Two of them GRAB Jeffrey from behind and take him away.

INT. CAVERN - DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

The moderators escort Jeffrey into the dungeon and throw him inside a prison cell, where they chain him to a wall and lock the door.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Colin snatches away the key from Lenny's hand and smirks.

COLIN

Nice try... Lenny.

Lenny looks at Colin with trepidation. The rest of the crowd continues lining up for the crossing, largely unaware of what's going on.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Scott and Jack SPEED along the freeway.

CUT TO:

INT. PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE - DAY

The prime minister fixes his tie while makeup is applied to his face. In front of him is a small mirror, in which he can see a reflection of his face, as well as a female secretary standing in the background. His adviser stands in front of him, observing the preparation.

PRIME MINISTER

(to adviser)

How do I look?

ADVISER

You look great.

PRIME MINISTER

Good. I don't wanna go out there looking like a scumbag.

ADVISER

You're okay... did you go over
your lines?

PRIME MINISTER

What lines?

ADVISER

The speech.

PRIME MINISTER

Of course. If I didn't, I wouldn't
be here, would I?

ADVISER

I guess not... May I give you a
few pointers?

PRIME MINISTER

Go right ahead...

ADVISER

Make sure to look directly into
the camera. Never look down longer
than half a second. If you have
trouble remembering a sentence,
move onto the next. Don't let your
voice crack. It's important to
clear your throat before
speaking... and drink some water.

PRIME MINISTER

What if I piss myself?

ADVISER

That's why you shouldn't drink too
much.

PRIME MINISTER

Jesus. You're starting to sound
like my father.

ADVISER

Also, never smile. Always refer to the greatness of our nation. Make the people feel like you're one of them. Studies have shown people are more receptive to things to which they can relate.

PRIME MINISTER

I hope you're right. I will do as you say. But if you're wrong, this will really hurt me during reelection, and I can't have that. Do you understand?

ADVISER

I understand. Trust me. This will work. It has been scientifically proven.

The adviser nervously smiles. The prime minister gets up to leave.

PRIME MINISTER

I will take your word for it.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Scott and Jack drive through a tunnel and enter a parking garage, the same ones as before.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

While they are in the midst of the tier five crowd, Trent shows Lenny a key. Lenny is astonished.

TRENT

He knew they were onto him, so he gave me the real key.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Colin and the administrator LOOK at an LCD MONITOR containing SURVEILLANCE VIDEO of Jack and Scott exiting a truck, armed.

ADMINISTRATOR

Who the hell are they?

COLIN

I don't know, but they've come prepared.

The administrator's concern begins to heighten.

ADMINISTRATOR

Activate the alarm system and make the warning announcement. Deploy the troops to every corner of the premises. We'll begin the countdown.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Armed moderators RUSH toward the exit door and standby for confrontation with the intruders.

CLOSE-UP. LCD MONITOR

Colin ZOOMS IN the security camera and has a clear FACIAL RECOGNITION OF SCOTT.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

He is taken aback, but doesn't tell the administrator.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Reporters and journalists fill the room waiting in anticipation for the prime minister's televised speech. Cameramen point their cameras directly at the podium. Suddenly, the prime minister comes from behind a curtain and calmly walks onto the stage.

To his back are two flags representing his country, one on each side. He waits for the room to quiet down before slowly beginning his speech, occasionally glancing at the piece of paper in his hand.

PRIME MINISTER

My fellow countrymen. Thank you for your time. Today's topic is about progress and sustainability, which are both fundamental for any civilization, including our own. This is why I am speaking to you today about the proposed budget which will allow us to achieve these necessary goals, and more.

CUT TO:

INT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

As Scott and Jack walk toward the cavern door with their weapons drawn, an ALARM SIREN goes off with a RED LIGHT FLASHING REPEATEDLY. A pre-recorded ANNOUNCEMENT is heard through a loudspeaker.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Warning. Unauthorized personnel. Please leave the premises. If you do not leave the premises, we will use deadly force.

Scott and Jack are startled by the warning and are hesitant to go any further. They look around the parking garage to see where the voice is coming from.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Warning. Unauthorized personnel. Please leave the premises. If you do not leave the premises, we will use deadly force.

Scott and Jack look at each other, uncertain of what to do next. A COUNTDOWN begins.

ANNOUNCEMENT

One, two, three...

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The administrator is anxiously PACING BACK AND FORTH.

ADMINISTRATOR

We're gonna shoot these bastards.
Get everyone in position.

Colin presses a button instructing the moderators to get into position.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Small loopholes open up across the cavern wall. Through them, moderators point their machine guns toward the targets, Scott and Jack.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

ANNOUNCEMENT

Six, seven, eight...

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Through the commotion, Lenny and Trent are scrambling to escape from the bridge. They lose sight of each other as the rest of the crowd pours onto the bridge.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

A barrage of GUNFIRE commences, barely missing Scott and Jack. Bullets ricochet off walls and poles as they duck for cover.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

PRIME MINISTER

At the beginning of this year, I had submitted to parliament a budget for "Project Metropolis", using not only my own best judgment, but also the knowledge and expertise of my advisers. This project is not just about the glory of our nation... It is something we must do in order for our people to prosper in the years to come.

CUT TO:

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Trent desperately looks for Lenny, but can't see him anywhere. He screams out his name but his voice is drowned out by the loud commotion. He sees the moderators busily engaged in a firefight and frantically RUNS towards the exit.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Scott and Jack find cover behind the truck. Scott fires off several clumsy rounds from his handgun.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Trent UNLOCKS THE DOOR and opens it. HE PLACES A TRAFFIC CONE BETWEEN THE DOOR AND THE DOOR FRAME and exits into the garage, where he finds himself in the midst of a gun battle.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The administrator is overwhelmed with rage as he presses Colin about Lenny's whereabouts.

ADMINISTRATOR

(yells)

Where is he? Where is that son of a bitch? If you let him escape, I swear I'll rip your goddamn head off with my own two hands. Do you understand?

Colin is visibly offended, but the administrator is too angry and wrapped up in himself to notice or care.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

PRIME MINISTER

This budget is more than just numbers, because behind it lies our ability to prevent future catastrophes and protect our interests, in a world where resources are scarce. It is part of a well thought out plan to make our country strong and resilient.

CUT TO:

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Lenny is pushing back against the tide of people going onto the bridge. As he pushes his way through the crowd, he sees the lady whom he had met several days earlier. He grabs her arm and YANKS her away.

LENNY

Come on!

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

In the surveillance video, the administrator and Colin see Lenny and the woman running away from the bridge.

ADMINISTRATOR

(furious)

Get him!

Colin reluctantly walks out of the command center to chase after them.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

We see everyone on the bridge FALLING INTO THE GORGE as the bridge RISES upward. Everyone SCREAMS as they PLUNGE TO THEIR DEATHS. Lenny and the woman barely manage to make it off the bridge.

Colin notices the people's suffering as they perish and a feeling of empathy washes over him. He turns and sees Lenny and the woman making their way toward the exit. Instead of chasing them, he RUSHES to the dungeon.

INT. CAVERN - DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

Colin unlocks the prison doors and unchains the prisoners, including Jeffrey. Jeffrey looks at him with gratitude. Without wasting much time, they both rush out of the dungeon.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The administrator sees what's going on in the surveillance video. He is apoplectic. He SLAMS his fist on the desk.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

PRIME MINISTER

Our efforts on this project began more than five years ago, when we commissioned the building of a research facility deep underground, where scientists and engineers are able to conduct

(MORE)

PRIME MINISTER (CONT'D)

their work in a well secluded
place, away from prying eyes and
other distractions...

CUT TO:

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

The administrator RUSHES to the moderators. He JERKS them one by one and points them toward Colin, Jeffrey and the freed prisoners. The moderators stop firing at Scott and Jack and turn to them.

ADMINISTRATOR

Shoot them!

The moderators are reluctant to follow the order.

ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)

I'm giving you an order! Kill
them!

Seizing their opportunity, Lenny and the woman SLIP OUT OF THE CAVERN.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Lenny sees his dad and Jack with their weapons pointed at the cavern and taking cover behind a truck. Trent is right next to them. Lenny RUNS toward them with excitement.

LENNY

Dad!

SCOTT

Lenny!

Scott and Lenny embrace and hug.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Oh, Lenny. I'm so glad you're
okay.

LENNY

Dad, they were gonna kill us! Phil
is already dead! Hundreds of
people are dead!

Scott squeezes Lenny in his arms.

SCOTT

I know. I know. You're safe now.
Nobody is going to hurt you.

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Jeffrey and Colin wait to see what the moderators will do. After a long standoff, the moderators lay down their weapons one by one. The administrator can't believe his eyes. He RUSHES to the command center.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The administrator quickly DIALS a number and gets into contact with the commissioner.

INT. COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The commissioner's phone rings. He answers the call while sitting comfortably in his executive chair. On the other end, the administrator speaks frantically.

ADMINISTRATOR'S VOICE

They won't follow my orders!

COMMISSIONER

Having a bad day, are we? Who
won't follow your orders?

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

ADMINISTRATOR

These goddamn moderators! What am
I supposed to do?

COMMISSIONER'S VOICE

You know the protocol. The facility must be secured at all costs.

INT. COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The commissioner plays with a pen while he speaks on the phone.

COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)

Remember what you pledged when you became a member of this organization? Secrecy or death. Am I right?

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The administrator is taken aback. He looks like he just had the wind knocked out of him.

ADMINISTRATOR

What about you...?

COMMISSIONER'S VOICE

What about me?

ADMINISTRATOR

You're not going to help me?

INT. COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The commissioner suddenly LEAPS into an upright position.

COMMISSIONER

(indignant)

Does it look like I'm in the position to help?

ADMINISTRATOR'S VOICE

I guess not, commissioner...

COMMISSIONER

Go and do your job. If you die,
you will become a martyr. You will
make Dr. Ross proud.

INT. CAVERN - COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

ADMINISTRATOR

(deflated)

I understand, sir...

The administrator hangs up the phone and slowly walks out
of the command center.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

PRIME MINISTER

Since then, we have come a long
way in figuring out what needs to
be improved, how we should manage
the project, and how best to
procure resources.

CUT TO:

INT. CAVERN - CONTINUOUS

The administrator watches the moderators, led by Jeffrey
and Colin, allowing all the remaining survivors to leave
the cavern, but does not interfere. Defeated, he calmly
continues toward the exit.

PRIME MINISTER (V.O.)

The budget request that is now
before the parliament has been
reduced to fit these developments.
Further cuts, however, will only
prevent the project from taking
off the ground, literally and
figuratively.

(MORE)

PRIME MINISTER (V.O) (CONT'D)

The choice is up to the men and women you have elected to serve in office. That means you, my fellow citizens.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

PRIME MINISTER

The choice...is yours. Thank you.

After taking one last glance at his silent audience, the prime minister quietly walks away from the podium and exits the briefing room, disappearing behind the curtain.

MONTAGE:

A FEW DAYS LATER

A police tactical unit BARGES into the commissioner's office. Taken by surprise, the commissioner immediately puts his hands up. He is taken into custody and brought out of his office in handcuffs.

Police cars fill the parking garage. Crime tape surrounds the premises and the cavern entrance is boarded up by special agents.

Jack, Scott, Stacey, Lenny and the baby are gathered at a dinner table full of enticing food. They laugh and smile together while chatting. Stacey hugs and kisses Lenny playfully as they enjoy their meals.

DREAM SEQUENCE/MONOLOGUE:

We see Lenny FLOATING in the dark emptiness of space, upwards towards the stars, inching ever closer to the sun.

He SHIELDS his eyes from the sun's powerful rays and just as he is about to be ENGULFED by the sun-

CUT TO: Lenny wakes up in his bed and takes a sigh of relief.

LENNY (V.O.)

Ignoring his father's advice,
Icarus soared higher and higher to
the sun. The heat melted his waxed
wings and Icarus fell from the
sky, just as his father had
warned...

LENNY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Nothing is free in this town. They
will tell you everything you want
to hear. Then when you give them
the time of day, they will get rid
of you and keep all your
possessions.

FADE OUT

THE END