VENUSIAN ACID

EPISODE 1: The Sabotage

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EPISODE 1: “The Sabotage”

114 pages

CUT TO:

1 EXT. ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE OUTPOST - DAY 1

A vast stretch of substitute landscape, a smooth metallic plate covering the usual hillside. In vein of RAF MENWITH HILL.

TITLE:

"As all-electric consumer vehicles were made mandatory 8th June 2036, automotive manufacturers evolved or died.

In September 2077, intelligent businesses have integrated this power-source into their commercial vehicles too, predicting the ban of ALL fossil fuels."

FADES EXCEPT:

"2077"

FADE:

2 EXT. EMPTY CITY STREET - JEWELLERY SHOP - DAY 2

An unnaturally empty high street in the centre of London. A jewellery shop in a normally prime location.

No cars, not even electric. Only a very slight progression of technology.

3 INT. JEWELLERY SHOP - DAY 3

Empty shop. One CUSTOMER loiters around in the background, taking their 14th pass at a diamond ring.

The STAFF are milling around the 4K TV in the corner. The more senior managers are gazing intently, while the assistants and apprentices lackadaisically hang around, looking for something to do in the empty shop.

TV SCREEN:

An aerial news shot of the OUTPOST, with a caption:

"Mining Operation To Crack The Value Of Diamonds."

4 INT. OUTPOST - PRESS AREA - DAY 4

The interior of the OUTPOST is cavernous. The floor is concrete and the ceiling and walls are lined with scaffolding and structural supports.

Journalists and news cameras teemed around like a throng of children, excitedly talking a presenting their stories. They are so packed in that getting a good shot is impossible.

NEWS 1:

PRESENTER 1:
Security keep dragging the more intrusive broadcasters away from the door to the actual work stations. The atmosphere is tremendous, and palpable for the entire 2 weeks since the dig began. It's unknown how far down the miners are, but based on the specifications of the equipment being utilised, they're coming up on the-

The camera jolts as another camera bangs into it, blipping the LIVE FEED.

NEWS 2:

PRESENTER 2:
A sort of morbid curiosity, the climactic end of the diamond trade as we know it. What are the board members thinking, or are they being steered by the influence of one Dr Edmund Byron? Do they know they're about to break the only money train that's keeping them afloat?

As the two cameras jostle for the shot...

INTER-CUT:

5 INT. JEWELLERY SHOP - DAY 5

The jewellery shop GENERAL MANAGER rubs his forehead, glaring at the TV.

GENERAL MANAGER:
Keeping them afloat? What a selfish knob thing to say.

SENIOR MANAGER:
(Interrupting)
Oi, Martin!

They turn to look at the one customer, who looks back disapprovingly.

GENERAL MANAGER:
Like it even matters.

Now offended, the customer leaves.

6 INT. OUTPOST - PRESS AREA - DAY 6

The crowd pushes forward. GUARDS steward rowdy journalists back along the far wall as more and more security pours out of staff entrances.

NEWS 3:

PRESENTER 3:
With the eyes of the whole civilised world watching, can THE DIAMINERAL COMPANY handle-

CUT OFF:

7 INT. DIAMINERAL BOARDROOM - OUTPOST - DAY 7

SLOW TRACK OUT:

An off TV cuts in abruptly, plunging the din of the crowd into silence.

The boardroom is empty and uncaring.

HARD CUT:

8 INT. ELECTRIC CAVEPARTER - BRIDGE - UNDERGROUND - DAY 8

Isolated and enclosed from the outside world, The DIAMINERAL Company's Electric Caveparter mining vehicle works it's way further and further down.

Melting hot prongs (4) pry open the rock below, and the plunging drill base (1) violently powers downward.

The prongs, in addition to their fierce downward destructive power, are topped with a long, smooth sledge like cap.

Mounted to the top of the Caveparter's main body is a tracked winch mechanism.

ON-BOARD:

Individually working the 5 major actions, with digital mapping assist, is the primary crew - CAPTAIN MELISSA ANDREWS (drill), First Officer MIKE JACOBI, Technicians DENNIS GOLDBLATT and ANDIE BENZ, and DR BOB LAKER (prongs).

Dr Laker's view screen reads:

"16.4 miles below sea level."

The RECORD LINE of 7.5 miles sat far above their icon.

First Officer Jacobi side eyes a tiny portable DVD player, showing 'Innerspace'. Tech Goldblatt is watching a bodged, rough broadcast of the news. Barely audible, he was watching the automatic subtitles. Little clips of sound break through.

Jacobi turns.

JACOBI:
Dennis? Dennis? Goldblatt, turn it off!

GOLDBLATT:
What, why?

JACOBI:
It's off-putting.

GOLDBLATT:
It's inspiring, sir.

Benz turns in her seat too.

BENZ:
I'm with Command, Dennis, turn it off. It makes me feel sick.

GOLDBLATT:
Techs should look out for techs, Andie.

BENZ:
Too bad.

Capt. Andrews turns to Jacobi.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
First Officer Jacobi, focus up.

JACOBI:
Yes Captain.

DR LAKER:
We're at 16.5, Captain. I recommend laying down a sample marker.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
Understood, Doctor. I'm calling HALF. Log break at-

TIME: "13:22"

CAPT. ANDREWS (CONT')
13:22, Officer Jacobi.

JACOBI:
Got it, Captain. Calling HALF, techs!

GOLDBLATT AND BENZ:
Yes, sir.

The prongs cease, steadying the vehicle. The drill arrives at a dead halt, no trail off, cut with efficient speed.

Benz turns to Goldblatt.

BENZ:
I'm still getting used to day shift. Lunch time at normal time.

GOLDBLATT:
Absolutely.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
Agreed, Benz. It's hard enough to keep track the schedule without working at 3am. Dr Laker, accompany me to the extraction lab. Everyone, you have permission to start eating without us.

JACOBI:
Yes Captain.

Jacobi, Benz and Goldblatt exit the bridge. Captain Andrews and Dr Laker exit too, heading in a different direction.

9 INT. ELECTRIC CAVEPARTER - EXTRACTION LAB - UNDERGROUND - DAY 9

The lab was minimalist and specific, with a pressure proof clear screen with view to the tunnel outside.

The Doctor approaches the extractor node, and Andrews observes.

DR LAKER:
There's a good visual indicator already.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
Oh. I can't see anything.

DR LAKER:
On the push-scope. A stark increase.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
What's the percentage since our last half mile sample marker.

DR LAKER:
I'm sectioning now, Captain.

Andrews steps back, waiting. She looks out of the clear screen. A prong is visible, it's outer shell still boiling hot. There's visible wear.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
The rate of wear is increasing too.

DR LAKER:
Is it serious?

CAPT. ANDREWS:
No. But even with constant case changes, the rock can't be affecting it that much.

DR LAKER:
My controls have a linear on board reader.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
Even on a linear read out, the wear is noticeable. I'll log it now.

She looks back.

CAPT. ANDREWS (CONT')
Before that, the percentage, Doctor.

DR LAKER:
In a half mile, 0.021% alternative minerals.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
Thank you, Dr Laker. Get yourself something to eat.

DR LAKER:
Yes, Captain.

She exits, leaving Dr Laker in the LAB.

He turns back to the node, disappointed. Turning to leave too, the clear screen fogs very slightly.

EXTREME CLOSE UP:

Condensation forms on the glass.

10 INT. ELECTRIC CAVEPARTER - BRIDGE - UNDERGROUND - DAY 10

Entering the BRIDGE, this time alone, Captain Andrews mans her position and opens up a log entry.

"SAMPLE MARKER ADDITION NOTE -

+0.021%

TARGET SITE BREACH - N/A

LINEAR CONDITION READ OUTS - INEFFECTIVE

SECONDARY CONTACT POINTS - DURABILITY - UNACCEPTABLE"

11 INT. DIAMINERAL MISSION CONTROL - TUNNEL ENT. / SURFACE - DAY 11

Sterile control centre. Complex display of monitors.

Staring intently, EDMUND BYRON PhD (Managing Director of The DIAMINERAL Company, Doctor of Electrical Engineering) sits hunched forward, gazing at a mission parameter map. He is wearing a jumper, in contrast to anyone else.

CONTROL OPERATOR:
Alternate mineral increase, plus urgent Captain's Log entry.

CONTROL PROJECT MANAGER:
Ascension track, 8 hours exactly.

A man in a grey suit walks in a sits next to Edmund.

DR MOORE:
The changes to the re-map have been submitted.

EDMUND:
An increase of 0.021% in a half mile is inconsistent with our re-map, even.

DR MOORE:
But it's just gone through.

EDMUND:
I can't believe it's taking you longer to send an email than it is for us to drill half a mile into the ground.

Silence.

DR MOORE:
Dr Byron, I supervise the-

EDMUND:
(Sarcastic)
Leave now. Go and supervise.

Without another word, Dr Moore leaves.

Edmund stands and walks over to the Project Manager.

EDMUND (CONT')
Find the parameter for the auto-piloting system, please.

CONTROL PROJECT MANAGER:
Right away.

The PM marches over to the two rear consoles and relays the instructions.

Edmund studies the readout:

"SECONDARY CONTACT POINTS - DURABILITY - UNACCEPTABLE"

12 EXT. ELECTRIC CAVEPARTER - UNDERGROUND - DAY 12

CLOSE UP:

One of the four prongs, visible from the clear screen of the EXTRACTION LAB. A thin but deep crack in the surface, still radiating from the heat. Moisture drips on it, steaming off. The quantity increases slightly.

13 INT. ELECTRIC CAVEPARTER - GYRO KITCHEN - UNDERGROUND - DAY 13

The kitchen, even more so than the rest of the Caveparter interior, is gyroscopically stable.

WIDE SHOT W/ SUPER:

Mechanism shown.

Jacobi, Benz, Goldblatt and Dr Laker sit eating at the rounded metal table in the middle of the kitchen space.

IMPROV.

GOLDBLATT:
Why don't you save the movies for the accession?

JACOBI:
If we hit a rock on the way up and break the hull, it don't be because we're all watching Death Race.

BENZ:
Is that really something you'd pay that much attention to, sir?

JACOBI:
Fairs. However, that's why we really don't need the news playing down here. Now that's distracting schlock.

Turns to Dr Laker.

JACOBI (CONT')
Doctor? Do you watch your stuff on the news?

DR LAKER:
Please, call me Bob. And no.

BENZ:
(Joking)
First names. Risky.

JACOBI:
Very true.

DR LAKER:
Why?

BENZ:
Captain Andrews likes to keep the namesakes very formal.

JACOBI:
Once I was on a rig in Utah, and vibrations caused-

Basically, this rig was a joke of a thing, it was a different company, and it was horrible... and vibrations caused a raised walkway to buckle with me on it when I was a security officer. I fell and broke my leg badly and I was screaming. Captain Andrews ran up and yelled, "M- Officer Jacobi has broken his leg!"

Laughing.

JACOBI (CONT')
Even in those circumstances, "Mike" is still too personal.

Captain Andrews enters, stepping onto the gyro platform. Everyone stifles their laughter slightly, and acknowledge her. They're all finished with their meals.

Andrews walks over to the fridge and takes out a small smoothy bottle.

JACOBI (CONT')
No hot food, Captain?

CAPT. ANDREWS:
Not enough time today. We'll commence in 1 minute.
(Pause)
The wear readers need more attention. I've put in a request to change them for ones with on-board recorders and not linear readouts. But for the runs over the next for days, keep an eye out for a rise in heat damage, jarring, etc. 'C.' especially, is showing significant tear. They'll be changed as soon as we ascend. The rising pattern is simple but you will miss it if you're not looking for it. Understood?

JACOBI:
Yes, Captain.

GOLDBLATT AND BENZ:
Understood, Captain.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
An unfortunate oversight. But reported.
(Pause)
Back to work, Officers.

They clear up, and exit.

14 EXT. ELECTRIC CAVEPARTER - UNDERGROUND - DAY 14

SLOW AND DELIBERATE:

Slowly, the machine charges to life from park. The prongs radiate, melting the rock around it.

It shifts.

TILT UP:

A terrifying, dark mudslide bombards the tunnel walls above, and approaches the Caveparter at a rapid pace.

It barrages the hull, spattering around the cable connecting it to the surface.

EXTREME CLOSE UP:

The mud engulfs the red hot surface of the prongs, caking and bursting into flames.

HARD CUT:

15 INT. ELECTRIC CAVEPARTER - BRIDGE - UNDERGROUND - DAY 15

The bridge echoes and buckles. Proximity sensors alarm, and fire extinguisher indicators prime.

Captain Andrews ceases the MAIN DRILL.

Jacobi draws up the emergency kill switch for the PRONG CHARGERS and initiates it.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
DISTRESS CALL - EMERGENCY EVAC!
Set pull speed to above standard safety parametres!

In the chaos.

GOLDBLATT:
Well over, Captain!

JACOBI:
Goldblatt, angle 'B.' up to 125 degrees! Up the face of the tunnel!

GOLDBLATT:
YES, SIR!

As Goldblatt carries out his orders, Jacobi inputs the angle on his own console for prong 'A.'

16 EXT. ELECTRIC CAVEPARTER - UNDERGROUND - DAY 16

The Caveparter tips up to one side on it's prongs (A,B), raising the body of the vehicle further off the cave floor.

17 INT. DIAMINERAL MISSION CONTROL - TUNNEL ENT. / SURFACE - DAY 17

CONTROL is at high alert, recording readings off the tunnel surface, the condition of the Caveparter, etc.

EDMUND:
With an additional escalating ramp up, equate an accession speed!

CONTROL OPERATOR:
Entrance mass equates to 4 miles, sir.

EDMUND:
Get them to that co-ordinate.

CPM walks up from a rear console where another Op (3) sat.

CONTROL PROJECT MANAGER:
Raise at an initial 20mph!

Calculations set.

Another console shows a reading for a power supply:

"COMPLETION CELL - 2,500 MWh"

CONTROL OPERATOR 2:
Domestic Cell at Maximum capacity, sir.

OUTSIDE:

At the TUNNEL ENTRANCE, the cable belt accelerates to 20mph.

SMASH CUT:

18 EXT. ELECTRIC CAVEPARTER - UNDERGROUND - DAY 18

The Caveparter hoists free, ramping up to the set speed. The build up of earth continues.

INTER-CUT:

19 INT. ELECTRIC CAVEPARTER - BRIDGE - UNDERGROUND - DAY 19

The CREW brace, kept steady by their buckled, construction style seats.

JACOBI:
Secondary Override! Raising mining prongs, Captain.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
Moderating angle balance. Technical reports!

BENZ:
(Monitoring)
Initial 0 through to 176 degrees, Captain!

GOLDBLATT:
Through to 178 degrees!

JACOBI:
Equal!

Nothing from Dr Laker.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
Technical report, Dr Laker!

JACOBI:
Bob?

Dr Laker is frozen, panicking.

JACOBI (CONT')
You're on double duty, Doctor!!

CAPT. ANDREWS:
Officer Benz, take the helm!

BENZ:
Yes Ma'am!

Benz connects a safety line, and unbuckles her seat. She struggles over to 'D' station from her 'C' station, and connects herself by Laker's side.

BENZ:
You alright, Doctor?

DR LAKER:
I'm sorry, I'm sorry...

Benz studies the read out: "0 - 155 degrees"

BENZ:
CRANK IT UP 25 DEGREES, SIR!

Jacobi responds, dialing prong 'D' up from 155 to 180 degrees.

INTER-CUT

The trajectory of the retreating Caveparter smooths out, and it accelerates.

CUT BACK:

CAPT. ANDREWS:
Yep, well over safety protocol. We're at 12mph.

GOLDBLATT:
14mph indicated.

Dr Laker breaths heavily. Benz uncouples herself from his workstation.

BENZ:
No worries, Doctor. We needed the reading.

DR LAKER:
OK.

Benz returns to station ‘C’ and fastens herself in.

Andrews turns to her console.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
Sustain for 12 minutes.

JACOBI:
The estimated weight is increasing.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
We’re corking the mudslide. Requesting acceleration.

She enters the message code.

20 INT. DIAMINERAL MISSION CONTROL - TUNNEL ENT. / SURFACE - DAY 20

The request comes through.

CONTROL OPERATOR:
Sir? Mission parameter request.

CPM reads the request.

CONTROL PROJECT MANAGER:
Approved.

Edmund watches on.

HARD CUT:

21 EXT. ELECTRIC CAVEPARTER - UNDERGROUND - DAY 21

The mud builds on the roof of the accenting vehicle, now disproportionately heavy. Metal creaks.

22 INT. ELECTRIC CAVEPARTER - BRIDGE - UNDERGROUND - DAY 22

The safely-by-depth metre charges up, and Captain Andrews acknowledges.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
Accelerating to 30mph. Approved.

JACOBI:
Breaking the 4 mile containment in 8 minutes.

GOLDBLATT:
Sir, the on-board cell is depleting at maximum.

JACOBI:
How long can it sustain?

GOLDBLATT:
3 hours.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
That’s more than enough to get us to safety.

JACOBI:
Calculate how the additional weight increase changes that time frame.

GOLDBLATT:
Yes, sir.

Goldblatt studies his monitor.

Captain Andrews looks at Dr Laker.

GOLDBLATT (CONT’)
There’s an error with the factors-

23 EXT. ELECTRIC CAVEPARTER - UNDERGROUND - DAY 23

The Caveparter continues to ascend, the torrents of mud flitting off the roof, clogging the mechanisms.

INTER-CUT:

Single control panel, indicating:

“SUDDEN - TRACK FAILING”

CUT BACK:

The tracked cable suddenly, violently snaps. The snagging prongs cut right through the tunnel wall, but the Caveparter plummets downwards.

24 INT. ELECTRIC CAVEPARTER - BRIDGE - UNDERGROUND - DAY 24

The crew are in utter terror, wrenching at the control switches.

CAPT. ANDREWS:
CRANK LEGS, NOW!

All 4 stations launch the emergency breaks. It’s no use.

Benz’s station alarms as the activated heat function breaches.

IMPACT

25 EXT. ELECTRIC CAVEPARTER - UNDERGROUND - DAY 25

At the bottom of the tunnel, the Caveparter crashes to the ground. It’s supports rupture, and it’s ‘C’ prong bursts into blaring, spluttering flames.

INSIDE - SHOTS OF CREW

The inferno spreads fasts, engulfing the machine.

26 INT. DIAMINERAL MISSION CONTROL - TUNNEL ENT. / SURFACE - DAY 26

The reader shows a heat signature coming from the bottom of the pit.

“1,100 Degrees Celsius”

CONTROL is silent, shocked. Edmund looks on.

Dr Moore, watching from the back, exits.

27 INT. OUTPOST - PRESS AREA - DAY 27

The low bang reverberated around the concrete hanger. The previously excitable chatter turns to confused silence. Then comes a push forward of question and badgering of the SECURITY GUARDS.

As the din increases further, a signal comes through on SECURITY CHIEF's (DEREKSON) beacon.

BEACON VOICE 1:
Third party travelling.

The security chief organises the closest guards into a clearing force, making a ribbon of space in the crowd of news people. When stood clear, rails rise out of grooves in the floor, forming a secure drive strip.

The door at the closest end opens, and a black ELECTRIC SALOON car pulls out. It drives to the hanger exit.

INSIDE:

Dr Moore is visible, looking mortified.

28 INT. JEWELLERY SHOP - DAY 28

As the news coverage on the TV shows the exiting car, and the chaos of the room, the General Manager of the jewellery shop watches on, uncomfortable.

Even the junior staff stare intently.

CUT TO BLACK:

<u>OPENING TITLES -</u>

29 INT. DIAMINERAL PRIME TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT - DAY 29

A clean development lab, featuring rows and rows of mining devices and vehicles, battery cores, and mysterious aerial vehicles with upwards destructive capabilities.

A Mining Engineering Chief (DR BRYAN BOONE), walks out into the open space. Along the long-side wall is a wide glass pane. It overlooks a stunning view of Budapest during the winter.

TITLE: "BUDAPEST"

Bryan approaches a large project in the centre of the view, a stripped and re-tooled Caveparter.

TITLE: 4th JANUARY, 2078

Sadly, he downloads the vehicles documentation, as well as some other designs onto a pen drive, and pockets it.

OUTSIDE the window, a POLICE BLADE (electric helicopter) lands on the drive way. 4 INVESTIGATORS climb out.

Bryan opens the main doors.

INVESTIGATOR 1:
Good morning, are you the liaison, Dr Boone?

DR BOONE:
(Reluctantly)
Yeah...

INVESTIGATOR 1:
Thank you, for your co-operation.

They enter swiftly, tagging the machines as they go.

Reaching the Caveparter, INVESTIGATOR 2 turns back to Dr Boone.

INVESTIGATOR 2:
You still use this?

Investigator 1 gestures to him to be quiet, but Boone approaches.

DR BOONE:
Nah, but we thought we'd re-purpose it for other things. DIY home stuff, gardening, medical use for people with really big teeth.

INVESTIGATOR 2:
Sir, don't-

DR BOONE:
Log them, leave, haul them away in good time.

INVESTIGATOR 1:
All we need is your co-operation on the companies behalf, sir.

DR BOONE:
You've got it.

He glances at the Caveparter shell, then walks out of sight, further into the location.

30 EXT. DIAMINERAL PRIME TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT - MORNING 30

The next morning, the transportation is fully underway. Enormous CARGO BLADES lift the mining equipment into the air, before steadily hauling them towards the horizon.

Watching this unfold, Boone sits on a sofa, visible through a raised window in the facility. The residential space.

31 INT. DIAMINERAL PRIME TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT - RESIDENTIAL - DAY 31

A complete, large apartment. Well maintained, but with no personal touch. A modern TV.

Playing on the screen:

- A prolonged documentary series about a failed mass stowaway situation on a SPACE CRAFT heading to MARS.

<u>"Space Interceptors"</u>

S. I. PRESENTER:
The inevitable fear of conflict in a confined, artificial gravity space in the martian atmosphere inevitably lead to a minor offender among the gang of stowaways to signal their intentions to the 34th blockade 50 miles from the then current shortest travel point...

The waffle sends Boone into a malaise, until -

The front door buzzer sounds.

Boone crosses to the door and opens it. Dr Moore stood before the welcome mat.

DR MOORE:
Hello, Dr Boone. May I come in.

DR BOONE:
Yes of course. Would you like some coffee, Dr Moore?

DR MOORE:
A cup of tea, if you have it?

DR BOONE:
I'm sorry, I don't have tea in here. Maybe there's some in the downstairs kitchenette.

DR MOORE:
No worries, may I have a glass of water then?

Boone walks through to the kitchen, and Moore follows.

DR BOONE:
How long was your flight?

DR MOORE:
35 minutes, and the drive was nothing at all.

DR BOONE:
Did you come from London?

DR MOORE:
My Milton Keynes office.

DR BOONE:
(Surprised)
Oh. Are you here in a private capacity?

DR MOORE:
I'm not. May we sit?

DR BOONE:
Absolutely.

Dr Boone pours the water and the pair sit at a dining table,

DR MOORE:
With the finalisation of the mandate, we're of course closing this development facility. This is the formal instruction.

DR BOONE:
Yes, I gathered.

DR MOORE:
You still have the documentation of the equipment?

DR BOONE:
Yes, as you requested. The Home Secretary's not going to appreciate that.

DR MOORE:
You, I and a select few have been asked...trusted by Edmund Byron. Your dedication in the accumulation of our assets is unmatched.

DR BOONE:
With the exposure, what is Dr Byron's plan for the future of the company?

DR MOORE:
As for the details, he'll contact you and request your presence at a confidential summit. What I will say, with authorisation, is that the door has been opened for a new evolution in commerce, how the entire economic system exists in our world. All based on the practical expansion of what we can achieve as people.

DR BOONE:
Sounds exciting. When can I expect him to contact me.

DR MOORE:
When this site is secure, and it's design mainframe has been backed up.

DR BOONE:
I'll separate the domestic cells from the couplings on every device. It'll make disposal cleaner and help them shift the material faster.

DR MOORE:
Inform me when it's done, Bryan.

He stands, and Boone stands too.

32 INT. DIAMINERAL PRIME TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT - DAY 32

CLOSE UP:

As Boone disconnects the final COUPLING, he looks round at the investigators. They were pre-occupied, puzzling over the deconstruction of a STEEL RAY tunneling craft.

Boone inserts a micro-SD into the base of the computer. Bringing up a full data back up, he transfers it all, wiping it from the mainframe.

33 EXT. DIAMINERAL PRIME TECHNOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT - DAY 33

As the final CARGO BLADE takes off, Boone walks outside pulling a compact travel bag with him. He closes the door behind him, and watches the final BLADE exit.

Boone then reaches into his pocket, and produces his phone.

He calls:

DR MOORE (ON PHONE)
Hello, Dr Boone.

DR BOONE:
Secured. I even removed the files they hadn't accessed.

DR MOORE (ON PHONE)
Good. How many did you remove?

DR BOONE:
83%, we have the only documentation.

DR MOORE (ON PHONE)
They're tripping over their own feet trying to keep up. There's no knowledge of the utilities.

DR BOONE:
They'll sit in a warehouse for the foreseeable future.

DR MOORE (ON PHONE)
To be used as exhibitions in court. I'll inform Dr Byron now.

DR BOONE:
Thank you.

DR MOORE (ON PHONE)
From me, good day.

Dr Moore hangs up.

Boone waits. His phone beeps. The app he uses is a closed hub. The new message simply read:

"16:00 - 05.01.78

1 Paveway Drive, Boston Spa, LS23 6SS"

The time is 14:30

Quietly, Boone looks back to his workplace. He chooses another option on his phone, and the interior lights switch off.

He crosses to his company car.

MONTAGE:

34 EXT / INT. BUDAPEST FERENC LISZT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY 34

Boone arrives and walks through the airport.

He passes shops and lavish displays.

35 EXT. HANGER / RUNWAY - DAY 35

WIDE:

An enormous JUMBO-CASTER (electric jet) sat in it's hanger bay. The logo on the side:

"Caster, a DIAMINERAL company."

The jet sat stationary.

PAN ROUND:

Another brand of jet takes off, the acceleration almost instant from coasting to take off speed.

36 EXT. LEEDS BRADFORD AIRPORT / ELECTRIC JET - DAY 36

The Electric Jet soars towards the airport. The sound is delayed, the plane's speed breaking the sound barrier.

INTER-CUT:

Boone looks down.

The jet lands.

37 INT. COMPANY CAR / EXT. ROADS - DAY 37

A second company car makes it's way down the country roads of Wetherby.

Boone drives. The inside of the car is laden with 360 degree safety readers. The speed is 110mph, even on a country road.

He passes a road sign: 120mph top speed.

38 EXT. 1 PAVEWAY DRIVE - THE BYRON HOUSE - EARLY EVENING 38

A minimalist sandstone estate, tidy in layout.

Boone's car pulls up on the gravel driveway, and he gets out.

At the door to the main building stands a security guard, MR MORTIMER.

Boone approaches.

DR BOONE:
Evening. I'm Dr Bryan Boone, here to meet with Dr Byron.

MR MORTIMER:
(Stony faced)
One moment, Dr.

He checks a digital register, listing 13 other names. He reaches Boone's name, with a side heading -

DR BOONE:
What does-?

Mr Mortimer selects the name.

The door opens, sliding back. Out walks SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
(Also stony faced)
Dr Boone, welcome. Come with me.

Taken aback by the odd polite stoniness, Boone enters the house, and Derekson closes the door.

39 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - FRONT HALL - EARLY EVENING 39

The hall is basic and tasteful, with the exception of a large spire object at the end of the hall.

As the two approach, it glows.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
Do you have a mobile phone, Dr?

DR BOONE:
Yes.

Boone produces it.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
May I take it for a moment?

DR BOONE:
Yes.

Boone hands it over, and Derekson plugs a jack into the bottom. The cable leads to a small hard-drive looking device.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
Thank you.

He hands it back.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON (CONT)
I've disconnected visual and audio record functions. Please submit your phone at the end to release the lock.

DR BOONE:
Of course.

Derekson opens the door at the bottom of the hall, and they move deeper into the house.

40 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - SECOND HALL - EARLY EVENING 40

They enter a SECOND HALLWAY. The technology worked into the architecture is even more prominent in this room. A display of the first designed COMPLETION CELL is present.

As the two head for a far door, Boone speaks up.

DR BOONE:
(Cautiously)
What's your name, sir?

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
Derekson, Security Chief, Dr.

DR BOONE:
(Jokingly)
With all these independent modules, you still have a cable device there?

He indicates the hard-drive in Derekson's pocket.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
Reliability.

DR BOONE:
Ah.

Derekson smirks for the first time.

They reach the door, and Derekson opens it. It's a platform-like SERVICE LIFT.

They get in, and Derekson presses the floor labelled "ELEVATION LOUNGE - Floor 6".

DR BOONE (CONT)
Does that mean...?

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
No, it's just the top floor.

The doors close.

41 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - ELEVATION LOUNGE - EVENING 41

The lift doors open.

The LOUNGE was huge, cavernous, lit naturally despite the fading outside light. The glass all around the ceiling displayed magnified stars, star systems, and planets within our solar system, from Mercury to Saturn.

Boone walks in, and Derekson stays put.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
Good evening, Dr.

DR BOONE:
(Turning)
Oh, thank you, Chief.

The lift doors close.

Boone approaches the middle of the room. There's a long matte finish table. Around it sat 13 people, quietly

conversing. A holographic display is projected in front of them, a programmed name tag system.

The attendees are:

Dr Louis Benjamin - Head of Mineralogy

Dr Milo Foreman, Dr Jill Mena, Dr Jacqueline Davis - Mineralogists

Dr Anya Bartkowiak - Head of Planetology

Dr Jean Guest, Dr Roger Pratt - Planetologists

Chief Darren Stapleton, Chief Lorraine Maxwell - Mining Engineers

Chief Bill O'Neil - General Engineering Representative (Contractor Company)

Dr Moore - Head of Technical Support

(Whom Boone clocks)

Flight Lieutenant Tom Dylan, Flight Lieutenant Barry Billingham - Support pilots

The dress code isn't formal. Somewhat relieved, Boone sits down too (14 in attendance), only for a graphic to show up in front of him:

"Dr Bryan Boone - Head of Mining Engineering"

Boone is shocked, and looks around awkwardly as everyone glances at his name tag. Next to him sat Chief Maxwell and Chief Stapleton.

MAXWELL:
Looks like you'll be calling the shots, Dr.

DR BOONE:
Yes... Bryan Boone, nice to meet you.

MAXWELL:
Lorraine Maxwell, your Mining Engineering team.

They shake hands, and Stapleton reaches over.

STAPLETON:
Darren Stapleton, Dr.

DR BOONE:
Please, call me Bryan.

They all sit back. Boone and Dr Moore lock eyes and nod to each other.

MAXWELL:
I love your work from the Budapest site. That must have been a dream come true.

DR BOONE:
It was.

MAXWELL:
Oh, I mean...

DR BOONE:
No, it's fine. That lead to this. Whatever it is.

STAPLETON:
Thank god it's not just us who's in the dark.

DR BOONE:
Maybe it's just engineering who don't get the notices.

On the other side of Boone sat Dr Jill Mena, Planetologist.

DR MENA:
It's alright, it's not just engineering.

DR BOONE:
Oh good. Bryan Boone- Dr Bryan Boone. The fancy name tag says it all.

They shake hands.

DR MENA:
Dr Jill Mena, Planetology.

DR BOONE:
You guys must love this room.

DR MENA:
Yes, it's a fantastic design. Not only as an art piece. It gathers detailed atmospheric readings from every planet in our solar system, and readings per se on planets beyond that.

DR BOONE:
How often do you collect here?

DR MENA:
Collect? Constantly. This is only my second time in here, myself.

DR BOONE:
First.

He falls silent, looking around at everyone once again. He stops on the two Flight Lieutenants. They are seated further across the table on the other side.

He turns to Maxwell.

DR BOONE:
Pilots?

MAXWELL:
Yeah.

Boone looks down at the table display. There are a collection of indicators with symbols on them. He presses one with a mic on it.

A faint mic boom echos around the room. Boone releases the button hurriedly.

DR BOONE:
I don't know what I was expecting with that. Excuse me.

He stands, trying to be discrete, and walks around the long table. He arrives behind the two pilots, who are seated, small talking with each other.

DR BOONE (CONT)
Excuse me, Lieutenant Dylan, Lieutenant Billingham?

They turn, in good spirits.

LIEUTENANT DYLAN:
Yes, Dr?

DR BOONE:
Bryan Boone, Head of Mining Engineering. Now I'm just reading my own name tag.

They shake hands.

LIEUTENANT DYLAN:
No worries. Dylan.

LIEUTENANT BILLINGHAM:
Barry.

DR BOONE:
Have you been informed of what's going on?

LIEUTENANT BILLINGHAM:
That's almost literally what we've been asking everyone since we got here. Sorry, Dr.

DR BOONE:
Wow. They're keeping this closed.

LIEUTENANT DYLAN:
Yeah, and is this a boardroom?

Dr Moore, sitting two seats away from Lieutenant Billingham, overhears. He leans back.

DR MOORE:
This isn't a boardroom.

A backdoor onto an OBSERVATION PLATFORM opens, and Edmund Byron walks into the LOUNGE.

Boone hurriedly walks the long way round the far side of the table, and sits back in his seat.

Edmund approaches the centre table, and stands at the head.

EDMUND:
Good evening, all. Are we caught up on credentials?

He looks at Dr Moore, then switches off the NAME TAG PROJECTIONS.

EDMUND (CONT')
All of you, and this certainly won't be the extent of it, are being invited onto a project. In the last decade, we've built the infrastructure of our organisation, and only 4 months ago, we commenced the final stage of this operation. An older project designed...to end it. End our company, end the next company, end our current economic system once and for all. Now you know why this, and every DIAMINERAL boardroom is empty, this isn't a company. This is an idea. A means to an END.

The room holds it's breath. Boone's initially nervous demeanor has changed to an intense focus.

EDMUND (CONT')
Now then, the final stage...is far from final. Going beyond that, the same principle, but on a larger scale. If we had succeeded with CAVEPARTER, achieving depths never charted before, and found the mapped diamond cluster... that would be it. I'm not going to insult you by telling you it wasn't tragic, or deeply disappointing. I mourn the crew of the CAVEPARTER every day. They died trying to achieve our vision. Personally...my priority. We'll continue that, TONIGHT. Join me on the observation platform.

He turns, and exits towards the OBSERVATION PLATFORM. Everyone stands, and follows.

As they approach the doorway, the wall around it slides apart into columns of metal, and they all walk between the resulting gaps.

The stars in the LOUNGE dim as the telescopes change position.

All the planets fade from view, except one.

42 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - OBSERVATION PLATFORM - NIGHT 42

The congregation walk onto the next deck. Rising up, out of the projected void of space, is VENUS.

Edmund turns to look at them all, observing them all.

EDMUND:
My proposal to you. Your time, your expertise. A journey.

He looks to Dr Bartkowiak and Dr Benjamin, and nods. He stands aside, still observing the group, as they step forward.

DR BENJAMIN:
Approximately 130,000,000 carats of diamonds are mined annually, with a total value of nearly $9 billion. As that yield decreases, industries plow more resources into discovering more to maintain the cycle. These diamonds, and not to mention other precious gemstones, increase in value. Caveparter's target would have beat that 32-fold. One step in devaluing the industry, and cutting the shriveling extremity off, leaving this empty industry to die.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
In one journey, we can destroy the value of any yield of diamond on Earth. An estimated haul and delivery of 800,000,000 carats of diamonds. $55 billion in value. A return trip from Venus. It's lack of tectonic plates, extreme blanket pressure and intense heat

(MORE)

Dr bartkowiak: (CONT'D)
are all indicators of a diamond layer under the crust.

The group shifts.

DR BENJAMIN:
And even empirical evidence of a larger quantity of diamonds under the surface could do the stock market enough damage...maybe...to cripple it permanently. A further estimated Octillion tonnes of diamonds.

EDMUND:
A space program. A complex inter-planetary mining operation. Calculated, but unprecedented. The system is in place, the mission objective clear. Now we need your skills and dedication. You all-
(Glances at the two presenting doctors)
-have the month to decide. My door is always open.

He smiles, and exits. Dr Moore follows abruptly, leaving everyone else to stand in stunned silence.

Boone stares at the floor. It reflects the Venus display back up at him.

The collection naturally split into small groups. Maxwell and Stapleton turn towards Boone.

DR BOONE:
On-board?

Slight nods.

DR BOONE (CONT)
A moment, please.

Boone turns to leave, and comes face to face with Billingham.

LIEUTENANT BILLINGHAM:
Well, now we know.

DR BOONE:
It's for the cause, I can say that.

He exits.

43 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - ELEVATION LOUNGE - NIGHT 43

The stars are back, and brighter than before.

Boone approaches the lift. Tiny lights on the top show which floor the previous users are travelling to. It shows

"Floor 3"

He calls the lift back up and steps in.

44 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - RESIDENTIAL FLOOR / MAIN OFFICE - NIGHT 44

The lift stops, and Boone gets out. He makes his way down the hallway, aware of his slight intrusion.

He listens, and hears faint voices from down the hall.

He walks down, finds the door the the MAIN OFFICE at the bottom ajar. He knocks.

INSIDE

DR MOORE:
(Interrupted)
The forwardness-

EDMUND:
Stuff it. Come in.

Boone enters.

EDMUND (CONT')
Hello, Dr Boone.

DR BOONE:
Good evening, Dr Byron. May I talk with you?

EDMUND:
Yes. Sit, please.

Dr Moore turns towards the door.

EDMUND (CONT')
Remain present please, Gareth, it's about personnel.

Vexed, Dr Moore sits back down on the side chair to Edmund's desk. Boone sits in front, and Edmund sits behind.

DR BOONE:
Mining engineering are all in.

EDMUND:
Excellent. Brilliant, in fact, it's a huge undertaking.

DR BOONE:
Dr Byron, I have some questions.

EDMUND:
Yes, and call me Edmund. May I call you by your first name? I like to keep these sessions informal, as a show of friendly appreciation.

DR BOONE:
Yes, that's fine.

EDMUND:
Fire away, Bryan.

DR BOONE:
First off, thank you so much for this opportunity...Edmund. This project is beyond anything...but I have some concerns over the safety.

EDMUND:
Understood. And you'll be relieved to know that Stage 1 of the operation acts as both a trail run, and a proof of concept.

DR BOONE:
A trial run. Unmanned?

EDMUND:
An interplanetary probe ship. The capacity to arrive, drill down and tell us what's what.

DR BOONE:
But not to return?

DR MOORE:
No.

EDMUND:
But to send back particulate reading, video surveillance, atmospherics, Planetology has that covered.

DR BOONE:
And Mining Engineering needs to get that probe deep enough to give readings?

EDMUND:
Exactly. And after that, a simple scale up will be required for the manned mission. You have plenty of the DIAMINERAL designs on file, and you'll have the departmental staff to create more.

DR BOONE:
I'll have?

EDMUND:
Yes, absolutely. One moment.

He flicks a switch, and twin screens fold out of the table, each off set to the right of Edmund and Boone. Dr Moore takes out a pad and stylus.

The screen shows a chart, listing completed personnel. The section for Mining Engineering scrolls in. Along with the established 3, were 3 other blank spaces.

DR BOONE:
To work alongside the current staff?

EDMUND:
Lorraine and Darren are the best of the other sites, but I need your insight, as the new head of the department. Your choice. Bare in mind the ideological factors.

DR BOONE:
Yes. How long.

EDMUND:
The window for the launch of INITIAL we have is from 15th March to the 22nd, 2079.

DR BOONE:
Oh. Why that window?

DR MOORE:
Air space regulations.

EDMUND:
We have 1 year and 3 months to build a probe rocket, and after it's launch, they'll be very little time to start our manned mission, approximately 97 days. A a crew of 29. Enough mining power to penetrate the crust of Venus, and enough torque to pull 160 tonnes of gemstone out of the atmosphere.

DR BOONE:
Well, with your Completion Cells, the power won't be the problem, but you already know that. You need speed of delivery on my front.

EDMUND:
Yes.

DR BOONE:
I have someone in mind. Hugh Barkley, Dr of Chemical Physics. He's an employee of yours, and he's not exactly a corporate shill.

Edmund glance sideways at Dr Moore.

EDMUND:
Can you interview him?

DR BOONE:
Right away. He'll need some information.

EDMUND:
You have Level 4 permissions, and Level 2 clearance. Extend him Level 4.

DR BOONE:
Understood. Thank you, Dr.

The two stand, as does Dr Moore with a slight delay.

EDMUND:
It takes a bravery to abandon the old economic system.

DR BOONE:
And a survival instinct to recognise and fight it's destructive power.

EDMUND:
Thank you, Bryan.

Edmund smiles widely, and Bryan leaves the room.

45 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - ELEVATION LOUNGE - NIGHT 45

The room is in full productivity mode, everyone shaking off the initial shock of Edmund's proposal.

Maxwell and Stapleton study Boone's designs. They've changed since last displayed, an overlay of development placed over the old design.

Boone enters the room, and spots them. He approaches.

DR BOONE:
We have a journey to make. Don't worry, it's shorter than that.

He nods to a magnification of Venus.

STAPLETON:
The moon?

DR BOONE:
Japan.

MAXWELL:
I'm all in, but won't a phone call do?

DR BOONE:
Eye on time management, but no.

Dr Moore walks in too.

DR MOORE:
Dr Boone? Dr Byron suggested you save the extra 10 minutes to the airport.

46 EXT. THE BYRON HOUSE - DIAMINERAL CASTER STRIP - NIGHT 46

The take off strip is short, hanging out the back of the complex.

At the threshold, Derekson is at the ready with his hard-drive.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
Mobiles, please.

They hand theirs over, one by one, and he enables them.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
Even with Level 2, don't think this is a reason to start keeping private logs of this development. Your logs will be files with the rest of the crew. For your convenience, that function has been made available on your mobiles.

DR BOONE:
Thank you.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
You'll be escorted by Mr Mortimer.

Mortimer takes over.

A DIAMINERAL CASTER stood at the ready, as Boone, Maxwell and Stapleton walked out onto the strip, accompanied by Mr Mortimer.

DR BOONE:
I don't have my suitcase.

MR MORTIMER:
There's fitted uniform where for all of you in the CASTER already, along with cleaning supplies.

DR BOONE:
OK.

MAXWELL:
Smart casual is out.

DR BOONE:
Yeah.

They enter the CASTER.

47 INT. DIAMINERAL CASTER - THE BYRON HOUSE - NIGHT 47

As the four passengers take their seats, the pilot turns in his seat.

LIEUTENANT BILLINGHAM:
I'll be your driver for this evening, and into the early morning, technically.

DR BOONE:
Awesome. Let's get to it, Lieutenant.

Lieutenant Billingham brings the CASTER around, and launches.

48 EXT. THE BYRON HOUSE - DIAMINERAL CASTER STRIP - NIGHT 48

The CASTER jumps to acceleration.

49 INT. HYDRO ELECTRIC POWER PLANT - WATER INTAKE - DAY 49

A gargantuan, exaggerated WATER INTAKE FAN AND GRID, lit with submerged floodlights.

Text appears:

"Negishi Power Plant - Osaka

06:00"

A small submarine appears in view, and approaches the fan.

50 INT. SUBMARINE - WATER INTAKE - DAY 50

INSIDE the sub, DR HUGH BARKLEY gestures to a monitor. It's viewfinder was fixed at the base of one of the fan blades, which was jammed solid with dead jellyfish.

Barkley addresses a second monitor, showing another man, business man KINJI NEGISHI.

DR BARKLEY:
(Japanese)
Case in point, Kinji.

KINJI:
(Japanese)
That's absolutely vile.

DR BARKLEY:
Yep. There's a major population problem, and that's at this time of year. Imagine in Summer time. They'll be coming out in the reservoirs.

KINJI:
I know it's a sales pitch, Hugh, but that isn't possible.

DR BARKLEY:
It's not good for the water, and it's certainly not good for the mechanics, I can tell you that much.

KINJI:
What do you suggest?

DR BARKLEY:
Cloud fishing.

KINJI:
I think Apple have coined that.

DR BARKLEY:
Heh, Clouds of Jellyfish, sir.

KINJI:
Fishing?

DR BARKLEY:
Yeah.

KINJI:
I'm a vegetarian.

DR BARKLEY:
Like pescatarian?

KINJI:
No.

DR BARKLEY:
Oh, well that's a preference thing, isn't it? You won't be eating them.

KINJI:
It's more of a principle, catching jellyfish to use as food.

DR BARKLEY:
I understand. But it's either catching them, thus finding a use for them, scooping them out of your intakes every week, which still equals the same number of dead fish, or finding some other way to control the population.

KINJI:
Like?

DR BARKLEY:
I'm not saying I would, it's crazy for an individual to chemically hinder a population. But I'm not the only person with a patent on jellyfish.

KINJI:
OK. What do you need?

DR BARKLEY:
The funding to build up the fleet needed to rangle these things. On a departmental basis, even.

KINJI:
And your fee?

DR BARKLEY:
You know me, Kinji, I just need a practical application for clean industry use.

KINJI:
As opposed to home use?

DR BARKLEY:
Clean home use.

KINJI:
Yes. Is that sustainable?

DR BARKLEY:
A clean cycle. I have many myself.

KINJI:
Do you do non-farms?

DR BARKLEY:
Yes, we do design features. They're very beautiful.

KINJI:
Hmmm. I'll think about it.

DR BARKLEY:
Take all the time you need. Maybe decide before Spring.

KINJI:
Smooth.

DR BARKLEY:
Thanks. I'll send the cleaning team down here.

KINJI:
Over and out.

The call ends. Barkley programs the sub to ascend, and types a log entry into the on-board computer.

51 INT. HYDRO ELECTRIC POWER PLANT - WATER INTAKE - DAY 51

As Barkley's sub ascends, the cleaning team's safety suits descend.

HARD CUT:

52 EXT. OSAKA - CITYSCAPE - DAY 52

Time: “07:00”

LOCKED STABLE SHOT:

Caster framed with the expansive city below.

The Caster, from it's docking point outside a simple hotel, accelerates across a charted pathway. It arrives at it's destination in less than 8 seconds, crossing 35 miles.

53 EXT. BARKLEY'S HOUSE - DAY 53

BARKLEY'S HOUSE is fairly traditional, but with just enough design touches to make it quite surreal to look at.

The Caster lands, stopping to a dead halt almost instantly.

It's doors open, and Boone, Maxwell, Stapleton, Lt. Billingham and Mr Mortimer step out.

MR MORTIMER:
Level 4 permissions. Former employment details please.

DR BOONE:
Yes sir.

The front (double) doors to the house open, and BARKLEY walks out. He's now wearing slippers, shorts and a t-shirt, despite the cold weather.

DR BOONE (CONT)
Hello, Hugh.

DR BARKLEY:
(Deliberate alteration)
Hey, Bryan-Boone. Are you here to arrest me?

DR BOONE:
No, we're here to pitch you something. An opportunity.

DR BARKLEY:
Oh. Are you all from DIAMINERAL?

MR MORTIMER:
An off-shoot.

Boone glances at Mortimer.

Barkley shakes everyone's hand, going round.

DR BARKLEY:
Dr Hugh Barkley, please call me Hugh.

MAXWELL:
Lorraine Maxwell, Chief Engineer for DIAMINERAL Brighton.

STAPLETON:
(Abbreviated)
Darren Stapleton, Chief Engineer for Liverpool.

LIEUTENANT BILLINGHAM:
Flight Lieutenant Barry Billingham. I flew the plane.

MR MORTIMER:
Mortimer, Security.

Barkley nods at him.

DR BARKLEY:
Cool. Let's go in, it's cold.

He turns, and they follow him inside.

54 INT. BARKLEY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY / LIVING ROOM - DAY 54

The interior is very different, the inverse of the outside.

The floor is a tasteful, normal wood. However, the walls and ceiling are an enclosed aquarium, containing hundreds of thousands of jellyfish, off thousands of different varieties.

Boone looks bemused. Maxwell, Stapleton and Lt. Billingham look amazed, gazing around. Mr Mortimer parts his mouth slightly, more out on concern than awe.

It's warm, and everyone takes off their uniform jackets except Mortimer.

DR BOONE:
New company?

DR BARKLEY:
More freelance work, plus interior design.

They enter the living room, full of rustic furniture, contrasted with, now, a floor to match the walls and ceiling. In the larger space, they were split into sections. In between each section are gaps, which upon further inspection by Lt. Billingham on one side and Stapleton on the other are revealed to be walkways.

Tiny metallic bands sat at the bottom of each section. Lt. Billingham reads the text under a tank of smaller, bright orange ones, gathered together in a swarm.

"Rhopilema esculentum - 2078/06/20"

LIEUTENANT BILLINGHAM:
Excuse me, Dr Barkley?

Barkley grimaces at the formality, but approaches.

DR BARKLEY:
Yes, sir?

LIEUTENANT BILLINGHAM:
What does the date signify?

DR BARKLEY:
Estimated expiration.

LIEUTENANT BILLINGHAM:
Like...when they die?

Dr Barkley opens his mouth to answer, but is interrupted.

STAPLETON:
Is one doesn't have a date.

Stapleton is looking at an enormous specimen, on the other side: "Cyanea capillata"

DR BARKLEY:
The lion mane?

STAPLETON:
I guess.

DR BARKLEY:
That one isn't edible.

LIEUTENANT BILLINGHAM:
Ey?

DR BARKLEY:
At least not yet. My fund develops new preparation methods every day.

He guides Lt. Billingham out, meeting the rest in the middle of the living room as he talks.

DR BARKLEY (CONT')
We made Drymonema dalmatinum edible last year with soft water processing. The "Stinging cauliflower" now taste better than the regular.

His eyes light up. Maxwell leans forward, fascinated. The Lt. looks respectfully keen, but Stapleton looks peaky.

DR BARKLEY (CONT')
How about breakfast?

He excitedly leaves for the KITCHEN. Nervously, everyone follows.

55 INT. BARKLEY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN / PREP STATION - DAY 55

A towering preparation double-tank, containing a vast, pink jellyfish, the Stinging Cauliflower. It is situated in the tank furthest away.

DR BARKLEY:
Into place. Completion Jets courtesy of Dr Byron.

As the others watch, the Completion Jets activate, drawing the animal closer. It enters the second tank, and the divider closes behind it.

Slowly and methodically, Barkley lines up the automatic pumps on the side. Salt water thunders out, leaving the jellyfish dry and suspended on a pristine gauze below.

DR BARKLEY (CONT')
Rinse.

A fresh water vapor rapidly fills the empty tank.

DR BARKLEY (CONT')
It's not only water. It's an extractant.

He point to under the gauze. Tiny crystals of salt and venom had formed.

CLOSE UP:

The gauze's thin weave opens slightly, producing thinner but simple devices. Venom glands sever and erode into the gaps, expelling as waste out the side.

MAXWELL:
That was no time at all.

DR BARKLEY:
The irony is that it took us forever to achieve. Really balances it out.

The venom crystal layer lowers down, and sifts into a vial.

DR BARKLEY (CONT')
For documentation. Or mixers, perhaps.

Boone smirks.

The fish lowers on it's mountings, and slides down a subtle slide onto a chopping board.

DR BARKLEY (CONT')
Fantastic device. Fully developed, one of a kind.

STAPLETON:
No patent.

DR BARKLEY:
Don't need it.

Stapleton looks forward at it.

DR BARKLEY (CONT')
The sustainable future of protein, fishing an domestic farming. Looks great in a house, and way tastier than any lava-lamp.

DR BOONE:
How about; we get tea and coffee, we talk, then you cook for us?

DR BARKLEY:
D'you know what, grab the coffee, we'll talk over prep.

HARD-CUT:

Coffee and tea gets made. Maxwell, Stapleton, Lt. Billingham exit into the DINING ROOM.

INSERT - WIDE SHOT:

Entering the dining room on the other side. Cavernous aquariums, with the exterior windows visible behind them. Traditional wooden dining table, chairs and floor.

KITCHEN:

On the chopping board, Barkley starts cutting the fish into strips. He had a stack of ingredients all around.

Mr Mortimer comes face to face with Boone at the threshold.

MR MORTIMER:
I requested level 3 permissions from Moore and it was approved.

DR BOONE:
Thank you.

MR MORTIMER:
We've spent a lot of time here. Start the interview now.

DR BOONE:
One to one.

MR MORTIMER:
Of course.

Boone nods. Mortimer exits. Boone approaches Barkley.

DR BOONE:
(Under his breath)
Charming man...

He walks round to the opposite side of the counter.

DR BOONE (CONT)
I think it would be best if you just did that.

DR BARKLEY:
Good call.

DR BOONE:
While I give you some more information about this assignment.

DR BARKLEY:
OK.

DR BOONE:
I'm confident in your qualifications. You're way over, in fact. The only thing I can see

(MORE)

DR Boone: (CONT'D)
being an issue is your current career progression.

DR BARKLEY:
Jumping the gun, a little. What is the job?

Boone sighs.

DR BOONE:
Here we go... It's a predictive mining operation.

DR BARKLEY:
(Impatiently)
I...yeah.

DR BOONE:
Diamond haul. 4 miles of crust.

DR BARKLEY:
Would that be a large enough yield?

DR BOONE:
It will be on Venus.

DR BARKLEY:
Excuse me?

DR BOONE:
Edmund Byron is creating a space program. Privately and independently funded.

DR BARKLEY:
For what? 100+ tonnes of precious rock?

DR BOONE:
More importantly, empirical proof of a precious mineral layer under Venus' surface. An immediate depreciation in the value of the the diamond trade.

DR BARKLEY:
I though that was just some half-baked pseudo-scientific theory published by broadsheets 20-63?

DR BOONE:
They think in such 2 dimensional terms. Short sighted conclusions. This is more.

DR BARKLEY:
A theory. A nice one...

DR BOONE:
A final affront to a dying economy. A chance at everything we've ever wanted.

DR BARKLEY:
You don't have to convince me of the good.

DR BOONE:
I look around and I see evidence of this, but straight from you and how you see it, how does this work?

He gestures to the surrounding artificial ecosystem.

DR BOONE (CONT)
Tell me more about what you're actually doing here.

Barkley sets down his knife, having finished cutting the fish, vegetables and fresh spices. He switches on his electric hob.

DR BARKLEY:
DIAMINERAL became a slow crawl just to get diamond dust under our fingernails.

He puts two pans on the hob.

DR BOONE:
You can be forgiven for thinking that, but I can assure you that this isn't that.

DR BARKLEY:
OK. This is all funded by departmental work, in association with Negishi Power. If that's the only way I can create economically and environmentally viable business for myself, so be it.

DR BOONE:
It's a bit bizarre though, isn't it?

DR BARKLEY:
I disagree.

DR BOONE:
OK.

DR BARKLEY:
It’s a development which requires constant innovation and creative thought, and that produces the bare minimum amount of money I need to live. It’s also nowhere near as damaging to the ecosystem as drilling is.
(Pause)
I want in though, if this is the best chance of reaching that. A new economic system built on anything else. Anything. And, for the time being, chemical solutions so that you don't dissolve in the atmosphere. Sorry for the blast of reality, but it'll factor into everything you're doing.

DR BOONE:
Thank you, Hugh. You're the only man for the job.

Barkley stares at him.

DR BOONE (CONT)
Can I tell you that I've breached permissions to get you on-board?

DR BARKLEY:
In that case...

DR BOONE:
Very good.

Boone exits to the dining room.

Barkley turns to the pans on the hob.

DR BARKLEY:
Mum, I nailed the interview.

CLOSE UP:

He tips the ingredients into the separate pans.

HARD-CUT:

56 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - WORKSHOP LEVEL 1 - DAY 56

More of a cavernous hanger bay than a workshop. Location on a lower level of the BYRON ESTATE.

Edmund enters from the service lift and approaches the small group working in the centre.

The head of the Mineral Department Dr Louis Benjamin, the head of Planetology Dr Anya Bartkowiak, and the rest of the mineralogists Dr Milo Foreman, Dr Jill Mena and Dr Jacqueline Davis are gathered around the empty design shell of the PROBE SHIP (INITIAL).

Edmund begins recording on a remote microphone, located in the workshop's floor.

EDMUND:
Log recording.

INSERT:

Time on file reads "09:17"

CLOSE UPS:

Elements of the final ship's design, miniaturised for the probe -

- Failable hulls

Edmund points.

EDMUND:
Louis? This was on the first designs.

DR BENJAMIN:
And it was on-point. Failable hulls with space for control modules. Will be airtight, designed to melt safely when the exterior shell erodes.

EDMUND:
When? It was meant as an if.

DR BENJAMIN:
There are metals which can survive contact with Venus' surface, but all will inevitably be softened. And the size of the manned vessel, there will be ruptures.

Edmund points to the frame struts.

EDMUND:
And this is made of?

DR BENJAMIN:
Tungsten steel alloy struts, sir.

DR MENA:
With Iron-Nickle exterior panels.

DR BENJAMIN:
The melting points of each far surpass the highest estimates for Venus' surface heat, but as we descend through it's crust, the insulation effect will raise the temperature. The rock itself will melt onto the exterior, causing the expansion and buckling. The hulls will act like a time release, delaying the structural failings. A breach will take days to affect the ship, rather than minutes.

EDMUND:
How long will the initial breach take?

DR BENJAMIN:
26 hours.

DR MENA:
And complete structural failure in 61 hours in addition.

EDMUND:
Get in, haul, get out will take 5 days with safe parametres.

DR BENJAMIN:
We need to boost the speed of the drill down then.

EDMUND:
By 2 days. 2 miles.

- Acid protection

DR BARTKOWIAK:
(Head of Planetology)
Now this is what we need consultancy on, from your Chemical Physics guy.

EDMUND:
Inbound. Dr Boone's made sure.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Venus' sulfuric acid collations will contribute to eroding the surfaces of the ship. And dependent on which form of it the ship stays in the longest, we need to create a alkaline neutraliser method.

EDMUND:
You'll have a council with Dr Barkley as soon as he arrives. And we need to integrate the mining equipment into the INITIAL probe so it can be deployed.

The rest of the Planetology Department are studying a detailed diagram of the theoretical diamond layers of

Venus. Planetologists Dr Jean Guest and Dr Roger Pratt discuss:

DR GUEST:
It’s more likely to be a denser form, higher carats. Taaffeite.

DR PRATT:
That'd be at 8 miles deep. Mission parametres indicate we'll be hitting clusters at 4 miles, with the INITIAL touching down at 2 miles and the manned touching down at 5.

Pratt pauses.

DR PRATT (CONT)
Diamond is optimistic.

DR GUEST:
Our mountain and pressure maps indicate the chances are good.

DR PRATT:
The probe is bound for Plain 102. Deepest trench in the closest hemisphere. Hitting the money is still unlikely, with two incisions.

DR GUEST:
The yield isn't my concern.

DR PRATT:
I know. We can't just poke around a planet for the research alone.

DR GUEST:
They do less than that in space. It's a tourism industry. It's meaningless, it's commercial-

DR PRATT:
It's unsustainable.

DR GUEST:
It's easy. Broadening our horizons to minerals, atmospheres, biology of other

(MORE)

DR guest: (CONT'D)
planets. That's our way forwards, leaving the accumulation of wealth behind and collecting knowledge instead.

DR PRATT:
It's important not to leave the rest of humanity behind to, Jean. And our sustainability is dependent on the yield. Predominantly.

Dr Bartkowiak approaches, and their candid conversation stops.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Department meet, Log recording.

Behind them, Edmund turns for the lift.

The log cuts, and SAVES.

57 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - ELEVATION LOUNGE - DAY 57

The empty room, with the long table. The silhouettes of Edmund, and the three members of the planetology department are waiting, visible through the entrance to the OBSERVATION PLATFORM.

Out of the lift walks the Boone and Barkley. They approach the table, as do the rest. They meet halfway, and shake hands.

EDMUND:
Dr Barkley, welcome. We have a technical scheduled. Dr Boone, please may you make your way down to the workshop level 1, there's some questions regarding materials from Dr Benjamin that need answering.

DR BOONE:
Yes, sir.

EDMUND:
The minutes will be made available to all.

DR BOONE:
Thank you.

He turns and exits.

INSERT:

Time on file reads "10:11"

EDMUND:
Sit please.

Barkley and the rest of the room take their seat.

EDMUND (CONT')
You're introduced?

DR BARKLEY:
I read up on the CASTER.

EDMUND:
Your name is filed.

DR BARKLEY:
The alkaline neutraliser design is adapted from a filter module. It needs altering for the new materials and a cooling system for temperatures over 500 degrees Celsius. That shall take 1 month, testing inclusive. I'm aware of the metals, but can the design grafts be put on and are there placeholders in the shell.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
No, they're not. We'll file them now, how long will the adaptation take?

DR BARKLEY:
Estimated, 3 days. I'd love to get cataloging, the chemical itself will be the most time consuming part of the process.

EDMUND:
Whatever you need.

DR BARKLEY:
We need something strong enough to neutralise concentrated sulfuric acid, delivered in method which won't jeopardise the vehicle itself. A measuring device is needed to gauge the quantity of surface acid and automatically dispense the agent. A basic positive to negative reader, nonlinear.

Edmund looks down, then nods.

EDMUND:
We have an order directory for materials. Thank you, Dr Barkley.

Barkley nods, and stands. As does everyone else.

DR BARKLEY:
Please may someone show me where the workshop is?

DR GUEST:
Yes, follow me, sir.

They walk back to the lift.

DR GUEST (CONT')
Workshop levels. You'll want the 1st.

DR BARKLEY:
This is a house?

They exit.

58 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - WORKSHOP LEVEL 1 - DAY 58

Boone approaches the mineralogy department (Dr Louis Benjamin, Dr Milo Foreman, Dr Jill Mena, Dr Jacqueline Davis).

DR BOONE:
I'm sorry, I had to dash off on a recruitment drive.

DR BENJAMIN:
That quite alright. You're up to date?

DR BOONE:
Yes. The plating needs to be applied to the blueprints of the primary mining unit, a modified remote Caveparter with an assist, a 2nd collector vehicle. This will collect landmass and benefit with the suspected amount of atmospheric interference we'll get under the ground on Venus.

He looks up at the design shell of the INITIAL.

DR BOONE (CONT)
What's it called? It's not in the filing.

DR MENA:
INITIAL.

DR BOONE:
(Pleasantly)
A bit literal. The nose cone of the INITIAL will house a miniaturised Caveparter, seeing as there's very little room for an unloading mechanism which the manned mission will have...

He trails off.

DR BOONE (CONT)
What's the 29 crewer called?

DR DAVIS:
That's unnamed as of yet.

DR BOONE:
Well, lets call it SECOND INITIAL, just for clarity. It'll be based on a silo configuration?

Chief Bill O’Neil enters from behind.

O'NEIL:
We're waiting on you for the housing area.

DR BOONE:
Very good. I'll have all capacity numbers to you. My station...

He looks round, noticing Stapleton and Maxwell at a corner of the room, studying a DIGITAL WALK IN WIRE FRAME of the Caveparter.

DR BOONE (CONT)
(to Min Dep.)
Thank you, everyone. No weight issues, that's calculated correctly.

He jogs over to his staff.

MAXWELL:
We really need golf carts in here.

DR BOONE:
Yeah, it's less workshop and more factory floor.

MAXWELL:
And this is only 1. Silo planning station is on 2 through 3, below us.

DR BOONE:
It'd be quicker if we could use the original and change it's hardware, but they have us with this. The others are gone, confiscated.

STAPLETON:
Do we have the software on file?

DR BOONE:
Yes, adapted. The government archives filed the old software, from the original Caveparter, but that's been out of date since before the accident.

O'Neil walks up.

O'NEIL:
You created this.

DR BOONE:
No, but I made it what it is now.
What it could be.
(looks to him fully)
Please may I see the silo?

O'NEIL:
Upstairs said INITIAL was
priority 1.

DR BOONE:
I understand, but INITIAL's going
to need a miniaturised version of
what we already have.

O'Neil nods.

ACROSS THE WORKSHOP

Barkley studies INITIAL. He then catalogs a list of alkalies with a control pad and stylus, comparative to both a sheet of Iron-nickle alloy and a triangular configuration of Tungsten-steel alloy.

59 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - WORKSHOP LEVEL 2/3 - DAY 59

Boone gazes down (from 2) at the metal vertical rib cage of SECOND INITIAL's silo section. Construction was underway.

DR BOONE:
How large is your team, Chief?

O'NEIL:
10, plus me.

DR BOONE:
(Surprised)
10?

O'NEIL:
I know, right? We had it cut from
30, before the project started.

DR BOONE:
When did you start?

O'NEIL:
October. Us, plus mechanical assist from DIAMINERAL. Dr Moore, and such.

DR BOONE:
The core of the final ship. The Tungsten Alloy?

O'NEIL:
Yes. The protectors on the drop doors are thick enough to operate well beyond the estimated time the hull will last once on the surface. Have you been told about the power cells?

DR BOONE:
Not the ships?

O'NEIL:
Yes, there’s another private contractor coming in to build the mainframe for the Completion Cell system. Her name is Danielle McCarthy.

DR BOONE:
And that falls under General Engineering staff?

O'NEIL:
Yes.

DR BOONE:
We’ll certainly need the lift. It’ll be getting on for 160 tonnes, and that’s in our atmosphere.

O'NEIL:
Do you know why they’re not assembling the sections in earth’s orbit?

DR BOONE:
Once we launch INITIAL, we're not going to have enough time to do that. That'll expose the launch site...

Boone looks down.

O'NEIL:
What is it?

DR BOONE:
If we can covertly transport it, we could keep the SECOND INITIAL here, and move INITIAL to another launch site. It'll bring the project forward if we can find somewhere with an earlier blind spot than here. 15th March 2079, to say, November this year. Excuse me, Chief O'Neil.

O'NEIL:
OK, do what you need to do.

Boone walks to the lift, thinking.

HARD CUT:

60 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - RESIDENTIAL FLOOR / MAIN OFFICE - DAY 60

INSERT:

Time on file reads: "11:13"

Edmund looks intently, as Boone explains his idea. Dr Moore was there, along with Security Chief Derekson and Mr Mortimer.

EDMUND:
For all security concerns.

DR BOONE:
Yes, sir. This is time sensitive, so thank you for speaking to me. I think we can move the launch of INITIAL forward, as well as giving us more time with SECOND INITIAL.

EDMUND:
It’s that it’s pet name?

DR BOONE:
Yes.

EDMUND:
How do you plan on doing this?

DR BOONE:
If we move the INITIAL to a separate launch site, it’ll alert the police when it takes off but they’ll be no way of tracing it. As long as we can find one with a similar blind spot in its security sweep, but sooner than planned, the rocket won’t be intercepted. We can the launch SECOND INITIAL as soon as it’s completed.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
How do we move a rocket, probably 80 miles?

DR BOONE:
In sections. Assemble it on site.

EDMUND:
In road cars. I don’t think we can justify a flight plan for this, legally.

DR MOORE:
Something tells me the insurance won’t fly either.

EDMUND:
We’ve come too far to be constrained by that.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
(To Boone)
How many sections.

DR BOONE:
9. 2 halves of the fuselage, 4 Completion Cells, 1 cord Caveparter, 1 broadcast station, 1 launchpad, with self destruct.

MR MORTIMER:
The remains could still be traced.

DR BOONE:
Dr Barkley can do it. We'll even demonstrate, I'll put it on his itinerary.

DR MOORE:
The window, what was your estimate?

DR BOONE:
November this year.

Edmund pauses.

EDMUND:
I'll look into it. Personally.

DR BOONE:
Thank you.

EDMUND:
Move ahead with this in place. Airspace blind spots need to be calculated but we only need one, within at least 100 miles.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
I'll put a call list for drivers on that day. We'll have to keep it tight to personnel level 3 and over.

DR BOONE:
I need to inform Mining Engineering. And General may need foreknowledge today.

MR MORTIMER:
Why?

DR BOONE:
Workflow, there's 10 of them.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
Understood.

Boone nods, and exits.

He takes out his phone and programs Barkley's itinerary:

"Launchpad - INITIAL - Self destruct DESCRIPTION: ATOMISE

REQ: ASAP"

61 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - WORKSHOP LEVEL 1 - DAY 61

The notification comes through on Barkley's device.

DR BARKLEY:
Looks like there's been a change of plan.

Maxwell and Stapleton look round at him.

62 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - ELEVATION LOUNGE / OBSERVATION PLATFORM - DAY 62

The lift doors open.

Boon enters the ELEVATION LOUNGE. He walks past the main table. Behind him was a MAGNIFIED image of a plane, it's condensation stream copied in multiple lenses.

Boone passes by, onto the OBSERVATION PLATFORM.

He walks towards the GIANT VENUS MAGNIFICATION at the bottom, still visible in day light.

As he approaches, the sky vanishes to show the space beyond, along with colourful interference from Venus's atmosphere.

TRACKING WIDE SHOT SILHOUETTE:

As Boone walks further and further, the light from the blue tinted lounge gets dimmer and the gap gets smaller. It eventually vanishes behind Boone.

FROM BLACK:

63 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - WORKSHOP LEVEL 1 - DAY 63

CLOSE UP:

A hot sheet of Nickle-Iron suddenly gets doused in a torrent of sulfuric acid. In a matter of moments, large eroded contusions appear.

Behind a protective screen, Barkley activates the extractor fan. The fumes vanish. The chargers on either side of the sheet shut down, and the temperature decreases from 300 - 120 degrees Celsius.

He turns to his audience, Edmund, Boone, Maxwell, Stapleton, Bartkowiak, Guest, Pratt and O'Neil.

DR BARKLEY:
The estimated effect of concentrated sulfuric acid. Not great. With the heat element too, it makes it hard to create an alkaline substance that can do the job.

They walk over to a second display, situated next to the twisted metal. A second sheet of Nickle-Iron, this time with a boarder-configuration of small jets.

DR BARKLEY (CONT')
We have to keep the matrix tight, because of the heat and the surface area...but here.

He starts the test. The sheet heats up to 300 degrees Celsius. A blast of acid hits the surface, and the jets activate, neutralising the acid.

Barkley again activates the extractor fan.

The screen lifts, and the test devices descends into their housings. Barkley, Edmund, Bartkowiak and O'Neil step forward to study it.

The only damage to the metal's surface is a thin smattering of indentations.

DR BARKLEY (CONT')
That level, at a constant rate. The skin will last as long as the heat damage will allow, the acid won't be a problem.

O'NEIL:
Storing the chemical?

DR BARKLEY:
7,100,000 gallons. A 32,280 cubic metre storage capacity.

O'NEIL:
I'll prepare a layer tank across the length of the interior.

DR BARKLEY:
Design it across the higher level of the silo section.

EDMUND:
There's one less planetary element we need to worry about. Thank you, Dr Barkley.

Barkley nods, and Edmund crosses to the lift, accompanied by O'Neil, heading to a different floor. Bartkowiak turns to Barkley.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
The pressure is another matter.

Boone walks up.

DR BOONE:
The structure is adept to handle that.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
The final designs for the module are recorded?

DR BOONE:
Yes, and any query relating to additional ports for monitoring equipment will be met in earnest.

DR GUEST:
The time-frame, having been reduced as much as it has been, is making us concerned about the mining capacity the equipment can achieve.

DR BARKLEY:
There another planetary element we've tackled successfully, and it's a very efficient method for one of our other objectives...

Bartkowiak and Guest look at him. He nods sideways and exits frame.

Boone looks to Maxwell.

DR BOONE:
When they're out poking around in the rubble, inform Chief O'Neil that we're installing releases for the ModMOABs just above the main drop doors. Then secondary releases higher up.

MAXWELL:
Alongside the Caveparters?

DR BOONE:
We're constricted by space, alongside the base Completion Cells. External rockets, with extra fire boarding. Old fashioned word, like we still use boards.

MAXWELL:
Yes, sir.

She and Stapleton turn and exit, as Boone follows the other group.

64 EXT. THE BYRON HOUSE - GROUNDS - DAY 64

It's a light spring day. Boone, Barkley, Bartkowiak and Guest stand in a replica of a van, outfitted with safety screens and video and audio recorder.

A concrete launchpad stands on a flat plain, reinforced by steel struts, and surrounded by pressurised canisters.

DR GUEST:
(Gestures to canisters)
Are they necessary?

DR BARKLEY:
Yes, for extinguishing the land.

Pause.

DR BOONE:
This is the third test of this method. We'd greatly appreciate any insight into any trace markers that would give the effect away. Recording, Hugh.

DR BARKLEY:
Documented. Brace.

The launchpad abruptly explodes, ever fragment atomising, leaving very little trace. The field around it ignites, but the inferno is interrupted by the shock wave and it mostly extinguishes. The canisters finish the job.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
(Stunned)
What was that?

DR BARKLEY:
ModMOAB...a land based, trigger charged version of a modified US GBU-43/B MOAB. The same mining assist that will make our decent so fast, also used to dispose of that. Well, what was that.

The stretch is barren and blackened.

DR GUEST:
You're going to bomb the surface?

DR BARKLEY:
Yes, we must.

DR BOONE:
A very narrow window needs to be taken advantage of. Blasting through the crust is the only way to get to the source.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
The minimum incubator.

DR BOONE:
Yes. It's not efficient, or safe to do the entire site visit with blasting. But for a safe initial penetration, it's our only option.

DR BARKLEY:
A lesser yield than the nuclear option, but that obviously would cause us issues going down there after the fact. No oxygen to ignite, no air compression, no problem.

DR GUEST:
Dr Byron has agreed?

DR BARKLEY:
Of course.

They all look out to the test site.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Well we can't have those extinguishers on location.

DR BOONE:
We won't choose a field, I trust.

Boone and Bartkowiak stare at each other.

65 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - MAIN OFFICE - NIGHT 65

The large office seems strangely claustrophobic. The light glares onto Edmund's desk, as he rubs his head tiredly.

A call comes through on his mobile:

EDMUND:
Yes, Lieutenant?

LIEUTENANT DYLAN:
Sir, we've correlated your request.

EDMUND:
I'll be there right away.

He stands and exits.

66 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - ELEVATION LOUNGE - NIGHT 66

The LOUNGE had been converted into a viewing station, manned by Lt. Dylan and Lt. Billingham.

Edmund enters.

EDMUND:
What's our best option?

LIEUTENANT DYLAN:
Out of the DIAMINERAL sites open to us, on these selected blind spot dates, we have two options; a renovated quarry site in...

As he talks, Edmund mimes the names of each location, familiar with each.

LIEUTENANT DYLAN (CONT')
...Lancashire, window of 6th - 8th of November. Or a storage facility and development office in Whitby, window of 31st October.

Pause.

EDMUND:
Whitby is more isolated. And every part of it has been cleared out. We'll launch there.

LIEUTENANT BILLINGHAM:
Sir, may I suggest something?

EDMUND:
Yes, of course.

LIEUTENANT BILLINGHAM:
With the longer Lancashire window, the technicians will have more time and will able to plan contingencies in case there's a technical failure, sir.

EDMUND:
Thank you, Lieutenant. But I know the sites. The Whitby office is more appropriate, more enclosed.

LIEUTENANT BILLINGHAM:
Yes, sir. I'll inform security to prepare the convoy for that date.

Edmund nods his appreciation, and exits.

67 EXT. 1 PAVEWAY DRIVE - THE BYRON HOUSE - MORNING 67

Outside the estate, Edmund walks into the cool air. A car pulls up, followed by 3 massive electric lorry cabs, with 3 expansive containment units.

Security Chief Derekson gets out of the car, and Mr Mortimer gets out of the first lorry cab. Two MINOR DRIVERS get out of the others.

INSERT:

Derekson enters the plates into his register on his phone. 3/9.

68 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - WORKSHOP LEVEL 2/3 - DAY 68

The scaffolding and structural tungsten-steel beams, down in the bowels of the 3rd underground level.

- Failable hulls - more details

Chief O'Neil walks through to the outermost layer of construction. He approaches another General Engineer, RAY GARFIELD.

O'NEIL:
Ray, we've got a demonstration in 10 minutes.

Boone, Barkley and Bartkowiak enter.
Or 2...

Garfield signs quietly, then goes round to the silo's interior.

GARFIELD:
Everyone, demonstration in 1 minute, failable hull test.

McCARTHY, FRANK, TATTERSALL, and GLEN all grind to a halt, and descend from their work stations.

GARFIELD (CONT')
Section 140.

Boone walks forward to greet everyone. Barkley and Bartkowiak follow suit. The General Engineers look surprised.

Everyone shakes hands.

DR BOONE:
Bryan Boone, great to finally meet you all in person.

MCCARTHY:
Danielle McCarthy.

DR BOONE:
Ah.
(Glances at O'Neil)
Just in?

MCCARTHY:
Yep. Representative from the Integration Branch.

GARFIELD:
From General Engineering, Ray Garfield.

FRANK:
Art Frank, sir.

TATTERSALL:
Will Tattersall.

GLEN:
Joe Glen.

DR BOONE:
Thank you for giving us your time. Just an initial demonstration to document the effect of a singular hull breach.

O'NEIL:
We have a test path ready.

DR BARKLEY:
I'll set up the simulator.

Barkley gets to work, being escorted by Garfield down to the TEST PATH.

O'NEIL:
The process will be accelerated, as not to overload. It would ignite the air.

DR BOONE:
Understood.

They follow Barkley in a group.

DR BOONE (CONT')
We've put in an additional request. But first, where's the rest of your staff?

O'NEIL:
I'm bringing in the Mechanical staff when the final designs for the mining vehicles gets approved.

DR BOONE:
That's fine, and they'll be done imminently. The request concerns utilising them to fabricate the equipment for the first INITIAL. Quick turnaround time.

O'NEIL:
I'll move the call time up.

DR BOONE:
Thanks.

Barkley and Garfield stand back.

DR BARKLEY:
Close the hazard screens.

Frank activates the SCREENS at a panel, safely encasing the test area.

The tungsten-steel alloy struts were set out in 20 layers, with nickle-iron plates in between. 40 feet long.

DR BARKLEY (CONT')
It's a concentrated beam, with a dash of the acid compound. 20 layers before a serious hull breach occurs.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
We'll be leaving Venus with a lot less ship than we arrived with.

The General Engineers glance at each other. Under his breath, Barkley leans into Boone.

DR BARKLEY:
(Quiet)
Derekson's going to pop a blood vessel.

DR BOONE:
(Quiet)
We're recording minutes.

The simulator primes.

As the heat builds, and the acid runs through the condensers, the protection screen blackens over. Behind it, obscured from view, the nickle-iron buckles and splits.

It erodes away, one layer at a time. It fully penetrates.

Barkley turns off the simulation device. He runs the neutraliser through the condensers, and finally, lifts the safety screen.

Layers 1 to 13 are melted from HEAVILY to MINIMALLY.

DR BARKLEY:
1 through to 13. We could save on the materials for 7 bulkheads.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Better safe than sorry.

O'NEIL:
We'll keep the lot.

The group is satisfied.

69 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - WORKSHOP LEVEL 2/3 - SIDE ROOM - DAY 69

A large model of the final design for the SECOND Initial. It was clear, and had loose objects placed in it. It was in an airtight containment cell, and was surrounded by 4 7 ft tall pistons.

Observing is Planetology; Bartkowiak, Guest and Pratt, and Gen. Engineering; O'Neil, Garfield.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Jean, Roger.

DR GUEST:
Yes. Common place artificial gravity is compartmental, not a full solution for a 29 crew capacity ship.

DR PRATT:
If we turn on the drop simulator...

He initiates the test.

The pistons plunge into the floor, and the loose objects inside the model levitate with the zero-gravity effect created.

DR PRATT (CONT)
A universal gravity disruption.

DR GUEST:
Even with each section, each compartment locked off by itself. We need a total gravity generator rather than the standard room-by-room solutions accessible by the government.

GARFIELD:
Like what they use on broadcast TV? Space Interceptors?

DR GUEST:
Publicly funded ones. Reduces risk of unforeseen technical difficulties.

DR PRATT:
(Gesturing)
So, connected via the roof, the lowest deck of the crewed section and the drop doors on the silo section, is a total artificial gravity generator and receiver.

Pratt activates it. The levitating objects drop to the floors of their occupied decks.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Constant Break Drop Gravity, suspends the interior at the point of a drop motion.

O'NEIL:
Won't that make everyone flinch?

DR BARTKOWIAK:
It hasn't quite got the kick required to do that. Everyone will sleep fine.

DR GUEST:
And everyone will appreciate not working for the vast majority of a year in zero gravity.

O'NEIL:
That we will. We'll fabricate the full scale drive and apply it.

DR PRATT:
The scaled designs are already uploaded.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
The technology is perfect, entirely reliable with no wearing components.

Pratt rises the pistons back up.

TRANSITION:

Pistons obscure view.

BLACK

70 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - WORKSHOP LEVEL 1 - DAY 70

TITLE:

"October 31st, 2078"

WIDE SHOT:

The completed INITIAL probe rocket, a thin spire-missile.

It separates into 8 parts, 2 halves of the fuselage, 4 Completion Cells, 1 cord Caveparter and 1 broadcast station.

Along with them, the 9th part, 1 launchpad gets transported by. All the components move towards a large hanger door, pulled by tow cars.

71 EXT. 1 PAVEWAY DRIVE - THE BYRON HOUSE - NIGHT 71

9 trucks covertly located in the shadow of THE BYRON HOUSE. The equipment loads into the back of each container.

Climbing into each cab are the drivers, including SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON, MR MORTIMER, O'NEIL, LT. DYLAN and LT. BILLINGHAM. Boone and Barkley follow.

DR BARKLEY:
He took convincing, Derekson did.

DR BOONE:
You need to stop worrying about Derekson. Just make sure they set up correctly.

Mr Mortimer turns.

MR MORTIMER:
You're in mine, Dr Barkley.

DR BARKLEY:
(Under his breath)
Oh good.

DR BOONE:
I'll leave you to it.

LIEUTENANT BILLINGHAM:
Don't be concerned, Dr Barkley. The construction is well rehearsed, we just need your supervision.

Stepping up with them are CAPTAIN STEPHEN PERTWEE, FIRST OFFICER SIENNA MITCHELL, FLIGHT COMMANDER KATHERINE JEFFORDS, and ROBERT CARTER (Mechanic).

INSERTS:

As they climb into the cabs, their names log into the register, starting with the new characters and ending with Derekson.

9 lorries set off.

DRIVING MONTAGE:

72 EXT. MOTORWAY / VARIOUS ROADS - NIGHT 72

The 9 lorries drive in convoy, under cover of night. The electric motors were silent and eerie.

Barkley sits completely still, in an awkward bubble of silence with Mr Mortimer driving.

At intervals, STEALTH PANELS unveiled from the bodywork. Barkley observes.

INSERTS:

CCTV camera POVs - Not picking up the lorries.

73 EXT. WHITBY DEVELOPMENT FACILITY - NIGHT 73

The location was enclosed, private and pitch black. The harbour is visible in the background. The CONVOY arrives, pulling up in a row.

NIGHT VISION ASSIST: A faded black and white hue represents the crew's vision in darkness.

In two teams, one lead by DEREKSON and the other lead by CAPT. PERTWEE, get out and begin assembling the INITIAL.

Mr Mortimer looks at Barkley, and they both help, Barkley focusing firstly on the LAUNCHPAD.

The reader: "CHARGE - NEGATIVE"

DR BARKLEY:
All good, let's set up the site.

Derekson's team move the pad to their desired location in the stretch of land, and Capt. Pertwee's unloads the equipment using fold out hydraulic equipment.

MONTAGE:

- Construction of the INITIAL

- Capt. Pertwee's crew studying the sky.

CLOSE UP:

First Officer Sienna Mitchell looks up at the sky, digitally punching in on a far way spot. A POLICE BLADE is visible, tiny in the distance.

MITCHELL:
Sir. Police 1.2 miles South East.

CAPT. PERTWEE:
Inform Chief Derekson at .8.

MITCHELL:
Yes sir.

The INITIAL is assembled. Barkley and Carter approach.

DR BARKLEY:
We haven't meet. I'm Hugh Barkley.

CARTER:
I'm Robert Carter, but we haven't finished.

DR BARKLEY:
Right. Completion Cell sequence.

They activate the 4 cells. Barkley calibrates on the input control.

INSERT: Screen.

"Manual Guidance..."

He waits. Carter looks over his shoulder. Barkley turns.

DR BARKLEY (CONT')
Software intact...

Derekson walks up.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
All active?

DR BARKLEY:
Yes, it's just connecting to the server. Manual.

"...CONNECTED"

Flight Comd. Jeffords takes action.

JEFFORDS:
Evacuation procedure. The launch unit is in the cab, Dr Barkley.

DR BARKLEY:
Yes, Ma'am, right away.

He seals the on-board computer, and is guided back to the lorries. Mr Mortimer follows him back to their cab and shuts the door behind him, before getting in the drivers side.

INSIDE CAB

Mortimer stares at him. Barkley draws out the control panel. Over the radio.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
(Radio)
Evacuate Units 1 - 6.

OUTSIDE

The indicated trucks evacuate, 3 remain.

INSIDE

Barkley waits.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON (CONT)
(Radio)
Engage, Barkley.

DR BARKLEY:
(to himself)
Dr Barkley.

Mr Mortimer raises his eyebrow. Barkley hits launch on the keypad.

From inside the car, the 4 Completion Cells provide instant acceleration. The spear-thin INITIAL missiles upward, vanishing into the clouds.

The earth around the launch pad cracks, but it holds steady. Before his awe subsides, Barkley jumps as he's barked at by Mortimer.

MR MORTIMER:
(Firmly)
The pad, Doctor.

Barkley turns on the ModMOAB. The launchpad explodes, vaporising as planned.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
(Radio)
7 - 9 Units. Go, now.

Mr Mortimer steers the truck round.

MITCHELL:
Chief Derekson, Police at .8 miles enclosing.

SECURITY CHIEF DEREKSON:
Extend plates.

OUTSIDE

The stealth-panels fold out, and the convoy retreats into the night.

EXTREME WIDE SHOT:

The POLICE BLADE approaches. Behind it, other emergency enforcement crafts ascend.

They circle round and descend. The launch site is nothing but scorched earth, the chemical explosives glinting different colours in the grass.

CUT TO:

74 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - OBSERVATION PLATFORM - NIGHT 74

A projected live feed of the mounted camera angle on the side of the INITIAL's fuselage.

Surrounding it were the ENTIRE development team -

Benjamin, Foreman, Mena, Davis, Bartkowiak, Guest, Pratt, Boone, Stapleton, Maxwell, Garfield, McCarthy, Frank, Tattersall, Glen, Moore and Edmund.

- now joined by the rest of the MECHANICS DEPARTMENT.

DR MOORE:
The automatic sequence is in effect.

EDMUND:
The prerequisite to the SECOND INITIAL...

CUT TO BLACK

SUPER:

Computerised diagram of the Earth's orbit of the Sun, in comparison to Venus'. The gap, over the months, decreases from the INITIAL's 122 days down to the next planned journey of 91 days.

FADE IN:

75 EXT. SPACE - VENUS - X 75

EXTREME WIDE SHOT: Small in the frame.

INITIAL approaches Venus. It enters the atmosphere. It disappears from view.

CUT TO BLACK:

TITLE:

"February 20th, 2079"

FADE IN:

76 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - WORKSHOP LEVEL 2/3 - SIDE ROOM 2 - DAY 76

CLOSE UP:

A black void in a clear box. Surrounding the space was a thin layer of fibres.

PUNCH IN:

The SYNTHSIS FIBRES look peaceful in their box, but suddenly-

PARTICLE VISION: A computerised representation of the contents.

A tiny spurt of CO2 is released. It immediately gets absorbed by the fibres. A reader calculates:

“16 pascals - multiplied (X) 7476540000 square feet = 1180603.40 atmospheres”

TRANSITION THROUGH THE FIBRES:

77 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - WORKSHOP LEVEL 1 - DAY 77

A now crowded workshop, lined up with 2 full scale Caveparters. They look different to the last example, fatter.

The combined hoard of mechanics stood around the base, waiting nervously. Tiny footsteps sounded from inside.

78 INT. VENUS CAVEPARTER 1 - WORKSHOP LEVEL 1 - DAY 78

ESTABLISHING SHOTS:

The improved interior of the VENUS CAVEPARTER, new bridge, new corridors, labs, etc.

NEW GYRO-KITCHEN

Crouching in the parted mechanics, close to the firewall of the hull is Barkley and Boone. Bartkowiak stands over them, with O'Neil looking over her shoulder.

Barkley's reader shows:

"Threshold...450 degrees Celsius"

Boone leans back.

DR BOONE:
The correct parametres.

He glances at the others.

DR BOONE (CONT')
The miniaturisation of the failable hulls is complete.

O'NEIL:
Snagging of the SECOND Initial, then?

DR BARTKOWIAK:
OK.

Everyone stands, and walks round the Caveparter. Bartkowiak enters the BRIDGE, and Boone follows. The others pause, waiting for them.

Bartkowiak approaches the Captain's chair, ready for the Flight Lt's. She looks around.

DR BOONE:
What is it?

DR BARTKOWIAK:
These monitor view screens, is that the only way to look out?

DR BOONE:
They are on the bridge. There are simulation windows in the Extraction Lab, but it's a similar principle. They have increased telescopic function and more fields of view, including negative and night-vision.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
I seem to remember, on the original designs, there being clear pressure proof windows.

DR BOONE:
To decrease the possibilities of rupture, we replaced them.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Only on the two Caveparters?

DR BOONE:
On the SECOND Initial too.

Bartkowiak looks visibly disappointed.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Let's go and snag.

She exits, and Boone follows.

79 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - WORKSHOP LEVEL 1 - DAY 79

The group descend from the main exit hatch of the Caveparter.

Mineral department staff members Foreman, Mena and Davis meet them halfway.

DR BOONE:
The hull system checks are documented. The extraction lab is ready.

DR MENA:
We'll make our calibrations, apply our equipment.

O'NEIL:
The mechanical department will help.

DR BOONE:
Have you lost Dr Benjamin?

DR MENA:
Louis is on the Observation Platform. INITIAL is close.

Boone smiles and nods.

DR BOONE:
We'll be on Docking Floor. I'll be back after the inspection.

Boone, Barkley, Bartkowiak and O'Neil exit towards the lift, and the Mineral Department head back towards the Caveparter. They greet the mechanics.

80 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - DOCKING FLOOR - SUNSET 80

The lift doors open.

Boone, Barkley, Bartkowiak and O'Neil enter the NEW FLOOR and approach the immense, towering, 29 crew member capacity ship. The SECOND Initial.

ESTABLISHING SHOTS:

Exterior of the ship, with Garfield, Frank, Tattersall and Glen working. They insert camera lenses and houses. McCarthy is round the back of the vessel, studying the couplings of the Completion Cell powered thrusters.

SECTION INITIAL (MAIN SECTIONS):

BRIDGE, SILO SECTION (Airlock drop doors at bottom, 2 Caveparter ports, stairwell, service lift, and alkali compound tank), RESIDENTIAL FLOORS x4 (Room distribution 8,8,8,5), MINERAL STORAGE DECK.

81 INT. SECOND INITIAL - SILO SECTION - DOCKED - SUNSET 81

As a raising platform allows access to the bottom deck of the SILO SECTION, Boone, Barkley and O'Neil step off and enter the lift shaft.

They ascend to the top level, observing the ports and the vast 8 deck height of the section. The main work and operations hub of the ship.

The enter into the walkway space.

82 INT. SECOND INITIAL - BRIDGE - DOCKED - SUNSET 82

They enter the bridge. Bartkowiak and Boone cross to the control panel.

DR BOONE:
Engineering say the screens are a live feed, 16K resolution with their own Completion Cell generators. Chief O'Neil?

O'Neil walks up and turns on the surround live feed. The vast interior of the DOCKING FLOOR comes up.

O'NEIL:
There, Dr. Is everything OK?

Bartkowiak looks. Softer, she turns to O'Neil.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
It's nothing. I just wanted to see the surface, with my own eyes. But I understand. With the pressures, heat and interference, a clear screen would be a structural weakness.

O'NEIL:
With all of our failable hull technology, that atmosphere would get through a clear screen in no time. And I understand. The want to see Venus as it is. But there screens will capture it perfectly. We'll be recording the entire trip for documentation.

Bartkowiak smiles and nods.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
It's an engineering achievement, you must be proud.

O'NEIL:
My family would be. If I could tell them.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
You'll be allowed. Eventually.

Through the 16K screen, they could see the lift door open. O'Neil punches in on the digital telescoping sight.

It's Mr Mortimer.

O'NEIL:
Mortimer on the move.

DR BOONE:
I think that means the tours over. For now.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
You said this had less telescopic range?

O'NEIL:
That's right.

He hits maximum zoom. They could see Mortimer's irises.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Still very impressive.

O'NEIL:
Then the Caveparter's will certainly do the job.

Boone smiles, and they exit the bridge.

83 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - OBSERVATION PLATFORM - NIGHT 83

The Live feed from the INITIAL probe is projected on the screen. The entire personnel is present. The mineralogy department heads the crowd.

CHARACTER REF:

Edmund, Moore, Capt. Pertwee, Mitchell, Jeffords, Derekson, Mortimer, Benjamin, Foreman, Mena, Davis, Bartkowiak, Guest, Pratt, Boone, Barkley, Stapleton, Maxwell, O'Neil, Garfield, McCarthy, Frank, Tattersall, Glen, Carter, 4 Mechanics, Flight Lt. Dylan, Flight Lt. Billingham, 12 Mission Control Technicians including CONTROL OPERATOR PROJECT MANAGER, CONTROL OPERATOR 1 and CONTROL OPERATOR 2.

SCREEN LIVE FEED: Venus Crust

Distorted, acidic, Venusian dirt. The probe is plowing through, cutting deeper and deeper.

ZOOM x7,x15,x32.

Benjamin approaches Lt. Dylan.

DR BENJAMIN:
Reading Mark, Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT DYLAN:
Yes, Dr.

He pauses.

The INITIAL continues to drill down.

LIEUTENANT DYLAN (CONT')
Delay, it's normal. Link information takes 40 seconds. Times 2 for both commands.

DR BENJAMIN:
That's fine. Punch in on the top right quadrant, we may not have a lot of time before pooling starts and we loose visual.

LIEUTENANT DYLAN:
Got it.

Lt. Dylan punches into x1500 using his control pad, showing a change in lens on his device. He estimates the focus. The delay continues.

Benjamin turns to Edmund and Moore.

DR BENJAMIN (CONT')
The 17th mark, done manually. If this one has an increase on 0.08 particulates, that indicates positive.

EDMUND:
Very good.

Benjamin turns round to look at Boone and his team.

DR BENJAMIN:
It’s very effective, Dr Boone. Fantastic work from the Mining Engineering team.

The room breaks into a respectful applause. Boone recoils slightly, smiling nervously. Maxwell and Stapleton fist bump subtly, and Barkley nods his appreciation, focusing on the screen.

DR BOONE:
Thank you. I’m proud.

MAXWELL:
We’re all proud.

Edmund addresses the congregation.

EDMUND (CONT')
With these readings, launch will be in the very near future. When the SECOND Initial is ready, take some time. Go home for a short break, make plans for the trip period, be with your family and friends. There are very few obstacles now.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Basically none. The details of every possibility have been scrutinised, and accounted for.

Boone looks down at the floor.

The INITIAL probe continues burrowing down. As everyone waits in anticipation, it STOPS.

A veneer of acid starts pooling at the bottom.

Abruptly, the view punches in and attempts to focus in. A brightly coloured spec appears, but the focus is out.

LIEUTENANT DYLAN:
Adjusting focus.

He focuses, waiting...

Mineralogy lean in, awestruck.

DR MENA:
Evidence of a heavy mineral layer?

DR FOREMAN:
It maybe just a glisten from the light.

The focus shifts slightly.

Pause.

RACK FOCUS onto a rough, dirty, yet all too real diamond fragment.

Silence from everybody. The glint REFLECTS in Mena's eye.

DR MENA:
A mineral layer beneath the crust.

DR DAVIS:
(Disagreeing)
Proof of a cluster of precious stones.

EDMUND:
Cluster confirmed.

The pooling continues.

DR BOONE:
Lt. Dylan?

Lt. Dylan glances at Edmund and Benjamin.

LIEUTENANT DYLAN:
Dr? Got to keep moving if we want more use.

DR BENJAMIN:
Right you are. Proceed.

Lt. Dylan drives forward, starting the delayed response.

LIEUTENANT DYLAN:
Recording, Dr Benjamin. There's enough data their for you to analyse.

DR BENJAMIN:
OK.

Edmund turns back to everyone.

EDMUND:
Thank you, all. Finish up, then get yourselves home.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Final snags?

O'NEIL:
Equipment integration into the Caveparters.

Benjamin turns.

DR BENJAMIN:
Foreman, Mena, supervise the installations of the extraction lab devices. Dr Davis, I need a report of the final carrying capacity of the storage bay of the SECOND Initial. I'll continue here.

DR FOREMAN, DR MENA, DR DAVIS:
Yes, sir.

DR BOONE:
My staff will assist with the integration.

O'NEIL:
I'll guide Dr Davis to the storage bay.

O'Neil turns to his team.

O'NEIL (CONT')
Alright, ladies and gents, the film's over. Final fittings and fixtures, then go home for some much needed rest.

Gen. Engineering and Mechanical staff all turn and exit the OBSERVATION PLATFORM.

Mining Engineering leave with Mena and Foreman. O'Neil escorts Davis out, and Bartkowiak follows them, gesturing to the rest of her Planetology department to join.

BARTKOWIAK:
And the tour continues.

O'Neil grins, and they exit.

Edmund turns to look at Capt. Pertwee, standing near the back.

EDMUND:
It all seems in reach now.

CAPT. PERTWEE:
A world where that is worth nothing? Yes sir.

MITCHELL:
Can't wait.

Capt. Pertwee looks to Benjamin, who is facing the screen, accompanied by Lt. Dylan and Lt. Billingham. Billingham exits.

Capt. Pertwee looks to Comd. Jeffords.

CAPT. PERTWEE:
Commander, make sure Dr Benjamin's readings are strictly locational.

EDMUND:
Captain, the value is important too. Even if it's meant to cancel out the market.

CAPT. PERTWEE:
We're going regardless as of now, sir. And I don't want that plan to change for any reason.

EDMUND:
Understood.

JEFFORDS:
Yes, Captain.

Comd. Jeffords approaches Lt. Dylan and Benjamin.

EDMUND:
These people are the best, and ideologically compatible.

CAPT. PERTWEE:
The scenario is highly unusual. The extra scrutiny is constructive, I assure you.

EDMUND:
Very well, Captain.

Edmund exits, followed by Moore. Capt. Pertwee turns to Mitchell.

CAPT. PERTWEE:
Get yourself home, Mitchell. We'll be right behind you.

MITCHELL:
Thank you, sir. Edmund Byron needs to be more careful.

CAPT. PERTWEE:
He's mostly there. Mostly.

Mitchell exits.

Capt. Pertwee stares at the large screen, taking in the readings and murmur coming from Benjamin and Lt. Dylan.

84 INT. VENUS CAVEPARTER 1 - EXTRACTION LAB - WORKSHOP LEVEL 1 - NIGHT 84

Guiding a moving cart down the metal steps into the lowest deck of the Venus Caveparter, Maxwell and Stapleton listen in for instruction as Boone, Mena and Foreman bring up the rear.

DR BOONE:
The view screens are the same principle as the ship. We've left banded empty ports measured for the default attachments. If you have custom ones, I'll report it to Mr Carter, and he'll get that sorted.

DR FOREMAN:
We have a custom attachment for the extractor node only.
(to Maxwell and Stapleton)
Thank you, Chief Maxwell, Chief Stapleton. We'll handle the rest.

He walks forward to help. Mena turns to Boone.

DR MENA:
The custom port is 350mm in diameter. Plus whatever insulation or protection you need.

DR BOONE:
Very good.

DR MENA:
The progress the probe’s making is amazing.

DR BOONE:
Thank you. This will dwarf that, 20 times.

DR MENA:
Dr Davis has the SECOND Initial's storage inspection. Of the full yield, what's the load on each trip?

DR BOONE:
32 tonnes each.

DR MENA:
3 trips, both vehicles.

DR BOONE:
3 days, well under the lifespan of the hull.

Maxwell and Stapleton pass by.

DR BOONE (CONT')
(to Mena)
I'll get the attachment.

DR MENA:
Thanks.

Boone exits with his department.

85 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - WORKSHOP LEVEL 1 - NIGHT 85

On the production floor, Barkley waits, looking impatient. Maxwell and Stapleton approach, just ahead of Boone.

INSERT:

He's on his pad, filing the request to Carter.

DR BARKLEY:
Bryan? With the launch up in the air, I need to head home and sort out some stuff.

DR BOONE:
Oh yeah. Feel free, all of you. Mr Carter's got it from here.

MAXWELL:
Thanks, Bryan.

STAPLETON:
Yeah, we're on call if you need anything else.

DR BOONE:
Got it.

Maxwell exits, but Stapleton pauses.

STAPLETON:
It's good progression. For the department and career wise.

DR BOONE:
Absolutely. Whatever form DIAMINERAL takes after the financial collapse, our work will be the bedrock.

Stapleton nods, and exits too. Boone turns to Barkley.

DR BOONE (CONT')
You looked peaky on the Observation Platform. Everything OK?

DR BARKLEY:
I feel Mineralogy are loosing focus of what this mission is. What we all want it to be.

DR BOONE:
I'm sure they know the intention, and are working towards it.
(Pause)
You turned away from the attention, though.

DR BARKLEY:
It's just...the mining element of the mission - fine, covered. The build up of acid was tremendous, and any amount of neutraliser sprayed around will create a madly unstable environment. The amount of access pH7 run-off, the weight of the potential collapse, the cable line-

DR BOONE:
(Interrupts)
Sorry, the cable line is replaceable, and the Caveparters have independent drive meant for evading the exact environmental factors you're talking about.

DR BARKLEY:
The risk factor hasn't been properly addressed by anyone accept for us, everyone's so desperate to launch, it's like an escape.

DR BOONE:
We are escaping this. And the risk factor is covered on all sides by us, Planetology, Mineralogy... in a meeting you missed by the way, check the minutes. Everyone's aware, and better than anyone, I know the cost if I'm wrong. We're doing something that has never been done, ever, and there's a good

(MORE)

DR BOONE: (CONT'D)
chance it's a one off. This isn't landing on Mars - the Sun's glorified moon - we're going to experience an atmosphere unique to anything else in our solar system. The diamond mining isn't about monetary gain for anyone on this mission, it's about seeing what other planets are capable of.

Barkley looks down.

DR BARKLEY:
OK. Sorry, Bryan...

DR BOONE:
It's good that we're having these conversations here, rather than there.

DR BARKLEY:
I'm confident in the designs. I just have reservations about the crew, and no-one's a perfect judge of character.

DR BOONE:
That goes both ways, underestimating people's resolve. But fair enough.

DR BARKLEY:
These issues iron out with experience, but I suppose this is a hugely ambitious first mission.

DR BOONE:
Big changes need a hell of a catalyst.

Barkley smiles and nods. He exits, leaving Boone alone.

Boone looks back towards the Caveparter.

DR BOONE (CONT')
(To himself)
Confident in the designs...

CUT TO:

86 INT. THE BYRON HOUSE - DOCKING FLOOR - NIGHT 86

WIDE TRACKING SHOT:

The General Engineers are dotted all around, finishing snagging the SECOND INITIAL.

Boone approaches the base of the hull, and enters.

87 INT. SECOND INITIAL - SILO SECTION - DOCKED NIGHT 87

Back in the hulking vehicle bunker, Boone slowly ascends the stairs. He studies the couplings for the Caveparters, inspecting the 2 long cable tracks, one above the other.

He pauses, watching the monitor which accompanied the couplings.

"OPERATIONAL: -1.8 tonne capacity LOADED"

A diagram showed the wire frame of one of the Caveparters.

INTER-CUT:

88 INT. SECOND INITIAL - MINERAL STORAGE DECK - DOCKED - NIGHT 88

WIDE SHOT:

The expansive storage facility. Claw grips and forklift platforms lined the walls. Razor thin drill bits and laser cutters sat at the ready, and Davis studies the specifications on a read out.

Standing by the held LIFT are Bartkowiak and O'Neil.

O'Neil is apprehensive, and Bartkowiak is impatient. They glance at each other.

Davis straightens up and walks back to them.

DR DAVIS:
Great parametres.

O'NEIL:
(Relieved)
Goodo.

They step backward into the lift.

CONTINUOUS:

89 INT. SECOND INITIAL - LIFT / RESIDENTIAL FLOOR 2/4 - DOCKED - NIGHT 89

O'Neil points to the lift button panel. Small engraved diagram.

O'NEIL:
The layout dictates that the lift shaft only opens onto the top section of the silo section. As not to funnel any devistating heat radiation into the storage deck AND the residential floors.

DR DAVIS:
(Subtle sarcasm)
Oh, that's reassuring.

O'NEIL:
That the safety's in place, I agree.

He presses the button for the SILO SECTION. The doors close, and the LIFT moves upward.

INSERT:

Rising levels on the button panel.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Please may we see the observation deck?

O'NEIL:
Certainly.

He also presses the button for RESIDENTIAL FLOOR 2/4, on the way.

O'NEIL (CONT')
Better go to the second residential floor. I don't think flight crew will appreciate us visiting the first floor quarters.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Who's is this one?

O'NEIL:
Assigned at random. Bar the flight crew, obviously. Social integration.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
For 200 days, it's important.

Davis sighs. They arrive.

The lift doors open, and Bartkowiak and O'Neil step out into RESIDENTIAL FLOOR 2/4.

DR DAVIS:
I'm off out. Thank you, Chief O'Neil. Dr Bartkowiak.

They acknowledge, and the doors close.

Bartkowiak and O'Neil walk down the comfy, communal corridor.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
It's nice. I was almost expecting a submarine.

O'NEIL:
I think that would have rubbed people the wrong way. At least with this, everyone can relax.

They walk down to the bottom room. Room 13.

O'NEIL (CONT')
5 rooms on the 1st residential floor, 8 rooms each on the other 3.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
You said these aren't assigned yet? The ones on this floor?

O'NEIL:
Not yet.

Bartkowiak approaches the final room. O'Neil steps up.

O'NEIL (CONT')
Your phone unlocks it. It reads the unique signature, then only opens with identification.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Are our phones unique?

O'NEIL:
After Chief Derekson logged them.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Ah.

Bartkowiak holds her phone beside the keypad. It unlocks along the length of the door. Bartkowiak opens it, and the lights switch on.

90 INT. SECOND INITIAL - RESI: ROOM 13 - DOCKED - NIGHT 90

As Bartkowiak walks into the room, admiring the airy, spacious living space, O'Neil holds the door, moving it back and fourth.

O'NEIL:
The door opens like a normal door, but it doesn’t swing loosely or sharply, in the event of a gravity failing when it’s unlocked.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Does that happen often?

O'NEIL:
Absolutely not.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
I'm kidding, Bill. So it's like an inertia reel seat belt?

O'NEIL:
Yeah, except it's more dependent on touch.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
OK. I guess these are my quarters, then?

O'NEIL:
Yeah. Your name automatically registers, so there won't be any issues.

Bartkowiak looks into the kitchen area. O’Neil notices.

O'NEIL (CONT')
Full kitchen. Enough food packs to last for 5 years, eating well.

Bartkowiak turns to the wall next to her. An enormous black stretch of screen, covering the outermost hull.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Is this like the window?

O'NEIL:
Effectively.

He steps forward towards it.

O'NEIL (CONT')
It turns on like-

As he touches the thin ON button, Bartkowiak leans in and kisses him.

He kisses back, but the enormous monitor lights up on wall with a live feed of the DOCKING FLOOR, with all the General Engineers fettling away. Bartkowiak stops.

O'NEIL (CONT')
They can't see us.

DR BARTKOWIAK:
Oh.

She leans in and turns off the screen.

DR BARTKOWIAK (CONT')
Not the point.

They kiss again.

INSERT:

Time on file reads "23:23"

91 INT. SECOND INITIAL - SILO SECTION - DOCKED - NIGHT 91

As Boone starts to descend the steps, Davis steps out into the work space. Boone hears and turns.

DR BOONE:
Dr Davis?

DR DAVIS:
Bryan, you're really going to have to start calling me Jacqueline.

DR BOONE:
OK, Jacqueline. In the morning, we need to load the Caveparters.

DR DAVIS:
Are Jill and Milo done with the attachments?

DR BOONE:
The rigs are perfectly stable, they can feasibly work here. There's no more heavy loads, just two extra 350mm ports and protective layers.

DR DAVIS:
Why the rush to the finish?

DR BOONE:
Why not? Launch is imminent. And we'll all be operating round this space, we should all acclimatise.

Davis raises her eyebrow.

DR BOONE (CONT')
Find our footing.

DR DAVIS:
(Skeptically)
Yeah.

She looks down at a monitor by her side, indicating the Caveparter coupling system.

DR DAVIS (CONT')
The deployment system?

DR BOONE:
Vertically stacked. Two separate incisions in Venus'crust. We'll release the Caveparters at intervals, with complete lock down before and after each drop.

Davis catches up, and they walk down the stairs.

DR DAVIS:
Please may you inform General Engineering?

DR BOONE:
No problem.

He gets out his phone, and calls O'Neil.

DR BOONE (CONT')
Chief O'Neil? General Engineering has a brief, may you check the logs and inform them? If you have any questions, please go ahead.

O'NEIL (O.S.)
(Phone)
...Yes, Dr.

Boone glances at Davis.

DR BOONE:
(To O'Neil)
You alright, Chief?

O'NEIL (O.S.)
Yes, Dr. I'll be right there.

O'Neil hangs up.

Boone and Davis continue down the stairs.

HARD-CUT:

92 INT. BARKLEY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY / LIVING ROOM - DAY 92

Broad daylight in the aquatic house.

The front door opens and Barkley walks in. Behind him, the CASTER takes off from his drive.

Exhausted, Barkley paces slowly towards a wiry valve behind one of the larger tanks.

PROCEDURAL INSERT:

Checking a key:

A list indicating which fossetts and how many turns distribute amounts of food over certain amounts of time - ordered by 8 species sizes.

Barkley operates the elaborate feeding device, setting a TIME RELEASE for 10 months. He then stands on a ladder next to one of the larger tanks, and programs a thin, long cylinder at the top, above the water line.

As he gets down-

LOW ANGLE CLOSE UP: Looking up at the cylinder through the surface.

A slight amount of algae gets vaporised.

JUMP-CUT:

93 INT. BARKLEY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY 93

The main bedroom is more enclosed than the rest of the house. There's a very simple aquarium decoration, sitting in the corner like a monolith.

Barkley hits the mattress, slipping off his shirt. He looks at his alarm clock: "10:50". He looks at his phone time: "01:50".

DR BARKLEY:
Ugh...

He closes his eyes.

The white noise of the tank.

CREDITS.