

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

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DARKNESS:

The sizzling SOUND of a red LASER BEAM as it burns a NEWSPAPER BANNER onto an aluminum PRINTING PLATE. The banner reads: "Los Angeles Tribune."

Below this, three PHOTOS are scorched in. Line by line, the photos come to life revealing...

- 1) A dark massive triangular-shaped CRAFT on the MOON.
- 2) Six ASTRONAUTS approaching the strange craft.
- 3) An EXPLOSION obliterates the craft, leaving an enormous crater.

A HEADLINE follows: "TRAGEDY ON THE MOON: UFO BLOWS UP."

And lastly, a SUB HEADER: "Welcome 1 Crew Killed In Failed Rescue Attempt Of Object Bruce."

The plate begins rotating, churning out copy after copy...

BACK TO DARKNESS AND SILENCE:

TITLE CARD: ONE YEAR LATER

FADE IN the SOUND of typing on keyboards and smart phones. Voices near and far.

HARD IN:

INT. LOS ANGELES TRIBUNE - MORNING

A cluttered cubicle-filled news publishing company.

JOURNALISTS multi-task on desktops, laptops, and phones. EDITORS do the same behind glass offices. It's busy, but not nearly as busy as in the newspaper's glory days.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME

Journalists file into a large conference room. However, there's not enough of them to fill the space.

AT HEAD OF CONFERENCE TABLE

Executive Editor, LANEY MORENO, 55, Latina, greyish black hair, heavysset and smarter than everyone in the room, looks out at the Journalists over her bifocals. Notices all of them have STARBUCKS COFFEE.

LANEY

Am I really so intimidating that no one approached me for a Starbucks order?

A young Journalist, REED KEMPER, 29, handsome, from good stock, and always in a neck-tie, pushes through the other guilty-looking Journalists -- steaming COFFEE in hand.

REED

Here ya go, Laney -- soy Latte,
heavy on the foam.

Vet Journalist, BILL MCKINLEY, 48, larger than life, chuckles.

BILL

Kiss that ass, boy.

The other Journalists laugh.

LANEY

(deadpan)

There's a lot to kiss, people, so
don't be shy.

At the other end of the table, Reed leans down to seated Managing Editor, DAVIS MOORE, 60, bald -- the calm in the storm.

REED

Did you get a chance to talk with
Laney?

DAVIS

Yes.

REED

"Yes", as in she agrees my piece on
the misappropriation of local
housing funds is a lead story?

DAVIS

"Yes", as in she knows you wrote
the piece but hasn't had time to
review it yet.

REED

Awesome.

DAVIS

Be patient, Reed. Took me seven
years to get my first headline.

REED

Like a monk, I'm patient.

Davis smiles at that.

As Reed walks back with the others, he's accidentally bumped into by SHANE GOTLIEB, 27, slightly heavy, layered T-shirts, trashed jeans, and scuffed sneakers.

SHANE

Whoops. Sorry, dude. Guess I wasn't paying...

But Reed shakes his head, continues towards the front.

SHANE

(silently)

Okay, you're not a dick.

Laney calls out to Davis.

LANEY

Alright, let's start this.

DAVIS

Yes. Morning everyone. Quick update on our print side: starting next month, the 15th to be exact, what's left of our newsprint delivery division will be shut down.

The older Reporters look as if they've been told a dear friend has one month to live. Of the younger Reporters, only Reed's face shows the same devastation.

DAVIS

As Lord Beaverbrook said: "I suppose I will go on selling newspapers until at last will come the late night final."

(understating)

It was fun while it lasted, folks.

(beat)

Okay, before the rundown, we have a new lead blogger. Mr. Shane Gotlieb.

Davis points Shane out. On the heels of that last announcement, Shane nervously waves to all.

SHANE

Hey.

They nod back "welcomes."

DAVIS

I'm sure most of you've heard of his very popular blog, "Shane's Cool Shit."

Reactions are a mix of recognition and mild amusement.

DAVIS

Shane will be covering trends in
technology, pop culture and...
uh... uh --

SHANE

-- basically anything worth geeking
out over.
(smiles)

Reed rolls his eyes.

DAVIS

Also... this Friday is the one year
anniversary of the Object Bruce
moon disaster.

BILL

No thanks.

DAVIS

I haven't said anything, Bill.

BILL

Wait for it... Wait for it...

Dark sarcastic chuckles around.

DAVIS

Who wants to do a retro piece?

BILL

And there it is.

A collective MOAN from the room. No bites.

DAVIS

C'mon people -- we got the sister
of the deceased American military
space escort to do an interview.

Beat.

BILL

(smiles mischievously)
Reed'll crush it.

REED

No -- I'm good.

DAVIS
Okay, Reed -- thanks for
volunteering.

 REED
 (silently)
Shit.

INT. REED'S CUBICLE - LATER

Reed heads into his cubicle. Sees Shane in the cubicle directly across from his, chowing on CARROT STICKS and watching a YOUTUBE VIDEO on his iPad.

Reed tries to ignore him. Begins transcribing notes on his computer.

Shane laughs loud once. Twice. Then turns to Reed.

 SHANE
Hey man, wanna see Neil deGrasse
Tyson shred this climate change
denier?

 REED
Actually, no.

 SHANE
Oh. Okay.

Davis does a swing by.

 DAVIS
Reed -- did you guys meet?

They look at each other.

 REED
Uh...

 SHANE
Yeah, just now.

 DAVIS
Good. Good. Shane wants to shadow a
reporter for a day. Get a sense of
how we work here. You mind letting
him tag --

 REED
Not a good day. I'm backed up on
the developing housing fund scandal
and now I've gotta do this Object
Bruce retro.

DAVIS
Then let me lighten your load.
Bill's taking the housing story.

REED
What? Davis, that's my story? If it
got bumped to page one I should get
to cover it.

DAVIS
(smiles)
Are you done?

REED
No.

But Davis is.

DAVIS
(referring to Shane)
Take him out for some man-on-the-
street bites then hit the sister of
the deceased U.S. Welcome 1 mission
escort after.
(turns to Shane)
Welcome to the Tribune, Shane.

SHANE
(overjoyed)
Thanks, big D.

INT. LOBBY - LATER

Shane tags behind Reed.

SHANE
Hey. Why're you not stoked about
doing an article on the anniversary
of Object Bruce?

REED
Cause retrospectives are dog shit
assignments.

Reed pokes the elevator button.

SHANE
Why?

REED
It's old regurgitated news. They're
for hacks.

SHANE

Yeah, but Bruce was pretty damn cool. The whole NASA rescue attempt thing was awe --

REED

-- the Wile E. Coyote of lunar missions. Gee, let's walk into a crashed UFO and assume it's not booby-trapped. It's the biggest fail of mankind. And everyone knows the story.

They enter the elevator. It seals them.

INT. ELEVATOR - SAME

SHANE

Yeah, well, I've got a lot of followers who've got like a million theories on --

Reed snickers.

SHANE

Wha... what?

REED

That term, "followers" -- just always sounds like bloggers are cult leaders. The newspaper business, as it's been since the seventeenth century, has readers.

SHANE

Oookay. I'm just saying it might be kinda interesting.

REED

Right. Let's see how interesting it is.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Reed goes up to a WOMAN, 40, business attire and sneakers.

REED

Excuse me, ma'am, I'm with the LA Tribune. It's the one year anniversary of the UFO moon mission tragedy. Any feelings about it?

WOMAN

It's been a year already? Uh, it's terrible. Still sad. Just an awful loss. Terrible.

Reed records her old-school with a small NOTEPAD and PEN.

REED

Nothing new to add?

WOMAN

Uh, no, just so --

REED

-- terrible. Sad. Thanks. Can I get your name and picture for our paper?

WOMAN

Uh, sure.

JUMP CUT:

A mixed race COUPLE, 20's, is stopped...

REED

One year anniversary of Object Bruce and failed Apollo Welcome 1 rescue mission. What do you think about it today?

BOYFRIEND

Oh man, you should talk to her.
(motions to girlfriend)

REED

Either one of you is fine.

GIRLFRIEND

I don't want to say anything.

BOYFRIEND

C'mon, tell him that shit.

GIRLFRIEND

Uhhhh. Well, my dad's old golf buddy, he told my dad that the, the government, they had actually got some of the aliens but something happened on the way back.

REED

A golfing buddy. Sure.

GIRLFRIEND

Yeah, but my dad totally believed him.

REED

Of course. Thanks.

JUMP CUT:

As they head down the street looking for more interviewees...

SHANE

I really dig your OG notepad and pen style.

REED

It's not a style.

Three nerdy MIDDLE GRADERS recognize Shane.

MIDDLE GRADER #1

Hey, are you the "Shane's Cool Shit" dude?

MIDDLE GRADER #2

Oh, yeah.

MIDDLE GRADER #3

No way!

SHANE

(smiles)

I am... Shane.

This digs into Reed a little.

MIDDLE GRADER #1

Cool!

SHANE

This is Reed. He's a reporter.

MIDDLE GRADER #2

(feign coughing)

Fake news.

MIDDLE GRADER #3

(feign coughing)

Fake news.

Shane laughs, Reed does not.

Shane notices one of them wearing a T-shirt with a cartoon of a couple ALIENS on the moon changing a tire on OBJECT BRUCE while waving off help. The caption reads: "No thanks, we got this."

SHANE

Hey, what do you guys think about the Object Bruce mission a year ago? That was pretty dope, right?

REED

That's... you're, you're biasing
the interview --

MIDDLE GRADER #1

Hell ya. When the mission leaders
were like --

MIDDLE GRADER #2

(correcting)

The military escorts, dumbass.

MIDDLE GRADER #1

Whatever, the escorts were like
going into the UFO and the other
astronaut dudes were --

MIDDLE GRADER #3

Wasn't all dudes -- there was a
girl astronaut too, stupidass.

MIDDLE GRADER #1

Whatever, man! And then suddenly
the UFO blew the hell up. That was
sick!

MIDDLE GRADER #2

Object Bruce blew up, dipshit.

MIDDLE GRADER #1

Same thing!

Shane turns to Reed.

SHANE

(does quotes)

My "readers" are pretty smart.

REED

(testing)

Any of you guys remember why the
UFO was called Object Bruce?

MIDDLE GRADER #3

Because of Bruce Stanbridge, the
amateur astronomer in New Zealand
who saw it first. Duh.

REED

(sarcastic)

Enlightening.

(to Shane)

Get their names and pic.

As Shane takes their pictures and names with his iPad...

REED

Okay, we've got enough. I gotta do that interview with the sister of the escort.

SHANE

Right on. Can't wait to meet her.

REED

(sighs)
I'll text you the address.

SHANE

Sweet.

Reed starts to leave.

SHANE

Wait -- you don't have my cell number.

REED

(sighs again, hands him his phone)
Type it in.

EXT. HELEN MARCHEL'S HOME - LATER

Pasadena, CA. Quiet Norman Rockwellian neighborhood.

Reed gets out of his 1987 VOLVO.

As he heads up the street, checking the addresses, he sees Shane already waiting. Stands next to a new RED TESLA ROADSTER.

REED

How'd you beat me here?

SHANE

Uh, new traffic app. It's tied into the traffic lights. We shoulda carpooled, man.

REED

Why?

Reed checks out Shane's cool ride.

SHANE

Cause carpooling is --

REED

You come from money or something?

SHANE

Oh. No -- I have a lot of big tech company sponsors for my blog -- you should start one. And because carpooling is --

REED

I don't write self-important diatribes.

Reeds continues down the street. Shane follows.

SHANE

Wow. Anyway, cause carpooling is better for the environment.

REED

I don't have time.

SHANE

For the environment?

REED

It's too late for the planet at this rate. How many "followers" do you have?

SHANE

I have about six million subscribers. Dude, you're seriously kind of a dick.

REED

Actually, I'm not.

SHANE

No, actually you are.

REED

I'm just an impatient person.

SHANE

That's not an excuse.

REED

I have less than a month to accomplish the only dream I've had since I'm nine -- think that qualifies as an excuse.

SHANE

What dream and why only a month?

REED

Unless you weren't paying attention at the rundown this morning, our newspaper is shutting down its print division in less than thirty days.

SHANE

I was paying attention and so what? Everyone will just have their stories posted online. What's the big --

REED

You don't get it.

SHANE

Let me get this straight -- you're all tweaked cause the Tribune is going green and will be saving trees? Are you serious?

Reed stops.

REED

I'll never have a front page story. I'll never unsnap a rubber band and open up the paper to see a lead article I wrote.

(looks at Shane's
reaction)

Forget it, you're not a journalist.

Continues walking.

SHANE

Yes, I am.

REED

No -- you're not.

SHANE

Look, Bob Woodward, journalist journal -- my site is a journal of my opinions based on my experience.

REED

Who told you that -- the blog fairy?

SHANE

Oh, my god -- you're such a dick.

REED

Why are you shadowing me, Shane?
There's not going to be any "cool
shit" for you to see here.

Shane stops.

SHANE

Jesus, you suck as a reporter.

REED

Excuse me.

Reed stops.

SHANE

Isn't it obvious? I wanna do what
you do, man.

Reed laughs.

REED

Right.
(realizes he's not joking)
Wait -- are you serious?

SHANE

Go blow yourself.

Shane takes off.

Reed starts to continue down the street. Stops. Hesitates.

REED

Jesus.

Turns back.

REED

Shane.

Ignores him.

REED

Shane! Wait.

Reed jogs over to him as he starts to climb into his car.

REED

Okay. Okay. I'm sorry -- maybe I
was being a little... whatever.

SHANE

Excuse me for not having the grades to get a journalism scholarship like I'm sure you did, but I have my own digital front page every goddamn day. You should read it. My shit's good, Reed.

Beat.

REED

Okay. Show me what you got.

SHANE

What?

REED

This is your interview. Make me an asshole.

Beat.

Off Shane pushing his door closed...

INT. GRACE MARCHEL'S HOME - SAME

GRACE MARCEL, 30, is as plain and conservative as her modest decor. She passes under a JESUS CHRIST figurine above the living room entrance.

Sets down MILK and COOKIES on the coffee table next to Reed and Shane on the couch -- which has old-school plastic covers on it. Sits across from them.

SHANE

(referring to milk)
Oh, I'm lactose --
(thinks better of it)
Uh, thanks, Ms. Marchel.

REED

Thank you.

GRACE

You can call me Grace. Actually, it'll be Sister Grace after tomorrow.

SHANE

Really?

GRACE

Yes, I'm joining our Church of Divinity.

SHANE

That's the same church your brother
Captain Marchel attended, right?

Reed's mildly impressed. Mildly.

GRACE

Yes. Our minister's getting a
little too old to handle some of
his tasks, so I'll be helping out
there.

SHANE

Great. I noticed you don't have any
pictures of your brother around.

GRACE

Oh, I have them here...

She pulls out a PHOTO ALBUM. Lays it on the coffee table.

GRACE

My brother and I were very close.
It's still a bit difficult to see
his face sometimes. So I just keep
it all here.

ON ALBUM

We see CAPTAIN PETER MACHEL, 33, posing with his SPACE SUIT,
in his AIR FORCE uniform, and as a kid proudly being
CONFIRMED.

GRACE

He was a true patriot and a saint
for what he did.

SHANE

Yeah -- too bad the Welcome 1
mission wasn't a success.

GRACE

Oh, I think it was.

SHANE

What do you mean?

GRACE

The outcome was in God's hands
after all.

Beat.

REED

Right.

Shane sets the book down.

SHANE

Well, it's been a year and --

The PHONE RINGS -- yes, a land line phone.

SHANE

-- and since then --

GRACE

I'm, I'm sorry. It'll just keep ringing unless I get it. I'll tell them to call back.

As she leaves the room...

SHANE

Guess God doesn't like voice mail.
(turns to Shane for
evaluation)

So?

REED

Get to the meat, Carl Bernstein.

Reed checks his watch.

Beat.

Grace slowly shuffles back -- in total shock. Tears roll down her cheeks.

GRACE

My... our... Father Halprin is
dead.

SHANE

Holy shi..

She loses it. They get up to comfort her.

REED

I'm so sorry, Grace.

SHANE

What did he die of?

GRACE
(shakes head)
I can't talk about it. I'm sorry. I
need to, I, I can't talk right now.

REED
Sure. Of course.

EXT. GRACE'S HOME - SAME

Reed and Shane head towards their cars.

REED
Well, you didn't embarrass
yourself. That was a complete waste
of --

SHANE
We shoulda pushed her.

REED
(chuckles)
Slow down there, blogger boy. Her
minister died. There was nothing to
push --

SHANE
The cause of death.

REED
Doesn't matter. He was old.
Probably died from being old. Meet
ya back at --

SHANE
She's hiding something.

Reed stops at his car.

REED
Like the enthusiasm, but that
woman's not hiding anything. See ya
back at --

Reed opens his car door.

SHANE
Don't you think the timing's a
little what-the-hell? Exactly one
year later?

REED
People die on their birthdays and
holidays all the time.

He starts to climb in. Shane continues...

SHANE

This isn't a birthday or a holiday. It's the one year anniversary of the moon mission, dude. That's high on a scale of improbable coincidences. How do we find out how he died?

REED

Listen, Shane, I know you're used to everything's being an online conspiracy, but --

SHANE

Back to being a dick.

REED

-- but there's nothing here. Old people die and they don't always pick the day they do it on.

But Shane doesn't move.

Reed huffs.

REED

Christ.

Reed makes a call. Check his watch again.

REED

(to cell)

Officer Neary, coroner's office please?

(beat)

Hey Ian, it's Reed. Can you check if a body came in?

Reed puts his phone on speaker. Sets it on his hood.

IAN (O.S.)

T.O.D? Name?

REED

Recently, maybe within a couple hours. Name's Halprin. Don't know first name. Old guy.

OFFICER NEARY (O.S.)

Got a James Halprin? Was guy a priest?

REED
(taken aback)
Yeah. What's the cause?

OFFICER NEARY
We haven't started yet. Looks like
maybe... suicide.

REED
What?

SHANE
Hah!

REED
Looks like?

OFFICER NEARY
Well, I'm seeing a rope burn around
his neck and based on the skin
discoloration, I'd say
asphyxiation. And doesn't look like
any signs of struggle.

SHANE
Holy shit.

IAN (O.S.)
Don't print that yet. I'll hit ya
back when we officially report.

REED
Copy that, Ian. Thanks.

Hangs up.

Beat.

REED
Probably was really sick and didn't
want to be a burden to the Sisters
or his congrega --

SHANE
I'm Jewish, but I'm pretty sure
Catholics, especially Catholic
priests, believe you kill yourself
you go to hell.

Beat.

REED
Follow me.

SHANE

Carpool?

Reed ignores him.

EXT. CHURCH OF DIVINITY - MORNING

A small classic missionary-style church in downtown Pasadena.

Reed and Shane climb out of their respective cars.

SHANE

Totally shoulda taken one car,
dude.

REED

Pay attention and try to keep up.

Reed goes to pull back the large wooden church doors --
LOCKED.

REED

(undaunted)
C'mon.

They head around the side...

AT SIDE ENTRANCE

A door is open exposing a large stage alter. SISTER MCKENZIE,
25, child-like, is knelt down. Prays at the alter.

They cautiously head inside.

INT. CHURCH OF DIVINITY - SAME

A thick haze of sunlight bathes the church with multicolored
lights from the stained glass windows.

Reed and Shane carefully approach the Sister.

REED

Excuse --

She's startled.

REED

Sorry, Sister.

She wipes her tears away.

SISTER

It's fine. Please come in.

REED
You mind talking with us for a
second about Father Halprin?

SISTER
Sure.

Reed pulls out his notepad.

REED
(delicately)
We're with the L.A. --

SISTER
Yes, as I mentioned to the other
police detectives, I found him.

SHANE
Detectives?

REED
You found him?

SISTER
Yes. I came in this morning and
went to dust the confessional like
I always do on Wednesdays and...
(collects herself)
... discovered him there.

SHANE
He hung himself inside the
confessional?

Too emotional to verbalize a response, she nods.

REED
You mind if we take a look?

SISTER
Of course.

As they head back to the confessionals...

REED
Sister, I have to tell you -- we're
not with the police.

SISTER
Oh, sorry. Are you with the Church?

REED
No, we're with the L.A. Tribune.

SISTER

Oh, I should get Mother Superior.

Turns to head back.

REED

This will just take a second -- I promise.

She contemplates.

SISTER

Okay.

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH - SAME

Reed takes a look inside the dark musty booth. Then Shane's turn.

INTERCUT WITH OUTSIDE CONFESSIONAL

REED

I just have ask you a couple questions.

SISTER

I should really get Mother Superior, she likes to handle --

REED

They're just quick questions then we'll be on our way. Really appreciate it.

She nods.

Shane doesn't see anything out of the ordinary in the confessional. Takes some pictures. Plays with the PARTITION, having never been in a confessional before, slides it open and closed.

REED

Why do you think Father Halprin killed... took his life? Was he sick?

She shakes her head.

SISTER

He seemed fine to me. He gave a beautiful sermon last night on regret and being accountable.

REED
Regret?

SISTER
Yes.
(beat)
You should really talk to --

REED
Just one more question.

As Shane pokes his head back out of the dark confessional, he notices something on the other side.

CU CLOSED PARTITION

SCRATCHED into the partition is Psalm: "MATTHEW 27:3-5"

He takes pictures of the Psalm.

REED
Did Father Halprin feel depressed or maybe, in some way responsible for Captain Marchel's death?

SISTER
Oh, no, no. He was very proud of his sacrifice.

REED
Sacrifice?

SISTER
Yes. For his country, but more importantly, his faith.

Shane returns to Reed and the Sister. Tries to show Reed the pic of the writing on the partition. Reed blows him off.

REED
What do you mean by his faith?

Shane tries again. Get's rejected again.

REED
(to Shane)
Hold on.

SISTER
Peter was so supportive of the church.

REED
Right.

SISTER

He donated all his possessions to the church before he left.

REED

That was very generous.

SISTER

Yes, he --

SHANE

Left them before the mission?

REED

No, she means in his will --

SISTER

No, before he left he gave them to the church.

SHANE

Wait -- are you saying he literally gave everything away BEFORE he left on the Welcome 1 mission. He left totally broke?

Reed, annoyed, turns back to Shane.

REED

No, Shane, she's saying --

SISTER

Yes, I guess he did. He was a very charitable soul.

Reed returns his look to the Sister.

SHANE

So he knew... in his soul... he was not coming back?

SISTER

(realizing)

Oh, yes. I guess so.

REED

How do you know he gave away everything to the church before he -

-

SISTER

I handle the donations at Divinity.

SHANE

Jesu --

From behind them...

MOTHER SUPERIOR (O.S.)

Sister!

They all turn around.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Help sister Ortiz in the kitchen
please.

As the Sister scurries away...

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Can I help you two?

REED

Yes, we're with the L.A. Tribune.
Would you like to comment on why
you think Father Halprin killed
himself and if he knew Captain
Peter Marchel was not coming back
from his mission and how Captain
Marchel would know this?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I'm sorry. I'd prefer for both of
you to leave.

REED

Are you denying knowledge of this
information, or denying the
information itself?

MOTHER SUPERIOR

This has been an extremely trying
day. Sister McKenzie and I have
nothing more to say to you. Have a
blessed day.

Shane holds up the picture of the Psalm.

SHANE

No comment on this too?

She looks on surprised, but quickly regains her composure.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

(smiles)

Have a blessed day.

As they leave, Mother Superior turns, heads back to the alter.

REED
What'd you show her?

Shane shows him the pic.

SHANE
What does it mean?

REED
It means I haven't been to
Catechism since I was twelve.

Reed snatches a BIBLE from a pocket in one of the pews.

SHANE
You can't steal that.

REED
Shhh.

EXT. CHURCH OF DIVINITY - SAME

As they leave the Church, Reed rifles through the bible.

REED
Where the hell is...

Shane shakes his head. GOOGLES the Psalm. Shows it to Reed.

Snatches the bible from Reed. Leaves it at the front doors of the church.

SLOWLY PUSH IN

REED
(reads)
Matthew 27:3-5 "Then when Judas,
His betrayer, saw that Jesus was
condemned, he changed his mind and
brought back the thirty pieces of
silver to the chief priests and the
elders, saying, 'I have sinned by
betraying innocent blood!' They
said, 'What is that to us? See to
it yourself'...

INT. DAVIS'S OFFICE - LATER

Reed finishes reading the Psalm from the couch in Davis' office. Shane at his side. Davis leans on his desk. Arms folded.

REED

(cont. reading)

... And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple, he departed, and he went and hanged himself."

(looks up at Davis)

Hanged.

DAVIS

That Psalm was on the partition?

Shane shows the pic to Davis on his iPad.

DAVIS

And the donations. You got confirmation on --

REED

Church donations are public record. Marchel gave everything he had to the church the day before he blasted off.

Reed hands Davis a paper copy of the RECORDS.

SHANE

Dude knew it was a one-way trip.

REED

Davis, what if Marchel confessed to the priest that he was being sent on a suicide mission? And what if the priest felt so guilty about not telling him to abort the mission that took the lives of Marchel, the other astronauts, and the occupants of Bruce, that he hung himself as per the Psalm: "I've sinned by betraying innocent blood?"

SHANE

Or what if Marchel was part of a radical religious group who thought whatever was in Object Bruce was evil and purposely sabota --

REED

I'm not endorsing that enormous leap, but what do you think, Davis? There's something here, right?

REED (cont'd)

You're right, Davis. It's not there yet.

SHANE

What?

DAVIS

Don't forget the retro piece -- need it by Friday.

(to Shane)

And looking forward to reading your first blog here, Shane.

They file out.

EXT. CUBICLES - SAME

As they head to their cubicles...

SHANE

Yeah, I'll bet he's gonna enjoy my first blog.

REED

Shane -- you can't post this.

SHANE

Why not -- that's the whole point of writing "self-important diatribes", right?

REED

If Davis says we don't have it yet, we don't have it.

SHANE

We have the evidence --

Holds up his iPad.

REED

No -- we don't have confirmation that the other escort was in on whatever the hell this may, or may not be.

SHANE

Fine. We'll get it.

REED

Really?

They arrive at their desks.

SHANE

We discovered Marchel knew he was
screwed, we'll get the same
confirmation from the other escort.

EXT. CUBICLES - LATER

Shane scans through an article. Excitedly he reports...

SHANE

The other escort had cancer!

Without looking up...

REED

And was in remission well before
the mission. And his medical
records are sealed.

SHANE

I'll get them.

EXT. CUBICLES - LATER

Day's winding down as the sun pierces through the blinds in
it's slow decent.

Shane, hunched over his iPad -- stabs at it.

SHANE

Shit. I suck at hacking. Gonna
reach out to a hacker I know.

Reed, again without looking over...

REED

Give it up, Shane.

Veteran reporter, Bill, drops by.

BILL

Hey Shane, I'll let ya shadow me
tomorrow if you wanna see how beat
reporters work the real stories.

Reed bristles.

SHANE

Sure. I'll let ya know.

And off Bill goes.

REED

Okay, give me what you have so far.

SHANE
Is that guy also kinda --

REED
-- a dick? Yes. Send me what you
have on the doctor who declared his
remission.

Shane smiles.

SHANE
Sure.

INT. LA TRIBUNE - NIGHT

The last of the stragglers head off for the day, leaving Reed
and Shane alone.

Reed abruptly stops scanning a doc.

REED
The Doc's clean. Even has five
stars on India's yelp page. And the
escort wasn't in a cult so...
nothing.

SHANE
There's gotta be something there
otherwise there's no conspiracy.

REED
Yeah, cause maybe there isn't any
conspiracy, Shane.

SHANE
Did you check what medication he
had him on to put him in remission?

REED
It doesn't matter.

SHANE
Did you see where this guy studied
medicine?

REED
Yes, he studied at a university,
Shane.

SHANE
Was the university one of those
religious schools, like Pepperdine?

REED
 No, it's a...
 (scrolls the university
 site)
 ... a... chiro...

Reed stops.

SHANE
 A what?

Reed leans forward, intrigued.

SHANE
 A what?

REED
 Chiropractor school.

SHANE
 They don't treat cancer with
 Chiropractics in India, right?

REED
 Hold on...

Shane scoots over in his chair. Intercut with Reed's computer screen...

REED
 He's listed as an Oncologist the
 same year as the mission.

SHANE
 I'm confused.

Reed YELP searches Dr. Tambor under "Chiropractor." Finds a listing with the last review. Checks the date.

REED
 Shit. He was adjusting spines up
 till a month after Bruce slammed
 into the moon.

SHANE
 Wait -- so his cancer free
 diagnosis was determined by a --

REED
 -- Chiropractor. He was given a
 license to practice medicine two
 months before lift off.

SHANE

Jesus! They sent up a dying man.
Let's go.

REED

Where?

SHANE

To Davis' office.

REED

He's left.

SHANE

Fine -- let's call him.

Whips out his phone.

REED

Shane.

SHANE

What's his cell?

Shane looks on the newspaper DIRECTOR on the wall.

REED

Shane.

SHANE

What?

(finds number)

Here it is.

REED

Don't call -- it's not there yet.

SHANE

What are you high, dude? It doesn't
get more "there" than this!

REED

We're missing something.

SHANE

What?

REED

Motivation.

SHANE

Cause they knew the ship was going
to explode.

REED
Who is "they?" And why would "they"
send them up if they knew that?

SHANE
NASA.

REED
Not confirmed, and why?

SHANE
Cause... cause I don't know, man!
Let the goddamn public decide!

Reed leans back in his chair.

REED
So, the best conspiracy theory
wins?

Shane calms down.

REED
Pull up video of the escorts
leading the Welcome 1 crew into the
ship.

Shane does.

REED
Play it.

CU IPAD SCREEN

We see the two ESCORTS give the other 4 CREW PERSONS a STAND
DOWN sign as they head under the shadow of the ship.

SHANE
Dead men walking.

REED
Pause it.

Shane does.

REED
Zoom in.

He does. We see the escorts carrying two white CASES with the
RED CROSS medical LOGO on them. A realization washing over
Reed.

REED
Bullshit.

Then washes over Shane.

SHANE
Those aren't medic kits --

REED
Bullshit.

SHANE
They're dirty bombs.

REED
Calm down.

A beat as Reed entertains such a notion.

REED
Let's find out who packed and
cleared those cases.

SHANE
There's no TSA precheck on moon
missions.

REED
No, but it's NASA's airport.

Beat.

SHANE
Oh, shit. I did a tech podcast with
this girl who did software upgrades
at NASA for the Welcome 1 mission.
Girl's a genius. A little weird,
but cool. Casey something...

Shane pulls up her contact info...

REED
A software geek? Not high enough to
know --

Finds her.

SHANE
Got her. Do you know anything about
Mission Control 2?

REED
Cape Canaveral is 1 and Houston is
2, right?

Dials. Puts cell on speaker.

SHANE

Man, you could never pass for nerd. Houston is mission control 1. Directly underneath mission control is an identical control room. This room takes over if the shit goes south. That's mission control 2. Casey set up and supervised all their new overrides from control 1 to 2 --

CASEY (O.S.)

Hello?

SHANE

Casey, it's Shane.

CASEY (O.S.)

Shane?

SHANE

Yeah, from "Shane's Cool Shit." I did a podcast with you about a year ago.

CASEY (O.S.)

Oh, yeah. Sorry, man. How are you?

SHANE

Good, listen. I'm working at the L.A. Tribune now and this reporter and I are tracking this story about Object Bruce and want to ask you a few questions.

CASEY (O.S.)

What kind of story?

SHANE

Dude, we think there might be an epic cover-up...

Reed rolls his eyes at Shane's overzealousness.

SHANE

... regarding the Welcome 1 mission. Oh, you're on speaker with my partner, Reed. Say hi --

Call goes dead.

SHANE

Hello? Hello? What the hell? Maybe someone cut us off?

REED
She hung up.

Reed starts to pack up for the night.

SHANE
No way.

REED
Probably thought you were screwing
with her cause she doesn't know
shit. Let's go --

A TEXT chimes in.

SHANE
(reads)
"I was there and there was no cover-
up. Don't call me again."
(beat)
Ehh, shi --

REED
Right. Okay, I'm going home. We can
work on finding another way in
tomorrow.

SHANE
Man, I'm all fired up now.

REED
Go home. Talk in the morning.

INT. SHANE'S COTTAGE - LATER

Shane enters his cottage home -- which is not what you'd
expect from a pop-tech nerd.

The decor is tasteful rustic with only a few smatterings of
tech-toys and a movie poster in the background -- ALL THE
PRESIDENT'S MEN.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

He sets down his iPad on his nightstand. Rolls back. Folds
his arms behind his head. Stares up at the ceiling. Tries to
come down from his day. His eyes finally flicker close. Beat.

Suddenly, we shoot up straight through the roof.

EXT. COTTAGE - SAME

Looking down as we rise higher and higher, we view the neighborhood then the city then rotate and head toward the moon.

We pick up incredible speed as we get closer and closer to the glowing orb. As we make out the large triangular OBJECT BRUCE (pre-explosion), the moon rotates and the craft is enveloped by the dark side of the moon.

BUZZZZZ!!!

An ALARM RINGS out and we shoot straight back into Shane's bedroom.

INT. SHANE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Shane jolts up in bed from both the dream and the alarm.

SHANE

Jesus!

Looks down at his iPad. See an AMBER ALERT BANNER.

SHANE

The hell am I getting an Amber Alert on my...

CU AMBER ALERT BANNER

It reads: "Red Tesla (CA) LIC/6EGEEK Griffith Observatory, midnight."

SHANE

What the...

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - MIDNIGHT

The moon's perspective of Shane's red Tesla as it winds up a narrow road to the top of Griffith park.

EXT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY - MIDNIGHT

Drives out onto the deserted parking structure. Pulls over next to the only car in the lot -- a PRIUS.

A faded BUMPER STICKER on the Prius shows an image of Object Bruce with the heading: "NEVER FORGET"

INT. SHANE'S CAR - SAME

Shane peers out through his windshield at the sparsely lit Griffith observatory.

SHANE
This isn't scary.
(beat)
Now what?

A small LIGHT sparkles from the side of the observatory.
Motioning to him.

SHANE
Nope. You come here.

More shining.

SHANE
Don't go, Shane.

And more. Then stops.

SHANE
Shit.

He dials 911 on his CELL. Doesn't press it. Just has it
pulled up... in case.

Climbs out.

EXT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY - SAME

As he approaches the observatory, he sees a shadow enter the
side entrance.

Pauses. Then enters.

INT. PLANETARIUM - SAME

Cautiously walks down the dark isle of the Samuel Oschin
Planetarium.

Takes in the retro Zeiss star projector in the middle of the
auditorium.

VOICE (O.S.)
That wasn't cool, man.

Shane jumps. Looks for the source of the voice.

SHANE
Casey?

Seated across the isle is Casey, 25, but looks younger in her
unabomber hoodie.

VOICE
Have a seat.

Shane sits in the reclined chair across from her.

SHANE

I'm sorry, dude -- I didn't mean to insult the work you did on Welcome, we're just trying to figure out some weirdness we found.

CASEY

You didn't insult me. Just don't ever call or text me about this again.

Casey takes a hit off a VAPE PEN. It creates a swirl that expands outward, backlit by the planetarium lights.

CASEY

Wanna hit?

SHANE

I'm good. You know someone who works here? When are they gonna reopen the Lenard Nimoy Theater downstairs. It's been like a year --

CASEY

I run the observatory. And the Theater will reopen soon.

SHANE

(surprised)
What? When did you leave NASA?

CASEY

The day after the Welcome 1 mission.

Takes another hit. Blows a smoke ring into the milky way projected on the ceiling above.

CASEY

Go ahead. Tell me about the weirdness you found.

SHANE

We uh, well, we believe both of the escorts knew the shit was gonna hit the fan... and maybe even caused it.

CASEY

Really?

SHANE

Yeah.

(beat)

You think I'm full of shit.

CASEY

Everyone's full of shit. Continue with your conspiracy theory.

SHANE

Anyway, we were just wondering if there might be a possibility that for some reason NASA didn't want to bring home whatever was in Bruce.

CASEY

(dryly)

"Didn't want to bring home..." You mean genocide?

(beat)

Your theory's giving NASA too much credit -- they're just an independent agency of the executive branch of the U.S.

SHANE

Okay, then who in our scenario ran the mission?

CASEY

Which one?

SHANE

Which... There was more than one mission?

Takes another drag. Sends out TWO SMOKE RINGS. Then turns back to Shane.

SHANE

There were two? What was the other mission?

CASEY

Well, it wasn't the photo op that everyone saw.

SHANE

Casey, you gotta tell me every --

CASEY

Chill, man. You're timing's good on this story, but you miss one bit of code, your array of pointers don't all point in the right direction, the whole thing will crash and this'll remain just a conspiracy.

SHANE

Wait, so this isn't a conspiracy theory? What was the other mission?

CASEY

When... was the other mission.

SHANE

Okay -- when?

CASEY

Seventeen days before.

SHANE

Before the Welcome 1 mission? Where?

CASEY

It's gotta look like you found this out on your own. I've told you enough. Come to me when you've found more and need confirmation.

Casey stands up in the haze of smoke.

SHANE

Hold on. What if I have more questions?

She heads off. Trailing...

CASEY

When you confirm the second launch, post an article about how awesome Justin Bieber is.

SHANE

What? Are you ser --

EXT. REED'S APARTMENT - MORNING

A NEWSPAPER flies over the lawn of a Spanish-style duplex. Scuffs across the path leading to the front step. A FOOT steps on it, abruptly halting it.

Reed bends down. Grabs it. Smells it like a cup of fresh brewed coffee. Puts it under his arm. As he heads across the street to his car...

Shane cockblocks him with his Tesla.

SHANE
Get in, dude.

REED
I don't carpool, Shane.

SHANE
Just get in -- we have to talk.

INT. SHANE'S CAR - LATER

Reed looks on as Shane catches him up while driving too fast.

SHANE
I'm telling you, she was totally paranoid -- and not just from whatever she was vaping.

REED
Slow down.

SHANE
Am I talking too fast?

REED
No, slow down.

SHANE
Oh, sorry.

Shane dials back the car speed.

SHANE
This shit's real, man. We just have to track down the second launch.

REED
Right, and ignore the fact that every telescope in the world was trained on the moon during that time and would've seen this other rocket.

SHANE
What if they didn't have to go to the moon? Just get close enough to communicate, or share-screen whatever with the object?

REED

Uh huh. Pause that gargantuan "what if" for a sec. Go slower -- and did you bother asking her why she now teaches kids about the solar system instead of exploring it with NASA?

SHANE

No, but, but, obviously she quit because she was afraid of the people who ran the other operation.

REED

That's speculation. Did you ask her why she's not told anyone about this second moon mission before?

SHANE

Cause maybe --

REED

More speculation coming. And more slow, please.

SHANE

Sorry. I don't know, she said something about our timing being good.

REED

Too vague.

SHANE

Cause she trusts me. Cause I'm not a reporter. I'm just a guy with a blog.

REED

Hold that very accurate assessment of yourself. Take a left here.

SHANE

My mapster says it's quicker to the Tribune this way.

REED

We're not going to the Tribune.

EXT. FORREST LAWNS CEMETERY - LATER

Shane pulls over to the side next to a CRYPT surrounded by rows of various GRAVESTONES.

INT. SHANE'S CAR - SAME

REED
Be right back.

Climbs out with his newspaper.

We see Shane go around the corner of the crypt.

A few moments later he returns -- sans newspaper.

Climbs back in. Shane starts to ask him what he just did...

REED
Nope. We're never gonna talk about
that.

Buckles up.

REED
Okay, I'm convinced -- this girl's
jerking you off.

SHANE
What?! How can you be so dismiss --

REED
There was no launch seventeen days
beforehand, or even a year
beforehand.

SHANE
It was a covert --

REED
You ever been to a launch?

SHANE
Well, I've --

REED
And I don't mean seen it on some
cool simulated VR gadget?

SHANE
No.

REED
When I was eleven my father took me
to see the launch of the Columbia
Space Shuttle.

SHANE
Oh, shit.

REED

We were three miles away and the sound was deafening. It left a chem-trail hundreds of miles long. You can't hide a rocket launch.

SHANE

That must've messed you up when it exploded on reentry --

REED

My father was also at the launch of the Challenger.

SHANE

Oh, shit.

REED

After witnessing that shuttle disintegrate on take off, he vowed never to go to another lift off. But I made him take me. He thought when the Columbia also blew up he had jinxed the shuttles. So, when Welcome 1 took off -- I kept the hell away from the launch as well, just in case. Didn't work.

SHANE

Wow. So you were a space geek when you were a kid.

REED

Space geek is all you got from that?

SHANE

No, I got that maybe it wasn't launched out of the US. Other countries have space programs. Maybe it was --

Reed hits on something.

REED

Your car have enough charge to make it to San Diego?

SHANE

Of course, why?

REED

Map us to University of San Diego.
I have an ex who runs the
Geological Survey Department.

INT. SAN DIEGO STATE UNIVERSITY - DEPARTMENT OF GEOLOGICAL
SCIENCES - LATER

The large Spanish-style building looks out from a hilltop
above HWY 5.

INT. GEOLOGICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT - LAB - SAME

NEEDLES on a row of SEISMOGRAPH machines quietly twitch back
and forth, recording activity at designated spots around the
globe.

We MOVE IN on the front door as three SHADOWS stretch tall
behind it. The door unlocks, opens...

PROFESSOR NAJI DARVEEN, 30, Indian, glasses, studious,
pretty, leads Reed and Shane into the Lab.

NAJI

What's the date again?

REED

It would have been May 6th.

They head toward a bank of MONITORS stacked in the corner of
the room. She has a seat. Pulls up an ARCHIVE FILE.

REED

The last space shuttle launch
registered six-point two. So, we
should be looking for a seismic
event of approximately the same
magnitude.

NAJI

Well, that narrows it down to only
a few hundred such daily events.

REED

Great.

NAJI

However, the seismic waves of a
rocket launch has a different
signature than your average
earthquake, since the disturbance
happens mostly on the surface, at
the launch pad site.

SHANE

That's how we know when like the North Koreans test nuclear missiles?

NAJI

Actually, the government uses an infrasound detection system that measures sound waves, but yes, same idea.

LONGITUDE numbers appear on one of the monitors.

NAJI

And here we go.

She jots the numbers down.

SHANE

Professor, did you know Reed believes it's too late to save the planet from global warming?

NAJI

It's one of the reasons why I've not married him.

REED

Please -- it would take every nation on Earth to agree on a single goal. Which has happened in the past when?

SHANE

So we should just give up and let big businesses suffocate --

NAJI

Don't waste your breath, Shane. Okay...

She takes the numbers over to a big widescreen HD TV mounted against the far wall. Turns it on. A SEARCH WINDOW comes up. She types in the longitude numbers directly onto the screen.

NAJI

Here...

She hands them each a pair of EYE GLASSES.

NAJI

Show time.

As they place the glasses on, a 3D GRAPHIC of San Diego appears on the screen. We PULL BACK above San Diego, California, the United States, and head EAST across the planet.

SHANE

Damn -- I gots to get me one of these.

The graphics continue as we glide along, heading across the Pacific Ocean, to...

NAJI

I thought the longitude looked familiar.

... INDIA. The remote HARIKE wetlands to be exact.

REED

India?

SHANE

Whoa -- the other U.N. Security Escort with cancer --

REED

-- from India.

NAJI

Very interesting. Here's the event...

On the MONITOR we see a CGI EFFECT of a small area of land, RIPPLING outwards from the center of a spot. Trees around it sway in response.

Shane takes PICTURES of this on his iPad.

As the vibration waves begin to fade away...

NAJI

See how the waves of the episode quickly dissipate? The natural shifting of earth plates take much longer to settle. There's your rocket launch.

SHANE

Awesome -- we now have evidence of a second ship!

NAJI

What does this mean?

SHANE

Means the shit's about to slam into
the fan --

REED

Hold on -- India wasn't on the list
of nations vying for Welcome 1.
They've had a space program since
1963, but claimed they weren't
ready for any kind of manned
missions when Welcome 1 was
forming.

SHANE

Space nerd.

NAJI

They do now.

The screen becomes PIXELATED.

SHANE

Uh oh.

REED

What's that?

NAJI

I don't --

An ALERT WINDOW pops up: "ACCESS DENIED".

REED

Who's denying access?

NAJI

It's not the internal UC system --
it's the government's.

She tries escaping out of the window.

SHANE

The government?

NAJI

They fund our research and own the
master server we use.

REED

What part of the government?

NAJI

It's a blanket terminal -- couldn't
tell you.

(MORE)

NAJI (cont'd)
(gives up)
We've been locked out.

REED
Can you make a printout of the
seismic event?

NAJI
We're locked out means we're locked
out.

SHANE
Does that make me a total badass
then cause I recorded the launch
playback?

Holds up his iPad.

REED
Nice. I'm gonna need you to go on
record, Naji.

NAJI
Of course.

INT. LANEY'S OFFICE - DUSK

Davis and the editor of the government beat, TOM HAMMOND, 50,
a pit bull of a man, sit or lean on furniture in the
Executive Editor's office.

Seated behind a large oak wood desk is Laney. She looks over
her bifocals at Reed and Shane seated on a sofa across from
her.

LANEY
TWO rockets?

DAVIS
U.N. Security Escort Marchel would
have been on the second one -- the
Welcome 1 mission we all saw. The
first rocket, in this scenario,
would have been another, covert
moon mission.

Behind his desk, Davis review's Shane's pictures of the 3D
seismic playback.

Reed and Shane look on in anticipation. Their asses on the
edge of their seat. Shane nervously cracks his knuckles. Reed
slaps his hands, stopping him.

LANEY

This seismic event -- how accurate
is --

REED

Within ninety-nine, point ninety-
nine, point ninety --

LANEY

Got it.

She hands the iPad back to Shane.

REED

And there's no official record of a
rocket launch on that date in
India.

LANEY

Did you connect with India's space
program?

REED

No reply.

Laney gives him a look.

REED

But, India would've only hosted the
launch. The mission would have been
run through NASA's mission control
2.

LANEY

So, you called NASA.

REED

Yes.

LANEY

Okay. And?

REED

No response.

SHANE

But they also had nothing to do
with the operation -- only hosting
it for whatever governmental agency
was running it at the time.

LANEY

And you know this because?

REED

Shane has a credible contact who worked at NASA during both missions.

TOM

What "credible source" -- I'd like my guys to vet him.

REED

She'd like to remain an unnamed source.

TOM

She? Fine. We won't publish her name -- who is she?

SHANE

Can't tell you.

TOM

I'm sorry, who's this guy again?

DAVIS

Shane. He's a new lead blogger.

TOM

And what does Shane, blog?

SHANE

Trends in technology and culture.

TOM

A pop culture blogger who has some unknown contact who claims she was part of the biggest cover up in the history of mankind and the L.A. Tribune is supposed to publish it. Copy that.

SHANE

I'm sorry, who's this guy?

DAVIS

(reprimanding)
Shane --

Laney looks over her bifocals, amused.

LANEY

I believe Tom here covers government -- the department that would run such a fantastical story.

TOM

Not likely. Can we cut to the imaginative reason for the second Object Bruce mission?

DAVIS

Unknown at this point.

REED

We're looking into the possibility that the first mission was to get close enough to remotely upload the crashed ship's technology --

SHANE

-- and then the US and India would keep the technology for themselves.

Beat.

TOM

Question: When did this paper become a shit-tabloid rag?

LANEY

Stand down, Tom.

DAVIS

Regardless of the motivations for the other covert rocket, the fact is Captain Marchel knew he wasn't coming back alive and India sent up an escort who was pretty much already dead and had nothing to lose. Pretty amazing coincidence regardless and worth a write up.

Beat.

LANEY

Let's put it in where it shakes some leaves, but doesn't bring the whole tree down on us. Third page.

REED

(disappointed)
Third page?

Tom heads for the door.

TOM

(to Davis re: Reed and Shane)
Give Bill their notes.

Reed stands up.

REED
Excuse me, but this is our story.

DAVIS
Reed --

SHANE
What does that mean?

REED
Let us write it up, Bill can
revise, but this is our --

LANEY
Gentlemen, you did some strong
investigative work, but this story
and Bill's two Pulitzers outrank
you. You'll share a research
credit.

DAVIS
Can the boys take a second position
byline?

LANEY
Depends what Bill comes up with.

SHANE
What the hell?!

DAVIS
Come with me.

INT. DAVIS'S OFFICE - SAME

Davis leads them into his office.

SHANE
What just happened?

REED
We got ratfucked.

DAVIS
Sit.

He leans against his desk like a dad about school his kids.

DAVIS
Listen --

SHANE

We get to write about it too and Bill's just gonna do his own thing, right?

DAVIS

No -- you're gonna pass on everything you have to Bill. It's now his story.

REED

We busted our asses to track this piece. We delivered more than was asked and --

DAVIS

You did -- but you screwed up in there.

REED

By bringing them an incredible story?!

SHANE

A huge "holy shit" story?!

DAVIS

Yes.

Off their confusing reactions...

DAVIS

Christ, you guys are as stupid as I was at your age.

(beat)

Do you really believe there's more to this?

SHANE

Hell yeah!

REED

Yes.

DAVIS

Good -- then give me your resignations.

REED

What? You're firing us?

DAVIS

Nope, you're quitting. Then you're gonna get someone integral to go on record who knows what the hell this cover-up is about, the higher up the better.

(MORE)

DAVIS (cont'd)

Then you, as freelance journalists,
can negotiate any credit terms you
want with YOUR story.

Beat.

SHANE

Jesus, I was beginning to think
everyone who works here was a dick -
- you're the man, big D.

REED

Like who, Davis?

DAVIS

Not my job. But they better be
Goddamn Integral to the first
mission.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Reed and Shane head down the hallway -- discouraged, but
still hopeful.

SHANE

Why does this feel like we've just
been sent off to find the Arc of
the Covenant?

REED

Let's reach out to your exNASA
contact.

SHANE

She won't give us any names -- only
confirm them.

REED

Shit. Alright. Need someone who was
directly involved in the operation.

Bill comes up to them.

BILL

Hey kids. Thanks for the prep work.
I don't do handwritten notes, so
let's transcribe them. Thanks.

Leaves without a response.

SHANE

He didn't specify what language he
wanted them transcribed in -- gonna
do mine in Vulcan.

REED
 (ignoring Shane)
 Someone who's inte...

Shane stops, stares up at the muted mounted TV.

ON TV

A REPORT from CHINA shows hundreds of work COMMUTERS wearing GAS MASKS. The CLOSED-CAPTIONING READS: "Gas masks are becoming the norm due to the ever increasing poor air-quality."

SHANE
 This is insane.

REED
 C'mon, focus.

As Shane slowly starts to walk, an AD for a CAR interrupts the news story.

We see CU's of a sleek new car, intercut with a known CHAMPION RACE CAR DRIVER suiting up. He slides into his JUMPSUIT. Tugs on his BOOTS. Lowers his helmet over his head and locks it into place, like an ASTRONAUT.

REED
 The higher up the better.

Reed looks up at the TV as well.

SHANE
 Right, higher the better.

BACK AT TV

The Race Car Driver floors it and literally takes off across a TWINKLING STARRY NIGHT.

Beat.

They turn to each other, realizing...

INT. REED AND SHANE'S CUBICLES - SAME

They rush into their cubicles, ready to divide and conquer.

REED
 I'll start with India's space program recruits. You pull together a short list of American astronauts who didn't make the cut for the Welcome crew.

SHANE

Copy that.

They settle behind their desks. Start in Googling.

MONTAGE:

Reed and Shane work the phones like two telemarketers on Ritalin.

Some calls promising, others curt hang-ups.

ASTRONAUT (O.S.)

(Texas accent)

Is this a joke?

SHANE

No Commander, this is not a joke -- have you ever been to India? Around early May of last year?

ASTRONAUT (O.S.)

No, I have not.

SHANE

Can you prove it?

CLICK.

ON REED

REED

Have you ever trained with American astronauts? Worked with them on any missions?

INDIAN ASTRONAUT (O.S.)

(Indian accent)

You know we have our own space program.

REED

Yes, I'm aware of that.

INDIAN ASTRONAUT (O.S.)

American and Russians aren't the only ones in space now, young man.

REED

Of course, but have you trained with them in the past or gone on any missio --

CLICK.

They hit dead end after dead end.

Out of desperation, they SWITCH their CALL LISTS with each other.

SHANE

Wait. Wait. I don't understand.
Hold on...

Shane types his question into an iPad TRANSLATOR APP. Gets back the INDIAN translation -- but it's in HINDI SYMBOLS.

SHANE

Okay, a "T" with a sideways "S"
going through it...

They devour snacks and meals in between calls and on hold. Reed offers the last of his chocolate HO-HOs to Shane.

REED

... You wanna finish this?

SHANE

Don't be that way.

REED

What way?

SHANE

Obviously, you're one of those guys that can eat whatever the hell they want and not gain an ounce of gerbil fat. If I even look at a Ho-Ho my cholesterol sky rockets and I turn into Chris Christie.

And back at it they go.

More calls and more blow offs.

Reed dumps the Ho-Ho wrapper in the trash. Shane instinctively retrieves the wrapper, places it in the recycling container next to the trash.

INT. CUBICLES - EVENING

We PULL BACK from their work area to see they're now the only ones left in the office, save for a JANITOR.

Shane is reclined, asleep with a STRING BEAN in between his fingers, as if he were smoking it.

Reed, still on the phone, slams the rest of a RED BULL, but he's too far burnt for any of its benefits.

He slouches down, waiting for someone to pick up. Starts to hang up and CROSS OFF the last name on his list when...

RUBY (O.S.)

Hello?

Reed catches the phone in time.

REED

Hel, hello, Ruby Todeski, this is Reed Kemper of the Los Angeles Tribune.

RUBY (O.S.)

Sorry, I get my news online.

REED

Good for you. I'm a reporter. I'm looking for your uncle Simon Todeski.

RUBY

Simon doesn't live here.

REED

I know, I know. There's just no listing for him anywhere, so I thought maybe you might know where your uncle --

RUBY

I'm sorry, I don't.

REED

When's the last time you've seen him?

RUBY

I don't know.

REED

Uh huh. Right. Okay, well... enjoy your online fast-food bite-size news chunks.

Hangs up. Rubs his tired eyes.

REED

Jesus.

Beat.

Again, he moves to strike SIMON TODESKI'S name off the list when the phone RINGS.

REED
 (answers)
 Reed Kemper.

SIMON (O.S.)
 Ain't it awfully late to be
 calling?

REED
 Excuse me? I didn't call you.

SIMON (O.S.)
 No -- you called my niece.

REED
 Simon Todeski? Captain, uh,
 Commander Todeski?

SIMON (O.S.)
 I'm neither of those. Just an
 aeronautic computer engineer.

Reed CIRCLES Simon's name on the list. Begins taking notes
 below it.

REED
 Right. Did you, uh, have you ever
 been to... India.

SIMON
 India?

REED
 Yes, sir.

SIMON
 You can call me Simon.

REED
 Okay, Simon.

SIMON (O.S.)
 I was there once. I like to travel
 a lot. Hard for junk mail to find
 you that way.
 (beat)
 Yeah, must have been about... uh...
 little bit over a year ago I'd say.

Reed sits up. A second and third wind kicks in.

SIMON (O.S.)
 You could also say I think about
 that trip everyday.

REED
Did, uh, anything unusual happen on
that trip?

Beat.

SIMON (O.S.)
What are you getting at?

REED
Um,.. did, uh... did --

SIMON (O.S.)
Well, come out with it.

REED
Were you on a manned space mission
to the moon from India, sir, uh,
Simon?

Pause.

REED
Hello?

SIMON (O.S.)
You know it's been unseasonably
cold in Calgary for this time of
year. Some say mother nature's
pissed off.

Reed rolls his eyes.

REED
Right. Is that a yes, or no,
regarding the manned missio --

SIMOM (O.S.)
You got warm clothes, Mr. Kemper?

REED
Warm clothes? Yes, I --

SIMON (O.S.)
Good. When you land in Calgary,
turn off your cell phone and call
my niece from a pay phone.

CLICK.

Reed gets to his feet. Does a fist pump. Notices they're the
only ones in the building.

Pokes Shane awake.

REED

Wake up, sunshine. We're going to Canada.

SHANE

Ookay.

EXT. CALGARY FOREST - MORNING

POV AERIAL SHOT of a vast dense forest. The treetops poke through the scattered fog like daggers.

We FOLLOW a crappy economy rental CAR along a freshly cut trail.

EXT. SIMON TODESKI'S PROPERTY - SAME

Through the windshield, Reed and Shane take in a small structure that looks like the bastard child of a trailer and a log cabin.

They climb out of the car. Stop in front of a tree stump with a large AXE buried in it.

Husky for an astronaut, SIMON TODESKI, 40, unshaven, mix-matched flannel, steps out onto his porch. A SHOTGUN tucked in his arm crease, pointing down.

REED

Simon Todeski?

SIMON

I only approved a visit for one guy named Reed Kemper. Whoever's not Reed is trespassing.

REED

He's my partner. If you don't trust him, you shouldn't trust me.

Beat.

SHANE

Howdy, I'm Shane Gotlieb.

SIMON

Shane Gotlieb?

SHANE

Yes.

Beat.

SIMON
Let's take a walk.

As he steps off the porch...

SHANE
(quietly to Reed)
Does he have to bring the shotgun?

EXT. WOODS - LATER

Simon leads them deep into the woods. Shane looks around, getting more and more concerned as they go deeper into the dense woods.

EXT. CLEARING - LATER

They wander out into a small opening in the forest. In the middle is what appears to be a CAMPFIRE PIT with burnt RIBS from some sort of animal.

SIMON
This is good.

He turns back to a very nervous Shane and Reed. Smiles a smile that's half sincere and half dangerous. Then...

SIMON
I like your blog.

SHANE
You... you do? That's great.
Thanks, man.

SIMON
We can talk here.

They both ease up. Shane pulls out his iPad. Sets it up to shoot the interview.

REED
Mind if we record this?

SIMON
Nope --

Simon holds up a child's "E.T. THE EXTRATERRESTRIAL" THERMOS.

SIMON
-- mind if I calm my nerves a little?

SHANE
Hell, no.

They all have a seat on the logs enclosing the campfire.

Simon takes a long swig as Shane starts RECORDING.

REED
 (to Shane)
 We good?

Shane gives Reed the thumbs up.

SIMON
 So, guess you wanna know how we got
 to Bruce before Welcome 1.

SHANE
 How close did you get?

SIMON
 To the ship? About this close...

Simon touches Reed's leg.

SHANE
 What?

REED
 That's a little hard to believe
 since Object Bruce was being
 observed the whole time you
 would've been up there.

A smirk crawls up on Simon's face.

SIMON
 It was called "Operation Floyd."

SHANE
 Cool -- From the "Floyd" character
 in the movie "2001."

SIMON
 No -- Floyd, from the band "Pink
 Floyd."
 (beat)
 No one saw us because we came
 around "the dark side of the moon."

The reference to the dark side of the moon give Shane pause,
 reflecting on his dream. He shares a look with Reed.

SIMON
 Since the new moon began seventeen
 days before the Welcome crew
 arrived, we were invisible.

REED

And what exactly was your mission?

SIMON

To acquire all of Bruce's technology. To get the good stuff.

REED

Okay, why you? You had only gone into space once before. To reboot a satellite, right?

SIMON

Actually, to redirect a satellite to eavesdrop on another nation's satellite. I'm really just a glorified cable guy recruited out of N.S.A. I was sent up to Bruce to crack their system. Download as much as I could from the ship's mainframe computer.

SHANE

Knew it.

SIMON

But interfacing was a total nightmare. They had their own binary code. We downloaded it all, but without them to translate, it was useless. So we took a couple lollipops back with us.

REED

Lollipops?

SIMON

That's what we called 'em -- the occupants. Big round heads with little stick bodies.

This hit's Shane and Reed like an aluminum baseball bat.

SHANE

What... the... fu --

REED

Are you saying your crew took back -

-

SIMON

Two. There were a dozen of them on the ship, but we just had enough room for the two.

(MORE)

SIMON (cont'd)

The others we promised we'd come back for -- that's what our commanders told us anyway.

He takes another hit off his thermos.

Reed and Shane attempt to comprehend Simon's admission.

SHANE

(muttering)

Holy shit.

SIMON

But I think those guys knew we only wanted the ones we grabbed.

SHANE

We actually have E.T's on Earth?

SIMON

No, "we" don't -- they do.

REED

Who's "they?"

SIMON

D.O.D.

REED

Department of Defense? That's who ran it?

Simon nods.

SIMON

Via some bullshit rogue Black Ops division. They had NASA run it out of India through Houston's mission control 2. But NASA didn't have a choice.

SHANE

What do you mean they didn't have a choice?

SIMON

NASA wouldn't be around if it weren't for the D.O.D. Like SpaceX, most of NASA's funds come from launching test rockets and spy satellites for D.O.D.

SHANE

How did India get involved?

SIMON

They needed a place to hide a launch. I think India's deal was that they share a little in whatever technology was recovered.

REED

You're saying they -- D.O.D. Black Ops -- destroyed the ship and the other aliens so they, the U.S. could control the technology? I find that hard --

SIMON

I'm saying they wanted to monopolies the technolo --

SHANE

So they blew up the Goddamn ship?!

Simon pauses. Gives a look that conveys how innocent Shane and Reed are in all this.

SIMON

I'm saying... once you have the secret recipe to the Colonel's seven herbs and spices, you don't need the Colonel anymore.

SHANE

Jesus.

Simon shifts his focus to something deep in his mind's eye.

SIMON

(reflecting)

There were so many of them. These short little creatures. One of our crew, tough guy, was a pilot in Afghanistan. Four tours. He took one look at them -- they all occasionally moved as one. He ran right back to the ship like his ass was on fire.

(laughs)

We found him later. Hiding at the top of the capsule. Rocking back and forth, praying.

(considers)

I wasn't a spiritual guy before I went up, but...

REED

What were they doing here? Near our planet.

SIMON

I couldn't tell you, but I don't think it was an accident.

SHANE

What do you mean?

SIMON

It was too divine to be just a random happenstance. There's nothing random about the universe. I know that now. They were here for a bigger objective, trust me.

REED

How were the two aliens chosen from all the others?

SIMON

We didn't make that choice. We communicated that we had room for two and they chose.

SHANE

How did you communicate with them?

SIMON

We held up two fingers and pointed to our ship.

SHANE

Oh.

SIMON

However, we did converse with them on the return, but when I look back I don't remember them really talking.

Simon takes another swig.

REED

If you don't mind me asking you, why are you telling us all this? Why are you willing to go on record? I mean, I'm sure D.O.D. had you sign a nondisclosure agreement.

Simon smiles again.

SIMON

Yeah, I signed their NDA. They were so rushed to get us up there before the other ship, they didn't have us turn in the NDA until after we got back. So, I signed it Sponge Bob.

SHANE

That's genius.

SIMON

I was expecting them to notice, but no one ever did. I'm Canadian -- we like universal health-care as much as we like universal knowledge.

REED

Who were your other crew persons, the other astronauts?

SIMON

I don't speak for the dead.

REED

You're, are you saying they, the D.O.D. Black Ops killed them.

SIMON

I'm telling you I don't live all the way out here because I didn't pay my cable bill.

REED

How far does this cover up go? Secretary of Defense? Chief Of Staff, the VP, the Pres --

SIMON

I'm basically a grunt, man. I wouldn't know. My guess is none of them.

REED

None of --

SIMON

Why would the Presidential office and its staff, an office that changes every four to eight years, be kept in the loop about the most secret black op ever conducted by the seventy year old military industrial complex? Eisenhower warned us back in 1961'.

(MORE)

SIMON (cont'd)

It's not just one person -- it's the entire MIC. They control everything.

REED

Are they still alive -- the recovered aliens?

SIMON

Couldn't tell you.

SHANE

Do you have any idea where D.O.D. might've taken them?

SIMON

Nope. But I'm guessing it wasn't Disneyland.

A THUMPING, like a helicopter, is heard in the distance.

SIMON

You guys turned off your cells before you came out here, right?

REED

Yes.

SHANE

Yeah.

SIMON

The whole time?

REED

Yes. Why?

Shane doesn't answer. Simon waits for his response.

SHANE

I might've snuck a tiny peek at my GPS, to make sure we weren't getting lost.

SIMON

Interview's over.

Simon grabs his shotgun. Storms off.

FREEZE FRAME on the back of Simon as he leaves. PULL OUT to...

INT. LANEY'S OFFICE - EARLY

Laney, Davis, Tom, and legal counsel JOANNE BEVERLY, 38, stare at the frozen IMAGE of Simon on a TV SCREEN. They all turn to our guys, seated on the sofa.

REED

That's it.

SHANE

"It" just being we have actual occupants from Object Bruce on Earth!

DAVIS

How do you wanna run with this, Laney?

TOM

(cutting in)

As far the hell away as we can. This guy's an alcoholic mountain man with the credibility of a reality show cast member. It's time we permanently yanked the kids off the grown ups field and let our vets clean this up.

REED

You can't -- we own the footage and the story.

TOM

What the hell's he talking about?

DAVIS

Reed and Shane no longer work for us. They resigned and are now freelancers. We want their story we have to run it with them.

SHANE

So go blow us, Tom.

TOM

Little prick.

SHANE

Not little, FYI.

Laney smiles.

DAVIS

Shane --

LANEY
Alright, gentlemen.
(beat)
Nicely played.

She turns to Davis.

LANEY
Any skeletons with this guy?

DAVIS
None. We triple checked his
background -- it's all good.

LANEY
Joanne?

JOANNE
Clean. Legal's satisfied.

TOM
Except for the fact that he looks
like the long lost son of Charles
Manson --

DAVIS
This is solid.

TOM
Fine, let me just say this aloud so
everyone in this room can hear what
this is gonna sound like; The L.A.
Tribune today reported that the
U.S. Government --

SHANE
(correcting)
Department of Defense.

A snide look from Tom.

TOM
-- and the Republic of India
collaborated on the kidnapping of
aliens off the moon and blew up
their spacecraft on live TV.
(beat)
Does that sound about right?

Beat.

Laney turns to the guys. Looks them over.

LANEY

This will trash your careers. It will destroy the paper, or the very least, plummet our already low asset value of whichever conglomerate currently owns us...

Reed considers this heavily. Shane open his mouths to object -

LANEY

... IF any of this is wrong.

SHANE

We're aware --

LANEY

(sharply)
I'm not done.

Shane sits back.

LANEY

This story will piss off the entire world. And I don't know about anyone else in this room, but I consider myself a patriot. I don't like it when the land of the free gets caught with its pants around its ankles.

SHANE

With all due respect -- tough shit. We're not above the truth.

LANEY

Yes, well, truth comes in many shades lately, Mr. Gottlieb.

(beat)

Okay. That's it.

TOM

Jesus, Laney.

LANEY

Davis.

DAVIS

Yes?

LANEY

Get an umbrella for these two. Dismissed.

Off their reactions.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

Offices are dark, nearly after hours.

Reed smiles as he and Shane head towards their cubicles.

SHANE

(to Reed)

The hell does that mean -- "Get us an umbrella?"

REED

It means prepare for a shit storm.

SHANE

Translation?

REED

They're gonna run it.

SHANE

What?! YES!

Davis comes up behind them.

DAVIS

We're holding four columns -- front page. Need your piece emailed to the secure server by nine-thirty tonight, boys.

REED

Yes, sir.

SHANE

Hell, yes!

DAVIS

Congrats, ya little bastards.

Davis diverts off, into his office.

REED

Let's get outta here.

A creeping concern comes over Shane. Reed notices.

REED

What?

SHANE

What Laney said about it trashing us and the paper.

REED

Right, but we're cool. Simon checks out.

SHANE

I'm really enjoying being a reporter, man.

REED

Well, you're not a reporter until we publish. Let's go...

Shane starts to write a post on his BLOG.

REED

What're you doing?

SHANE

I'm writing a post about how awesome Justin Bieber is.

REED

What?

SHANE

I need to make sure it's not wrong.

REED

Shane --

SHANE

Meet ya at back here in an hour.

Shane heads off, continuing to blog.

REED

We have a deadline!

SHANE

I'll be back in time!

EXT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY - EVENING

Shane pulls up.

INT. PLANETARIUM - SAME

As dark and ominous as before, Shane heads down the main aisle of the planetarium.

Has a seat where he sat before.

SHANE
Casey? You here --

From the seat behind him...

CASEY
Whatta ya got for me?

Shane looks back at her.

SHANE
Hey, dude. Uh, so we got this guy,
Simon --

CASEY
-- Todeski.

SHANE
You know him?

CASEY
I've seen his work.

SHANE
Okay, so was he part of Operation
Floyd and the dark side of the Moon
mission then? I need to confirm
this.

Beat.

CASEY
Yes.

SHANE
Great -- was he directly involved
in the removal of two occupants
from Object Bruce? And are they
still alive?

Casey takes a hit off her vapor pen. Let's it drizzle out in
a rising waterfall of smoke, masking her face.

CASEY
Yes... but don't get hung up on the
aliens.

SHANE
Are, are, you're kidding, right?

CASEY
That's the story, but there's more.

SHANE

More than the cover up?

CASEY

The whole picture. There was a bigger purpose to them coming here.

SHANE

What purpose?

CASEY

It'll all make sense when this comes out. It's been a year in the making, dude. It's time now. And it's gonna be worth it. Trust me.

Shane considers.

SHANE

I hate to ask this, believe me, but... is my and Reed's life in danger. Todeski said his fellow crew persons were --

CASEY

It's a little too late to ask that.
(beat)
But don't flatter yourselves -- you guys are too small to be considered a serious threat. That's why I'm talking to you. And that's why they won't see this story coming.

SHANE

Is there anything else we should know before we go to print?

CASEY

No, you guy's have done your part... like I've tried to do mine.
(beat)
Good luck, dude.

Casey gets up. Leaves.

EXT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY - SAME

Shane heads to his car. Crickets calling out from every direction. He makes a call.

SHANE

(to Reed)
It's confirmed.

REED (O.S.)

Great -- meet me at the Roger Room.

Hangs up.

Something STIRS in the foliage next to the parking lot.

Shane picks up his pace.

Whatever it is it's tracking him.

Shane sprints to his car. Jumps in. Peels away.

EXT. THE ROGER ROOM - EVENING

INT. ROGER ROOM - LATER

A dark 1940's speakeasy-style joint. It feels like you should see the old cub reporters toiling away in every corner, but there are none -- only hipsters now.

AT BACK OF ROOM

Still amped by his meeting with Casey, Shane quickly works on writing his notes into the article, while Reed does the same on his laptop.

REED

What "bigger purpose to them coming here?"

SHANE

I don't know, she went Riddler on me. Her answer about our lives being in danger was vague too.

REED

Occupational hazard of a good story. What does she mean, it's been a year in the making?

SHANE

I don't know, man, that's all she gave me. Just glad all the cloak and dagger shit's over.

LATER

They finish writing up their respective sections of the story.

SHANE

Done.

REED

Done.

REED
Okay, let me see, blogger boy.

SHANE
Here ya go, Mr. Impatient.

Reed's computer switches over to MIRROR Shane's desktop. He opens Shane's draft doc. Begins reading.

Shane bites his nails.

REED
Okay... okay...

Reed casually reaches over and slaps Shane's hand away from his mouth.

REED
FYI: Do not use the word "guy or dude" as an adjective to describe someone. Nor ever use the word "cool." Nor refer to yourself. These are not your opinions, these are simply the facts as you've researched them.

SHANE
No biased self-important diatribes, got it.

Reed continues proofing. Doesn't look up for this exchange.

SHANE
So?

Beat.

REED
You might be more than a conspiracy leader after all.

SHANE
No shit? It's good?

REED
It's... not bad. Not bad at all for a research assistant.

SHANE
Can't give it up for me, can you?

Reed smiles.

REED

Alright, and off the story goes...

Reed send it -- via email.

SHANE

Yes!

Shane goes in for a fist bump, but Reed declines...

REED

That's bad luck. Not until we get email confirmation.

SHANE

Oh. Okay.

They monitor the screen. Occasionally Reed refreshes the email.

SHANE

So now that we've finally bonded, I've gotta know why you have such a stick up your butt about seeing your name in actual print? I mean newsprint -- it's not green, not that you give-a-shit, and news is news, whatever form it's in.

Reed drops his shields a little.

REED

My father and I... we didn't have what you'd call a close relationship. Classic workaholic. Only time we'd come close to something resembling bonding was between six AM and seven AM, when he'd read the paper. Once he'd finish a section he'd hand it over to me. Grill me about what the real story was, versus what was printed.

(remembering)

Something about the chalky smell of dry ink. The crinkling spruce wood pulp paper. Unfolding it, like a map leading you somewhere different on each page.

(beat)

(MORE)

REED (cont'd)

He never came to one of my baseball games, but if I impressed him with an insight on an article he hadn't considered, it was like having him see me knock the ball out of the park.

(beat)

He died before I became a reporter. Guess it's pointless now, but I can't look at a newspaper and not think of him.

SHANE

My dad was a butcher. I fucking hate meat-wrapping newsprint paper.

Reed cracks up.

Email CONFIRMATION PINGS in.

Now they first bump.

EXT. REED'S APARTMENT - LATER

Quiet, peaceful, the wind picks up a little. Shadows from a swaying tree play on the side of the apartment.

INT. SHANE'S BEDROOM - SAME

TILT DOWN from the same shadows dancing above Reed's bed. He stirs. We begin to move down on him.

INTERCUT:

POV out a windshield as we drive up a winding road in a wooded area.

As we come around a sharp corner the car's headlights hit something.

REVERSE ANGLE

The headlight's beams backlight the outlines two ALIENS in the middle of the road. At the moment of impact...

RING! (O.S.)

INT. SHANE'S BEDROOM - SAME

Reed jumps awake from the nightmare.

REED

Nooo!

He catches his breath as his CELL rings again. Snatches it off the night table.

REED

Reed.

Dead on the other end.

REED

Hello? Hel --

VOICE

You have no idea what you two have done.

REED

Excuse me?

No answer. Just breathing.

REED

Actually, we do. Do you?

Reed hangs up. Puts his phone on silent.

Lies there a beat. Eyes pop open.

Reaches under his bed. Withdraws a BASEBALL BAT. Tucks it in his bed, spoons it.

EXT. REED'S APARTMENT - MORNING

With the giddiness of a kid about to open his first gift under the Christmas tree, Reed steps out of his apartment to retrieve the morning paper.

But no present. He circles around, wanders the yard.

SHANE (O.S.)

Looking for something?!

Looks up to see Shane with Reed's morning NEWSPAPER. And sporting a TIE.

REED

Nice tie. I'm not carpooling.

SHANE

Get in if you want your paper.

EXT. FOREST LAWNS CEMETERY - LATER

Shane pulls over. As Reed climbs out, Shane hands him the newspaper.

SHANE

Tell your pop I said hi.

A smile from Reed.

AT GRAVESTONE

Reed steps up. Unsnaps the newspaper. Looks at the headline.

ON HEADLINE

"ALLEGED OBJECT BRUCE COVER-UP!
D.O.D. BLACK OPS BLOWS UP SHIP,
TAKES 2 OCCUPANTS!"

Reed looks on, overflowing with pride. Looks down at the byline.

CU BYLINE

"By
Reed Kemper
Shane Gotlieb"

He sets the paper down on the gravestone like an offering.

ON GRAVESTONE

"LLOYD KEMBER
Husband and Father
1952-2001"

Smiles.

REED
Enjoy the read, pop.

EXT. L.A. TRIBUNE - MORNING

Foot traffic wears down the sidewalk in front of the L.A. Tribune. Most of the traffic pauses for a beat at the NEWSSTAND. Double-takes yank pedestrians back for a second look.

Next to the newsstand, spray-painted on an abandoned MAILBOX, is Banksy-looking GRAFFITI of the MOON with a mushroom cloud EXPLOSION.

As Reed and Shane walk by, REED snatches up a few copies of the NEWSPAPER. Tosses money on the counter.

SHANE

Kinda tacky -- buying copies of
your own article.

REED

Blow me.

INT. ELEVATOR - SAME

Packed in the elevator like a crowded crayon box, Shane sneaks a peek down at his iPad.

ON IPAD SCREEN

We see the same news HEADLINE.

SHANE

Yeah, this isn't the coolest thing in the world.

REED

Dude, have some humility.

SHANE

Blow me.

EXT. L.A. TRIBUNE LOBBY - SAME

As Reed and Shane exit the elevator...

FBI AGENT #1 (O.S.)

Reed Kemper? Shane Gotlieb?

Suddenly, Reed and Shane are surrounded by FBI AGENTS.

REED

Yeah. What --

FBI AGENT #1

Come with us.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Blinds drawn. FBI AGENTS at each corner of the room.

Seated around the conference table are Laney, Davis, Joanne, a LAWYER, and Reed and Shane. A few MICROPHONES on the table stare up at them.

At the other end of the table is ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF THE FBI, HENRY GERARD, 45, short, glasses, impeccably neat. He refers to his NOTES.

HENRY

Please correct me if I have any of this information wrong. This story...

He holds up a copy of the newspaper HEADLINE.

HENRY

... all began because a priest
killed himself.

REED

Yes.

SHANE

Because he didn't try to stop
it.

HENRY

Uh, huh.

Henry's assistant, SPECIAL AGENT HIROSHI, 32, Asian, quiet
demeanor, lowers a cell from his ear. Leans into Henry.

AGENT HIROSHI

The Secretary of Defense wants to
be video conferenced in.

HENRY

I don't blame her. Let her know the
Bureau will take care of this per
protocol.

TRIBUNE LAYWER

Is anyone here being charged with
anything this morning?

HENRY

Well, it's only eight am, Mr.
Counsel -- ask me again in an hour.
Ms. Moreno, what did you think when
two of your junior reporters
pitched you this story?

LANEY

You mean, how could I take this
seriously? I didn't. But I'm old
enough to know how to give my
reporters enough rope to either
pull themselves up the ladder or --

HENRY

Might want to stay away from that
analogy, Ms. Moreno.

(turns to Reed and Shane)

Cause right now I see two
"reporters" dangling before me.

SHANE

Excuse me, Mr. FBI sir, talk to
Simon Todeski. He's the guy that
went up to Object Bruce.

HENRY

I would love to, but I'm afraid that's impossible as Mr. Todeski cleared out of his current residence and is now officially off grid. Which is so convenient.

REED

Great.

HENRY

So, here's the dilemma, folks. Without any actual evidence, or corroboration from the government agencies you're accusing --

DAVIS

Neither NASA, nor the D.O.D., returned our repeated calls for comments regarding the second rocket launch.

HENRY

Well, that's because there actually was a second launch.

Agent Hiroshi hands Henry a statement.

HENRY

(summarizing)

A rocket was sent up in India seventeen days before the Welcome 1 launch.

SHANE

Yes!

HENRY

And Simon Todeski was in India during that time.

REED

Yes.

HENRY

And they did successfully fulfill their mission -- which was to put a new spy satellite into orbit.

REED

What?

SHANE

Wrong?!

Henry produces two PHOTOS from a FILE.

HENRY

These photos are for your eyes
only, in this room.

ON PHOTOS

Photo (1) shows the Indian ROCKET LAUNCH. Photo (2) shows POV
of TWO ASTRONAUTS negotiating a satellite into position near
an Indian SPACE STATION.

HENRY

Mr. Todeski consulted with the
Indian Space Research Organization
on the software program for that
mission. Since it's called a "spy
satellite", D.O.D. doesn't usually
like to advertise their launch.
Crazy, huh?

Henry hands the photos and file back to Agent Hiroshi.

SHANE

That's disinformation bullshit!

Reed starts to deflate.

HENRY

The other news organizations will
be getting a statement this morning
from D.O.D., who had to make the
decision of either admitting to
spying on other nation's
satellites, or secretly harboring
little green men from the moon.

SHANE

Crock of shit.

Shane appears to be the last hold out on the cover-up story.

HENRY

Now your publication is free to
print what anyone says, whether
what they say is fact or fiction,
but it would make things much less
dramatic for the FBI if it didn't
involve the D.O.D.

LANEY

I'm sorry, Assistant Director, but
did you just attempt to censor the
L.A. Tribune from reporting on
government and public agencies?

HENRY

I would never do that. I'm just saying freedom of speech is a gift that sometimes is best left unopened.

LANEY

"It is the first responsibility of every citizen to question authority."

HENRY

Are you quoting me Benjamin Franklin, Ms. Moreno?

There is a mutual distaste, as well as a mutual respect between them.

HENRY

Now, about this exNASA source of yours. Would you like us to vet her, or would you like to keep that gift in its box?

SHANE

Sorry, we don't rat out our --

REED

Yes. I'd love for you to vet her.

SHANE

What?!

REED

Her name is Casey... something. You can find her at Griffith Observatory. She works there.

SHANE

Hey! What the hell are you doing?!

REED

They set us up, Shane. We were too stupid to realize it. I wanna know why she and Todeski did it.

SHANE

So, you're gonna throw her under the bus and not consider the possibility that D.O.D. is lying?!

Reed turns to Henry.

REED

I'd like to go on record stating
you have my full cooperation,
Assistant Director.

HENRY

Duly noted, Mr. Kemper.

SHANE

(to Henry)

You have two versions of what
happened. There's a fifty/fifty
chance that our version is true.

HENRY

That may be so, but I think I,
along with America, will sleep
better at night with D.O.D.s
version.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

The room clears out. Shane and Reed start to leave.

LANEY

Shane, Reed, stay a moment.

They sit back down -- far away from each other.

As the last FBI agent leaves...

LANEY

For the record. I think we were
right.

(beat)

I think something happened up
there. Whether it's Mr. Todeski's
version or something else.
Regardless, we dug and this is what
was found with the best of our
abilities.

SHANE

Great, can I go now?

LANEY

One more thing. Our owners have
asked that we bar you two from ever
publishing a story here again. I
considered it and then I thought,
what kind of an editor would I be
if I threw my reporters under the
bus every time we published a
controversial story?

Reed looks down.

LANEY

While you lick your wounds, I
suggest you use your time wisely.

(beat)

Now you can go.

EXT. SHANE'S HOME - NIGHT

From Shane's cottage we hear GUNFIRE.

INT. SHANE'S HOME - SAME

Shane sits on his couch. He's fired upon in an ON-LINE
COMMUNITY "ALIENS VERSUS PREDATOR" GAME while chowing
unenthusiastically on a bowl of celery.

ON TV SCREEN

One of the other GAMER'S human MILITARY AVATAR shoots at an
ALIEN. Keeps missing. Shane talks into headset mic.

SHANE

Evil Sam, you suck. You need to get
impregnated by an alien and die.

EVIL SAM (O.S.)

(kid's voice)

Please, you shot two of the humans
already?

SHANE

That's because I'm a Predator, you
moron.

Another Military Avatar jumps out and fires like a madman,
Shane sends a TRIDENT into his chest.

SHANE

(Lackluster)

Bieber Fever Freak 7, you also
suck. Don't play in this community
again until your balls drop.

BIEBER FEVER FREAK 7

Screw you, Chocolate Thunder
Brutha!

Shane takes a container of CHOCOLATE DIPPING SAUCE. Squirts
it on a celery stock. Shoves it in his mouth. It drips down
his chin.

An AMBER ALERT blares out on his iPad.

Shane looks at it.

"Red Tesla (CA) LIC/6EGEEK
Griffith Observatory, now."

SHANE

Sorry, dude.

He shuts his iPad off.

INT. REED'S APARTMENT - LATER

Very sparsely furnished apartment. Conservative in taste -- like Reed.

At his kitchen counter, Reed tugs off a bite of pizza while starring disappointedly at he and Shane's headline on the three newspaper copies he bought earlier.

Takes a long swig off a BEER.

Slowly, he slides the newspapers down the counter, off the edge, into his trash bin below.

Looks down at the ink from the newsprint on his fingers. Disdainfully wipes it off on his napkin.

Cleaning out his immediate past, he moves onto his NOTEPAD.

Tears out his notes on Object Bruce. Fists them into a ball. Tosses them one by one into the bin.

Stops on one note from the man-on-the-street interviews.

CU NOTE

"Dad's golfing buddy. Government
took back aliens. Something happened.
Blah blah blah."

BELOW THIS

"Bianca -- 323 555-3831, Silver Lake."

He starts to crumble up the note. Stops.

Shakes his head. Dials the number.

EXT. LAMILL CAFE - AFTERNOON

LaMill cafe -- ground zero for Hipsters. A table outside. The WAITER drops off a coffee order at a table with Reed and the young couple from the second man-on-the-street interview -- BIANCA and ALFIE.

REED
 (to Waiter)
 Excuse me, mine was to go.

WAITER
 I'll get you a to-go cup.

REED
 (turn back to Bianca and
 Alfie)
 I just wanted to do a quick follow
 up on your comment. Your father's
 golf buddy. His story about the
 aliens.

BIANCA
 Yes.

Reed realizes he doesn't have a pen.

REED
 Damn.

Alfie takes Reed's cell on the table.

ALFIE
 Here... You have a recording app.
 Scrolls through his APPS.

ALFIE
 Man, you have like no apps.

REED
 I don't have time for that stuff.

Alfie opens up his VOICE APP for him. Hits RECORD. Sets it
 back down.

ALFIE
 There ya go.

REED
 (dismissive)
 Yeah, thanks.
 (back to interview)
 He told your father, he said the
 government, they had taken some of
 the aliens from Bruce.

BIANCA
 Yes.

REED
Before or during the Welcome 1
mission?

BIANCA
I don't know. Just said we had
gotten some of them.

REED
Did he say how many of them there
were, the aliens they got?
(testing)
Three, four, half a doz --

BIANCA
Two.

This gives Reed a little pause.

REED
Two. You sure?

BIANCA
Yes.
(beat)
They called them suckers.

ALFIE
(correcting)
Lollipops.

BIANCA
Oh, yeah, Lollipops.

Reed is stunned. The Waiter returns with the to-go cup, but
Reed isn't going anywhere. Drinks from the cafe's cup.

BIANCA
He told my dad it was because they
had, like big heads and small --

REED
Your dad's buddy, he knew about
this because...

BIANCA
He worked at some department of
something at the government.

REED
Department of Defense.

BIANCA

I think so. Anyway, he said his department was waiting for them, the Lollipops, to come to a base he was at in Florida.

ALFIE

You forgot the quarantine part.

BIANCA

Yeah, NASA had quarantined the aliens first before they left -- incase they had like alien diseases, or in case their immune systems couldn't handle being with humans.

REED

For how long, the quarantine?

BIANCA

I don't know.

REED

So, what happened? You said something happened on the way.

BIANCA

The plane they were on went down in the ocean.

REED

Crashed?

She nods.

REED

No survivors?

BIANHA

No.

REED

Did he say who's plane it was that went down?

BIANCA

Yeah -- he said NASA. Said they screwed the pooch on that one.

REED

And when did he tell your father all this?

BIANCA

Uhhhh, like six months after the moon mission. Right after the guy retired. Then my father told me after his funeral.

REED

Who's funeral?

BIANCA

My dad's buddy. He had a heart attack on the golf course.

ALFIE

That's the way to go.

Reed takes all of this in, at least as much as he can.

REED

Did your dad believe him?

BIANCA

I think so, my father loves all that conspiracy stuff.

REED

And what about you guys?

They look at each other.

ALFIE

Nah, think dude was just messing with her dad.

BIANCA

I don't know. I mean he felt, according to my dad, the guy seemed super sad about the whole thing. Regretted the fact that we didn't save all of them.

REED

Can I get your father's information?

BIANCA

Sure.

EXT. SHANE'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Reed walks up to Shane's cottage. Checks his phone to confirm address. He's a little confused by the property.

KNOCKS on the door.

A moment later, Shane opens the door.

REED

Hey, wasn't sure I had the right address -- thought you'd live in some modern condo with all your pop-tech toys.

SHANE

Sorry to disappoint your stereotype of me. What are you doing here, Reed?

REED

I texted you and you didn't answer so --

SHANE

I turned my shit off. Again, what are you doing here?

REED

Can we talk?

Beat.

INT. SHANE'S COTTAGE - SAME

Reed has a seat on his old-school leather couch.

SHANE

Want some water, or juice...

REED

I'm good --

SHANE

... or forgiveness?

REED

I'll take some of that.

Shane reluctantly has a seat across from him.

SHANE

I misspoke, I'm outta that.

REED

Listen, Shane... I'm sorry. I was wrong. You were right -- the story IS real.

SHANE

Yeah, well it doesn't matter now. I'm back to being a blogger where facts aren't important, just opinions, so --

REED

Yes, it does -- I got a source, second hand, but a credible source from a D.O.D. operative. They did retrieve two of the aliens. But they died en route from India to a military base.

SHANE

Well, that's not super depressing. Thanks for swinging by.

REED

It does matter cause we did our jobs, man. Our headline was legit. No one can take that away from us.

SHANE

No, they can't -- but they took E.T. away from us. They took our dreams of finally meeting another intelligent species in our universe. They took away our connection to something greater than this planet's petty bullshit.

Reed accepts this assessment.

REED

Right.

(beat)

Look, you're a good journalist, Shane. I'd seriously be honored to track a story with you again. Don't give up on that dream.

Beat.

An AMBER ALERT buzzes on Reed's cell.

He looks at it.

SHANE

Don't bother -- that's our exNASA deep throat.

ALERT READS:

"Need 2 talk 2 u & Shane
Griffith Observatory, now."

REED

Shit. We gotta warn her about the
FBI.

Reed heads for the door...

SHANE

It's too late.

REED

No, it's not. C'mon, we'll carpool.

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - LATER

Shane races his car up the winding road toward the
observatory.

INT. SHANE'S CAR - SAME

Reed stares out the windshield.

SHANE

Having a total deja vu.

EXT. GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY - SAME

They climb out.

REED

This isn't creepy.

SHANE

Welcome to my world.

AT SIDE OF OBSERVATORY

Shane leads them into the side door.

INT. PLANETARIUM - SAME

Reed gets his bearings as Shane struts down the isle.

SHANE

Hey! Casey. Dude. You gotta get
outta here. The FBI know you work --

Over the PA SYSTEM.

CASEY (O.S.)

Doesn't matter -- it's too late.
Have a seat, guys.

SHANE

I don't wanna sit down. If you
already know, then we're cool.

Shane starts to leave again. Stops turns back.

SHANE

Actually, no -- we're not cool. Why
the hell didn't you tell us the
aliens were dead? How does them
crashing into the ocean slip our
clandestine vape-smoking meetings,
huh?

From around the planetarium projector walks...

SIMON TODSKI

SIMON

Cause the truth wasn't ready to
come out yet. It took a year of
beta testing, but it's ready now.

SHANE

Whatever. Enjoy the dark moody
lighting.

They start to leave...

SIMON

Have a seat. We want to show you
something.

SHANE

No thanks.

SIMON

It's really cool.

SHANE

I know what's cool, Todeski and
none of this is --

SUDDENLY, above them...

ON DOME CEILING

A REAL-TIME projection of the EARTH appears. Its enormous
mass slowly rotates, giving us a full view of its majestic
beauty. The clarity is beyond IMAX quality.

REED

That's pretty cool.

SHANE

Yeah, I've got the google Earth app too.

SIMON

This isn't the cool part. Please, just have a seat, man.

Reed has a seat in the reclined chairs. Shane reluctantly does the same.

SIMON

Let me see your iPad and cells. You'll get them right back.

They comply.

Simon disappears to the dark control booth.

CASEY (O.S.)

Ninety-seven point eight percent of Earth scientists say we're destroying the Earth at an alarming rate. That carbon emissions from gas exhaust, and more significantly coal in all forms, is ruining the world.

(beat)

They're all wrong.

SHANE

What the fu --

CASEY (O.S.)

We can't destroy the Earth. No matter what we do to her, she's gonna recycle herself as she's done many times over, like through several ice ages, massive volcanic eruptions, and asteroids. All we're doing by polluting the air and the oceans is killing ourselves and every current species. And mankind can't be recycled.

SHANE

Cut to the end of this IMAX presentation.

CASEY (V.O.)

The occupants of Object Bruce did what we're currently doing to their own planet. Their world became uninhabitable.

(MORE)

CASEY (V.O.) (cont'd)

They created technology to show themselves the adverse affects they were having on their planet, but it was too late for them to act. They were looking for another home when their ship crashed. However, the one's we took back brought us a house warming gift.

REED

How do you know this? They didn't make it.

SIMON

They told me on the way back from the mission -- before their transpo copter went down.

He hands back Reed and Shane's technology.

ON IPAD/CELLS

An ICON of the planet rests in the center of their device screens.

SHANE

(to Reed)

Let's get out of here...

REED

Hold on.

Reed taps the icons and an APP OPENS.

We see the identical live stream of the planet.

SIMON

Scroll right.

SHANE

C'mon, Reed, it's just some bullshit app.

But it isn't.

ABOVE THEM the image of the EARTH begins rotating several times with each scroll. Reed is a bit amazed by this.

SHANE

Don't be so impressed, it's just --

CASEY (V.O.)

Faster.

And Reed scrolls yet faster, until the face of our planet begins to change.

WE ENTER FULL SCREEN OF THE LIVE FEED.

The Earth becomes embroiled in tornados, hurricanes, and volcanic eruptions.

The green lush tones give way to a pale, brown, barren land.

The ice caps melt, causing the seas/oceans to encroach on all coasts, eroding hundreds of miles of land.

The scattered remaining city lights fade and extinguish, drowning the world in a murky merciless darkness.

CUT BACK OUT

Reed and Shane look on devastated.

REED

Holy...

SHANE

... shit.

Casey steps out.

CASEY

Pretty goddamn bleak, huh?

REED

This, this, is our actual future we're seeing -- right now with the current trajectory we're on?

Simon nods.

REED

How far away is this from happening?

CASEY

Does it matter?

SHANE

Jesus Christ.

CASEY

I know, right?

SHANE

Wait a second. How did you decode this app?

SIMON
I told you -- we got their
technology.

SHANE
Yeah -- the Colonel's seven herbs
and spices --

SIMON
Exactly.

SHANE
But you said it was a total
nightmare. You said they had their
own binary system -- which is why
you took the Lollipops back with
you.

CASEY
Dude, I cracked it. This is their
gift.

SHANE
Bullshit.

Shane heads off.

REED
Shane?

CASEY
Hey!

Reed follows.

INT. SUB LEVEL - SAME

Shane heads down to the EDGE OF SPACE EXHIBIT below them.

Reed trails behind as they head under a row of large PLANET
GLOBES approximating the distance from our sun to the edge of
our solar system. They disappear and reappear under the
globes shadows until they reach the side entrance to the...

LEONARD NIMOY EVENT HORIZON THEATER

A BANNER across the threshold reads: "CLOSED FOR REMODELING."

Shane tries the door.

REED
What the hell are you doing, man?!

Shane tugs at the knob.

SHANE

They're not dead. They're here.

He begins stabbing numbers into the security panel next to the door, attempting to hack in.

SHANE

C'mon, Goddamn it.

REED

You're reaching. You can't hide beings from another world in a tourist attraction.

SHANE

They survived being stranded on the moon for four months, who knows what they're capable of?

REED

Shane, give it up --

They door lock CLICKS open, almost as if on it's own. They share a look. Gently, Shane pushes through door.

INT. LEONARD NIMOY EVENT HORIZON THEATER - SAME

They cautiously enter. Scan the stage and the 190 seat theater.

A STRUCTURE towers from the middle of the stage, but it's too dark to see.

Reed clicks on the LIGHTS to reveal...

WORKERS SCAFFOLDING

Above the scaffolding is a hole that's been patched up. Shane walks around it.

REED

Shane...

Shane's not buying it.

Heads back out.

INT. PLANETARIUM - SAME

Shane returns. Heads down the isle to Casey and Simon. Reed catches up.

SHANE

I know they're here. Where are they?

CASEY

They're dead, man. And why the hell would I hide aliens here?

SHANE

Because hiding them here, in plain sight, instead of in the woods at Simon's place is where no one would bother looking. Are they somewhere in the underground parking area?

CASEY

(sternly)

Dude, you seriously need to let it go.

SIMON

They don't belong here.

SHANE

Where, goddamnit?!

REED

(calmly)

It doesn't matter anymore. We have their gift.

SHANE

It does matter. I can't believe humans are so disgusting that we'd let another species die at our own hands!

(beat)

I can't accept that.

Reed puts his hand on Shane's shoulder. Shane looks down, broken.

REED

Shane, the closest we're gonna get to them is the app. We need to get that story out there -- that's the bigger story.

FROM BACK ENTRANCE

VOICE

Don't move!

A half dozen BLACK OPS, guns trained on them, breach the room from the back.

The TEAM LEADER steps forward, starrng up at the projection of our future planet.

Signals to his Operatives to go to the planetarium control panel -- and to Shane and Reed.

TEAM LEADER
Hand over your electronics now!

CASEY
This isn't yours!

FROM THE SIDE ENTRANCE

OTHER VOICE
I agree.

All heads turn to see a dozen FBI AGENTS, guns drawn and locked on the Black Ops.

Assistant Director of the FBI, HENRY, in the middle of the Agents.

HENRY
Stand down! FBI!

TEAM LEADER
That technology is classified. It was stolen from the Department of Defense.

HENRY
I beg to differ. It appears it was meant for everyone.

TEAM LEADER
Prove it. Prove it came from them.

Beat.

A very logical question and one that has a bad outcome.

TEAM LEADER
Right.
(to his Team)
Make sure you get it all.

As his Team continues to confiscate the app, Henry and the others look on helplessly.

BEHIND THEM

As the oddity reaches the end of the rows next to Shane and Reed, we can see that the patterns of the chairs seem to take shape, as if being used for camouflage.

As the camouflaged objects appear to steps off of the chairs and onto the planetarium floor, they're stealth covering transitions into...

CASEY

No! Go away!

SHANE

Holy...

REED

... shit.

MEET THE LOLLIPOPS

As described earlier, they're short (3.5 Ft), with abnormally large hairless heads, wide almond-shaped eyes, grey/beige-colored skin, and thin stick bodies.

Like a mother protecting her children from eminent danger, Casey corrals the two beings. However, they peeks out from around her like curious children.

Simon joins Casey. Tries to cover them as well, but the Aliens step out from their protectors.

The Operatives move back as Henry and his Team move forward.

They all look on in AWE, except the Black Ops Team Leader.

TEAM LEADER

(quietly into headset)

Fall back.

Henry sees this.

HENRY

Drop your weapons NOW!

They surround the Operatives who lower their weapons and drop to their knees.

The Aliens look directly into Shane and Reed's eyes. No words are exchanged, however they begin to communicate.

SUBTITLES APPEAR:

ALIEN #1

(subtitles)

"Thank you for your help."

HENRY
Okay -- I think we better get
these, uh, guys out of here now.

CASEY
(refers to herself and
Simon)
We're going with you.

HENRY
Yes, I think that would be a good
idea since I'm sure we don't know
how the hell to deal with this.

REED
(to Henry)
Wait...

Reed takes Shane's iPad.

SHANE
What are you doing?

REED
I wanna give your followers
something worth following -- how do
I do that live thing?

Alien #2's skinny long finger hit's the FACEBOOK LIVE FEED
button.

REED
Oh. Okay.

And we're live.

CU SCREEN ON LIVE FEED

A parade of the SHOCKED EMOJIS dance across the screen as we
see the aliens. As they're led away we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LA TRIBUNE - MORNING

PULL BACK from CU of Reed and Shane typing the story.

Continue pulling back as Davis walks past.

DAVIS
Welcome back to the L.A. Tribune,
boys?

They give a THUMBS UP without missing a beat on their keypads.

Continue pulling back as Bill approaches.

BILL
Cheer up, boys -- you can't win
them --

In unison they FLIP OFF Bill, still lost in the composing of their story.

Bill fades away as we DISSOLVE to an even wider shot. Then wider as other journalist arrive and settle in for another day's reporting.

HOLD

HARD OUT TO:

BLACKNESS. Then the SOUND of sizzling as a red LASER BEAM burns a NEWSPAPER BANNER onto an aluminum PRINTING PLATE. The banner reads: "Los Angeles Tribune."

Below this, three PHOTOS are scorched in. Line by line, the photos come to life revealing...

- 1) The EARTH and its current condition.
- 2) The projected FUTURE EARTH -- a wasteland.
- 3) The 2 ALIENS being led away by the FBI.

A HEADLINE follows: "RESCUED ALIENS: THEIR GIFT TO OUR WORLD."

Then a SUB HEADER: "New Kyoto Protocol Unanimously Signed By All Nations Makes Promising Change In Mankind's Future."

And lastly, a secondary lead ARTICLE: "D.O.D. Begins New Era Of Disclosure After 'Operation Floyd' Fall Out."

The plate begins rotating, churning out copy after copy...

FADE TO DARKNESS AND SILENCE...

The End.