

PLANETFALL

A Screenplay By Michael J. Heagle
Story By M. Heagle and Matt Saari
Additional Material by Lance Miller, Marko Stachniw

DRAFT 8/10/01

A CARSCHOOL FILM-O-RAMA PRODUCTION
CONTACT MICHAEL HEAGLE
(612) 825-0753
CARSCHOOL FILM-O-RAMA, INC.
77 13TH AVENUE NORTHEAST SUITE #205
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55413
WWW.CARSCHOOLFILMS.COM

1 EXT., VOLCANO ZONE, DAY

Final showdown is in progress.

People are pointing guns at one another, shouting accusations, but one man is laughing: UGLY, AKA GORTON HEX. His hands are behind his back, and he's laughing.

WENDY

What are you laughing at, Ugly?

He just keeps laughing away. It grows in strength. ECU laughs.

CUT TO BLACK

"A FEW DAYS EARLIER..."

2 EXT SPACE

Black fades into stars, panning over to a big space station that looks like it is cobbled together from a bunch of junk. Because it is. It is positioned over a verdant planet.

3 INT., ASCENDANCY SPACE STATION, SPACE

Close ups as a woman puts money into a jukebox. Makes a selection. A holographic stage in the bar rezzes to life, a band appearing in glowing blue video-light. The woman takes a seat at the bar - we get a look at her, she's decked out in circuitry-patterned pants and has a samurai sword on her belt. She is LUX ANTIGONE.

The bartender nods, wordlessly. She mutters a brand name. A floating droid that looks a bit like a beer keg with advertising flashing on its back flies up a 25 foot wall of liquor bottles, fetching the drink.

She drinks. FREEZE FRAME WITH HER NAME AND "RAP SHEET" written like computer data on screen. She pulls out an electronic device with a screen - some sort of data organizer - upon which there is a photo of a thug and his rap sheet. A rendering of his head comes out of the data organizer and spins 360 degrees giving a three dimensional view of the picture. She shows it to the bartender. He nods towards a corner of the bar.

A BASTARD in the corner is drinking and carousing loudly with some locals.

Lux polishes off the drink and requests another. She walks over and sets the data machine on the table in

front of him. His wanted poster and value clearly visible. The locals vacate.

BASTARD

You're Machinata...don't you live by some sort of code?

LUX

Fine. You can win your freedom.. By a game of chance.

BASTARD

Poker, then.

Lux counts her reasons off on one hand, held

LUX

Poker is a man-made game. One: things that are man-made don't have the purity of randomness that a machine-made game does. Two: a computer game can make random numbers or random moves.

BASTARD

And it could cheat just as easily.

LUX

Mine won't. Because, three: a computer can truly be trusted to make a random choice since it can make choices without subconscious bias or emotion and without the emotional need to cheat. Hence, only a computerized game can truly result in an outcome based on chance. Ready?

He's shaking in his boots. She brings up a strange game of chance; maybe multi sided 3D dice in space.

LUX

High roller wins.

They pass their hands through the 3D dice, and they "roll." Suspense is built. But: She wins. He draws a pistol; she whips the sword out and back into its sheath in one swift motion. He falls to the ground in two pieces.

She goes back up to the bar.

LUX

Gimme two garbage bags, the kind with the laminated seams... I'll take this to go.

She is about to drink again when a hand comes between her and her glass. It's a FORMIDABLE ROBOT LAWMAN called LEONE.

LEONE

Double that bag order... Carter's not the only wanted man in this bar.

LUX

And by that, are you implying I'm not a lady?

LEONE

Lux Antigone, you are wanted in connection with A LIST OF CRIMES, including but not limited to the following.

He holds his hand out and a hologrammatic display pops up in midair, listing a myriad of offenses. He snaps it off just as fast.

LEONE

I also know that as a member of the cult Machinata, you are bound to respect and obey the orders of machines.

LUX

Is that right?

LEONE

MmmHmm.

LUX

And you are that machine?

LEONE

As part of the Galactic Interplanetary Mechanoid Police Force, I am --

She spin kicks him in the head, jarring his circuits. He starts to go weak in the knees; she does a jump kick and bounces him into a barstool. He appears to sit at the bar, spins, head hits the bar placidly. The lights in his eyes flicker and go out. Lux sees a woman eyeing her moves. She nods.

LUX

One: GIMPF droids read their Miranda rights straight out of a flash chip in their neural network. Two: when they start it up, there's a momentary lapse in reaction time. Pays to know

machines.

She's about to take another drink when she feels a pistol barrel in her back. Sneaks a look at the person responsible, a huge imposing guy named SHARK STERLING.

SHARK

Humans aren't as easy, are they?
I've got someone who wants to meet
you.

LUX

Busy day...

She eyeballs him. Turns. Pushes the pistol barrel down. She makes a motion towards the bartender, who's dragging two bags full of newly-scooped-up dead guy.

SHARK

She'll be back to pick it up
later.

The bartender doesn't look overly thrilled. The robot swoops down to watch as the two exit. It laughs at the bartender.

4 INT. STATEROOM, SPACE

Tira Corona, general of the Republican Army of a nearby planet, is seated at a table. She's in a uniform jacket, open casually to reveal an undershirt. She's also drinking some exotic liquid from a tall glass, boots up on the table.

Shark brings Lux in, forces her into a seat in front of Tira, then is gentler and brushes off her sleeves lovingly.

TIRA

You're a hunter. Lux Antigone.
Member of the Machinata Cult.

LUX

It's not a cult.

TIRA

Whatever. And you're for sale to
the highest bidder. I understand
you're quite expensive.

LUX

(Referring to
Shark)

Just ask your friend here...My
skills are worth the price

TIRA

What about your loyalty? And your silence?

LUX

What do you need? Assassination? A general? Her husband?

TIRA

You are to go planetside. To Zita.

She slides a data chip down the table. Lux picks it up, inserts it in the slot on her data organizer. It powers up and shows a large tanker type crate.

TIRA

You are to find a large shipping crate that is unmarked, untraceable in any way. And bring it back to us.

LUX

If it's untraceable and unmarked, how will I know if I've found it?

TIRA

It's completely custom. The only thing we know about it is the exact dimensions.

She triggers a button on the remote, a series of numbers flash around the 3D crate.

TIRA

It flew out of Zita City three weeks ago. Even their army can't find it. You recover it, it's worth £75,000 to you.

LUX

If it's worth that much, whatever's in it is a lot more trouble than that. I need to know what it is.

She looks at Shark, who shrugs. Tira looks like she's manufacturing what she's saying, just ever so slightly.

TIRA

A sum of money was stolen from the Republican Treasury. As you can tell from the size of the crate, it's all hard currency. We think it was "appropriated" by the President of Zita himself and it's hidden down there somewhere...

LUX

Just how much money are we talking about?

TIRA

A lot more than £75,000.

Lux gives it some thought.

5 EXT, ZITA, DAY

Planetside. Ships fly overhead outside a frontier town.

CLOSE UP:

A WANTED POSTER IS NAILED TO A BUSTED-UP WALL.

The face on the poster is a horrible drivers-license quality picture of a sad looking individual named GORTON HEX. His credits include "WANTED FOR TREASON, IDENTITY THEFT, MULTIPLE COUNTS OF LARCENY. EVADING AUTHORITIES." PAN TO:

THE MAN HIMSELF: GORTON HEX, who shall also be referred to as UGLY. He is slammed up against the wall right next to his poster. FREEZE FRAME ON HIM. We get a "digital rap sheet" that is similar to the one next to him. He is tied up and spitting abuse at his captor.

A BOUNTY HUNTER in a HAT pushes him towards an ARMY TENT. We don't see the BOUNTY HUNTER yet, until she throws UGLY to the ground in front of a pair of soldiers who are seated on camp stools and appear apathetic.

REVEAL:

WENDY STANTON, the bounty hunter in question. She is dressed in a long coat and frontier-type hat, with some body armor and a bus-load of futuristic weapons and pouches. FREEZE FRAME and RAP SHEET AGAIN.

The town square is in various states of decay and ruin, looks like there's been some war here. The soldiers stare at her, big ugly pauses in the speech below.

WENDY

...Busy?

SOLDIER1

Nope.

WENDY

...Can you help me?

SOLDIER1

...Why?

WENDY

.....Just thought it would be nice,
you being the local constabulary
and all. Got ourselves a wanted
fugitive here.

SOLDIER1

.....And what are we supposed to do,
exactly?

A horrible pause, until an OFFICER steps out of the tent. He is a grizzled older man in a different uniform shirt, a leader. He's got a coffee cup. He is SECTION COMMANDER RUSTY ARNTZEN.

ARNTZEN

What's going on out here?

Soldier 2 just sort of weakly points at Wendy and Ugly. This is the first sign of life we've gotten out of this slack-jawed individual who might be retarded. Arntzen waits for more response from his men and gets nothing. He turns to Wendy.

ARNTZEN

Can I help you?

WENDY

Ransom for a wanted criminal.

Arntzen looks her over - a look of recognition, then wondering what SHE'S DOING HERE AT ALL. He begins to check a wristwatch database for the man's rap sheet, but she pulls out a hard copy of the poster. Arntzen looks it over and looks back at the captured man. He smiles back at him, weakly, hoping to be recognized as the man on the poster.

ARNTZEN

Gorty Hex. Says treason here.
What's that paying now?

WENDY

Three thousand.

She hands him a credit chip to transfer funds onto.

ARNTZEN

...Yeah.

He takes it. Sees the name on it.

ARNTZEN

It is you. Does your father know
you're out here?

WENDY

What dad doesn't know won't hurt
him.

Ugly thinks about this for a moment, then forgets
about it. Arntzen scans the chipcard into his device.
Nothing. He tries again. Wendy is half-whistling,
looking up into the sky casually. Still no scan.

ARNTZEN

Your card isn't working.

WENDY

(Fake)
Really?

ARNTZEN

No, I can't seem to get it. Is
cash okay?

WENDY

Hmm. All right.

Anyone who's really watching can figure she just
pulled something. But these guys don't because we're
in a movie. Arntzen goes back into the tent.

WENDY

Let me guess. You guys joined for
the action...

Arntzen returns with the cash. Counts it off. Ugly
looks like he's gonna drool. She takes it and is on
her way. Ugly curses her vehemently as the soldiers
get up off their duffs and prepare to execute him.
Arntzen sees this and is aghast.

ARNTZEN

Not in the public square you
idiots! Take him out back
somewhere.

Wendy casually rounds the corner of a building and
then starts sprinting - is she running away?

The soldiers drag Ugly to a secluded alleyway with
Arntzen following.

ARTNZEN

Gorton Hex, in accordance with
Martial Law edict number 923.5,
you are hereby sentenced to
immediate execution via injection

squad.

Wendy is running, running, to higher ground.

ARTNZEN

Any last requests?

UGLY

Eh?

ARTNZEN

Fine then.

UGLY

Bastards!

Wendy struggles to climb some jarring rock formation.

Artnzen takes out a packet of three syringes and lets each of the soldiers randomly pick one.

ARTNZEN

It is dictated that I divulge the sequence of the drug regiment to the convicted. By law, you are to be injected three times, once by each one of us. One syringe contains Vistersine, a terminal compound when it's mixed with Zoxin which is in the second syringe...

Wendy gets past the rock formation and continues to run to higher ground.

ARTNZEN

None of us is sure who has what drug. In addition, the third syringe contains a placebo. This way, none of us will live with the guilt of knowing that it was he who administered the fatal dose.

Wendy gets up to a vantage point.

Arntzen collects the syringes from the men.

ARTNZEN

In my opinion, however, this is an extreme waste of manpower...and isn't much fun...

Wendy draws her gigantic long rifle.

Arntzen, with all three syringes in his grip, slams the needles into Ugly's skin. It sounds as though he has hit bone. With his powerful fist, he slams the

plungers down, injecting all the drugs at once.

We FREEZE FRAME ON ARNTZEN, and get his data. Action resumes:

Ugly recoils and is on the ground and foaming at the mouth.

Up on the vantage point, Wendy takes aim at Ugly.

Ugly kicks a few more times, more feebly, and dies.

SOLDIER1

I hate it when they do that - get all foamy.

POP!

She shoots him with some kind of tranquilizer dart that goes unnoticed by the soldiers. Ugly sits up abruptly, spits out some goo and stands bolt upright. The soldiers stare in amazement, and can't do anything but watch. Soldier2 points blandly at the escaping man.

After a moment, Arntzen gets enough sense enough to pursue. He quickly catches up to him, grabs his arm and spins him around. Ugly spits out more of that goo right into Arntzen's eyes. He falls to the ground in agony. Ugly runs through the village, grimacing as the soldiers tend to Arntzen and watch the man go, staring in amazement.

6 EXT. ZITA WILDERNESS, DAY

Ugly runs in the wilderness wildly. Animal-like. His hands are still tied behind his back and when he falls it hurts badly. He runs right into Wendy, who is standing in a glade, counting the money casually.

WENDY

Hey, Ugly.

UGLY

Why did you wait so long? I died, this time, I really died and I saw this really bright light. I wanted to go to that light, because it might be... You! And then I could strangle you for having killed me!

WENDY

Relax.

UGLY

Relax? Easy for you to say, it's

not your neck in the noose.

WENDY

Could be worse.

UGLY

How?

WENDY

Coulda stayed dead. You won't have to do it for much longer, I only have two more antidotes left. I've got eight of the actual poison sets if you'd prefer.

She indicates to him that he should spin around; he does. She aims her pistol at his binds, He suddenly puts his arms as far away from his body as he can. She shoots them off.

Wendy counts the money.

WENDY

Thirteen, fourteen. Fifteen for you. And fifteen for me.

UGLY

Hermmmmm. How many poisons did you say?

WENDY

Eight.

UGLY

Eight. You know, I have an idea how we could make some more money, faster.

WENDY

Save it. This scam doesn't hurt anybody, and that's just the way I like it.

7 INT., ASCENDENCY

Lux is standing in a SIMULATION ROOM. It flickers into life, showing:

8 EXT., SIMULATION OF ZITA LANDSCAPE, DAY

An exterior view of Zita, a perfect simulation. Lux looks around as the face of TIRA and SHARK appear as a sort of PICTURE-IN-PICTURE, floating in the sky above.

TIRA

Planet Zita. Never been there before, thought you might like to get an idea of what you're up against.

LUX

Why don't you get one of your soldiers to do this job?

TIRA

(Sarcasm to spare)

Gee I don't know, I guess you're right. Thanks for your help, you can go now. Listen kiddo, I'll let you in on a secret: war. We're treading lightly already with these guys. We get caught with one of our boys down there and we could start the next major conflict. Trust me. A third party is necessary.

SHARK

One of skill and subtlety.

LUX

I'll see what I can do, but I'll need half in advance.

Shark and Tira exchange a glance, wary. They disappear from the sky.

9 INT., ASCENDANCY

Tira and Shark confer, now off the simulation.

TIRA

That's a lot on faith.

SHARK

Faith isn't as cheap as it used to be.

Tira weighs the options, then remembers what she knows about Machinata. Like the machine, they don't gain anything by lying.

TIRA

Do it.

Shark nods and goes to fetch the loot.

10 EXT., SIMULATION OF ZITA LANDSCAPE, DAY

Tira flickers into existence next to Lux.

TIRA

I understand your electronic enhancements include certain visual capabilities. In order to protect our investment, we will have to ask that you share the frequency with us.

LUX

And watch my every move? Sorry. The Dictates of The Machinata forbid it.

TIRA

The way they forbid you becoming mercenary? Don't act so surprised. The details of your religion can't remain secret forever. You will share the frequency with us. We will observe your progress from this station. Remember: there is a price on your head as well as a cost for your services. Make sure one is the better value.

Lux eyes her sideways, then smiles a confident smile.

11 INT., ARMY

Two soldiers are peeling silver potatoes.

LILES, a stubby, somewhat nerdy communications officer, is complaining endlessly about the situation. His associate, LAVELLE, is a strong looking guy, with a streak of hippie-love-child in him.

LILES

It boggles the mind.

LAVELLE

Are you kidding? I love the way the army is letting me get in touch with nature.

LILES

Three cases of space potatoes... Each! Sometimes the crime doesn't fit the punishment.

LAVELLE AND LILES

(Together)

BUT THIS TIME IT DOES!

LAVELLE

Oh, they were so worth it. What was the name of yours?

Liles shakes his head. He doesn't know.

LAVELLE

Mine was Cinque. Or Pinky. Kinky.

LILES

Must have been.

LAVELLE

Must have been.

ARNTZEN enters, duty roster in hand.

ARNTZEN

Burton Liles. Shaquille Lavelle. You're both activated for duty. I've got orders to enter the Volcano Zone and retrieve a drop shipment that went missing there.

LILES

Why us sir? I mean, we are the biggest losers I know.

LAVELLE

Thanks a lot, jerk.

ARNTZEN

I'm inclined to agree with you, soldier. You have some of the worst records I've had the displeasure to read. Like this last entry. Caught with villager girls in your bunks after lights out... What is this stuff?

LAVELLE

Lack of a strong father figure, sir.

ARNTZEN

Well don't look at me, Private. If it were up to me you'd both be in the stockade. Unfortunately, the Royal Zita Army cannot afford to pick and choose at this point.

LAVELLE

You've got to be kidding. You mean, we're it?

ARNTZEN

I hate to even admit it.

He exits.

LAVELLE
It's come to this.

LILES
I prefer the potatoes.

12 EXT., ZITA OUTPOST TOWN

Lux lands at a VERY SMALL outpost sort of town. She enters a frontier type town with a combination of old-world architecture that smacks of the Wild West, with the addition of big cooling tanks and towers and satellite dishes and ducts.

One such place is called SNOOZE BAR.

13 EXT., SNOOZE BAR, DAY

Looks like an old west shoot-em up saloon, but it's a hotel and monastery for weary travelers. A PAIR OF ZITA SOLDIERS are posted outside. Wanted posters cover the wall outside beneath a rusted symbol of the FRIARS OF THE WELL OF DREAMS, a pair of gold bars fronted by a sleepy eye.

She walks in.

14 INT., ASCENDANCY, SPACE

Tira and Shark are sitting in the stateroom, watching LUX'S POINT OF VIEW on a projected plane of video. Both are doing casual things, as well. Shark is eating lunch. Tira is polishing some medals or something.

15 INT., SNOOZE BAR, DAY

Wendy and Ugly are negotiating with the monk who is at the front counter. Lux waits her turn in line, observing silently.

WENDY
What do you mean you don't accept it, it's Zita money, freaking coin of the realm!

MONK01
Sorry, but with the economic state of affairs and martial law restrictions we have to stick to electronic forms of transfer only. Converted directly to Galactic.

WENDY

I don't believe this.

The MONK turns around to grab a scanner. Ugly pushes aside his jacket, revealing his pistol, drawn and at the ready. He raises an eyebrow.

Wendy thinks about it, but shakes her head NO. He closes the jacket. The Monk returns, Wendy has her card out and is slowly peeling off a piece of magnetic tape from the real stripe (the one that was screwing it up for Arntzen).

Monk01 takes the card and scans it. He looks at the display and smiles slightly.

MONK01

Does your father know you're here?

WENDY

He does now.

Monk01 hands them a set of keys. They walk off, and Ugly mutters:

UGLY

Does everyone know your dad?

WENDY

Only the unlucky ones.

Lux steps up and sets her bag on the counter. MONK01 smiles a new-customer smile.

MONK01

Good morrow and welcome, young lady, to the Well of Dreams and Snooze Bar. I am Brother Lee.

LUX

Do you have a digital interstellar connection here? I need to make a long distance connect.

MONK01

We do.

He prepares some "paperwork" as she glances around. She sees the soldiers through the dirty window.

LUX

The soldiers are a little much.

MONK01

Military police are trying to shut down the temple.

She hands him a credit chip. He starts the transaction process, chatting.

MONK01

The Well is a natural spring that has key minerals in it that CAN be used to make the drug -- which we don't. To do so would be against the basic tenet of our faith. Still they want to shut us down. Heathens.

LUX

The drug?

MONK01

Oh.

He figures out that she's "not from around here." He puts his finger to his lips, a silent "Shhhh."

MONK01

Your card. I'll show you to the phone.

She takes it, shoulders the bag and he leads her down a corridor.

16 INT., ASCENDANCY, SPACE

Tira looks at Shark. The POV Video is still up, and they seem displeased.

TIRA

She sure is nosy.

SHARK

She's got to be to find the shipment.

TIRA

He's gonna tell her about the drug.

SHARK

He's not going to tell her about the drug.

On the POV CAMERA, Monk01 shows Lux to her room. He looks over his shoulder.

MONK01

(Over)

Psylenol, the source of our woes.

TIRA

He told her about the drug.

17 INT., SNOOZE BAR CORRIDOR

Monk and Lux continue the conversation in person.

LUX

I've heard rumors. They're system wide by now. How bad is it?

MONK01

It's a civil war. Or it was, anyway, It's all but over now.

LUX

What do the government troops want with a monastery?

MONK01

The Snooze Bar is simply a hotel for weary travelers. The Well Of Dreams... Ahh. That is the center of our faith. A mineral spring whose very nectar produces not only a perfect night's sleep - ever have one of those? It also has certain side effects that are not unpleasant.

18 INT., WELL OF DREAMS

They round a corner, and he shows her the Well. Its centerpiece is a big paddlewheel straight out of an old mill. There's obviously plenty of the stuff to spare, the wheel is spinning fast.

MONK01

The waters produce great visions.

Lux gets that look in her eye: stoner!

MONK01

I know what you're thinking "One of those kinds of drugs." Not at all - they are visions of the future. Yours, mine, ours, theirs. For real. If you still think time is linear, you need to reappraise your beliefs, sister.

Lux sees that he's not kidding, and eyes the great wheel with a sense of wonder. A church bell chimes.

19 INT., BELL TOWER

The "bell" is merely a speaker cone hanging in an ancient stone tower, emitting the SOUND OF A BELL.

Another monk stands beneath, gazing up at the tower solemnly as he presses a big red button.

20 INT., SNOOZE BAR TELEPHONE/HALLWAY, DAY

He leads her to the interstellar phone. It's fairly standard looking and a bit busted up. He gestures grandly.

MONK01

Your phone. And if you'll excuse me, our evening mass is about to begin.

She sets her bag down and inserts a credit chip.

21 INT., ASCENDANCY, SPACE

Tira and Shark are still watching the POV Video.

TIRA

Who's she calling?

She watches as Lux looks down to her wrist, punches a button into a wrist-mounted device, and the signal goes to static.

TIRA

You didn't tell me she had a signal block!

Looks like Shark didn't know either.

22 INT., SNOOZE BAR TELEPHONE/HALLWAY, DAY

Dials up an interstellar connection with the central hub of the Machinata religious order. By the looks of the interface, the religious order is situated on one of Jupiter's moons. A face appears that is all machine - but speaks with a fully human voice.

MACHINATA

Antigone.

LUX

I have some of the money I owe.

MACHINATA

You've fallen behind on your dues.

A worthy member of this order
would not allow herself do so.

She hangs her head, a half-bow that appears to be
required.

MACHINATA

Have you fallen prey to yet
another of the more human
pursuits?

LUX

No. I am in the middle of a task
that promises a favorable return.
You will have your back dues, and
the ordained portion of the whole,
when I have it.

MACHINATA

We appreciate prompt payment, we
only have issues with your chosen
way of obtaining your tariffs.

LUX

I understand.

MACHINATA

It is not your understanding we
desire, but your compliance.

LUX

Transferring now.

She switches the screen over to a transfer page and
her expression sours. She no longer has to wear her
respectful face, and she is clearly starting to get
pissed off about the tariffs enforced by the
Machinata. The transaction is complete, and she pulls
her card from the slot forcefully. She spins to leave
but runs straight into Wendy, who has been listening.

WENDY

Charming religion. That makes two
today.

23 INT., WELL OF DREAMS, DUSK

Ugly is talking to another monk (02).

MONK02

Sure, it's true. We are monks of
the Brotherhood of the Well of
Dreams, we don't lie about the
healing properties of her liquids.
A drink from the spring produces
the greatest sleep you'll ever

know, and visions unlike any
other.

Ugly kneels before the well, but the Monk stops him.

MONK02

It will cost, of course.

UGLY

Eh. How much?

MONK02

Five thousand, cash.

UGLY

Cash? I thought you guys didn't
take cash!

MONK02

We ALWAYS take cash.

Ugly squints at him with distrust, but hands over the
money anyway.

UGLY

What will I see?

MONK02

Some see the future.

UGLY

And others?

MONK02

A great big buzz.

Ugly doesn't need to hear anymore - he takes huge
gulps of the stuff with his hands. After a few, the
Monk pulls him away.

MONK02

This is the well of dreams, not a
buffet.

24 INT., HALLWAY (BY THE PHONE), DUSK

Wendy is still hounding Lux.

WENDY

Is that church bells I hear, or
cash registers ringing... Hmm.

Lux is going to ignore her, and makes her way past.

WENDY

Question: What kind of religion

forces its worshippers to hand over ninety percent of their takings? Answer: Machinata.

Lux spins, her sword hand whisking out, placing her blade at Wendy's throat. She doesn't seem very perturbed, because, as we soon reveal, she's got HER gun out and is sticking it in Lux's stomach. She smiles.

WENDY

Don't tell me. They need the money to print all those damn magazines you guys go door to door with, am I right?

Lux cracks a smile.

LUX

That's not us.

WENDY

Didn't think so.

They put down their weapons. SLOWLY.

WENDY

I didn't mean any insult, you just seem pretty unhappy with the whole deal.

LUX

The Oath of Material Poverty is voluntary. But it does cramp the style. And it keeps me busy, working. Which is what I must return to.

Wendy nods, lighting a skinny cigar. She offers one to Lux, who declines. She starts to walk off, but throws in this for good measure:

LUX

If you are happy with your arrangement, I suggest you steer clear of my business in future.

25 INT., UGLY'S "HOTEL ROOM," NIGHT

Little more than a furniture-free hovel, Ugly seems perfectly content on the floor. He's smiling and muttering.

INSIDE UGLY'S MIND, we catch a glimpse of his visions. They are heavily effected outtakes from the remainder of the film, in his POV whenever possible but not

strictly so. Perhaps the strongest image is of a soldier named CUMBERLAND who we will be introduced to in time; there is also a trio of dark shapes. A final, distinctive image is a partially-wrecked bridge across a gorge filled with steaming hot molten rock.

Back in REALITY, Wendy steps into the room, nearly tripping over the reclined Ugly on the floor. She tries to find a spot in the room, but he's shifting and groping with a stoned look on his face. She gets groped also. She decides to wait until the fit is over, and steps out again.

26 EXT., SNOOZE BAR, NIGHT

Wendy walks out past the military garrison, two soldiers who are chatting noisily. She re-lights her cigar and puffs slowly, listening in.

SOLDIER01

Did you hear about the new T-16?

SOLDIER02

Yeah, they're really supposed to be something.

SOLDIER01

Hey, what's the deal with Planetfall, did they ever find it?

SOLDIER02

I don't know, they never tell us anything. Last I heard Stanton was running out of qualified men going to look for the thing. Wouldn't be surprised if they never found it.

SOLDIER01

That would be nice.

Wendy keeps pressing closer to pick up more information. She is standing in the darkness when a FORMIDABLE ROBOT LAWMAN by the name of LEONE runs into her, on his way inside.

WENDY

Hey, what's the big idea?

LEONE spins, and stares at her menacingly. One of his eyes is no longer glowing, possibly broken by Lux earlier. She rolls the cigar to the other cheek.

WENDY

Nice night.

He is not amused and continues inside. The soldiers

have clammed up.

WENDY

What's shaking, fellas?

They say nothing. She flashes an ID card at them. They snap to attention and salute.

SOLDIER01

Sorry ma'am.

The other soldier is looking out of the corner of his eye at the ID, now hanging from her jacket in plain view.

WENDY

Now what's all this loose talk about Planetfall?

SOLDIER01

Well some of the men in Carson's unit came across traces of the crash site but no --

SOLDIER02

Hold it! It's HER!

Wendy sees that he's read her ID card. She puts a finger over the name, but to no avail.

SOLDIER02

We're not allowed to share any information with you, ma'am. I'm sorry, but everyone's received these orders, you're not going to get anywhere with that line of questioning.

Wendy swears silently, and puts the ID away.

WENDY

Come on guys, how about a nugget? One soldier to another?

SOLDIER01

But you're not a soldier anymore, ma'am.

This hits hard for her. She withers at the sound of those words.

WENDY

Then you don't need call me ma'am anymore, either.

She walks off into the darkness.

27 INT., ARMY TENT, NIGHT

Arntzen, Liles, and Lavelle are watching a hologrammatic show called PUMMELING ISLAND. Lavelle and Liles are eating - Liles is eating a can of beans and nearly spewing them out at every slight joke that is made. The show smells a little like SPACE SURVIVOR, with death-row prisoners beating the shit out of each other on a beautiful island. The roles should be played by the directors, writers, and producers of this film that you're reading right now. A warning alarm goes off quietly in the background, no one seems to want to break away and answer it.

ARNTZEN

Liles, get that.

LILES

But I'm eatin'!

Lavelle is answering the call with one hand, beans in the other.

LAVELLE

It's some guy, says he's a president, sir.

LILES

(Corrects him)

THE president.

ARNTZEN

Well - PUT IT UP and TURN THAT CRAP OFF!

PUMMELING ISLAND is replaced by the image of PRESIDENT ARCH STANTON. One of his advisors is in the background.

STANTON

Oh, Arntzen, I thought I'd catch you during commercial, I'm so sorry to interrupt your show.

ARNTZEN

Not at all, Mister President. How are things at the capitol?

28 EXT., CAPITOL BUILDING, NIGHT

A nice white structure that appears to be in perfect shape, unlike everything else on the planet. Futuristic cars traverse the beautiful pavement below. The President begins speaking in voice over:

STANTON

Fine, fine.

ARNTZEN

And the wife?

29 INT., CAPITOL BUILDING, NIGHT

Angle on STANTON, a stuffed shirt who appears strung out.

STANTON

She's doing much better. We're not letting a little pipe bomb wreck our week.

ARNTZEN

She's quite a trooper.

STANTON

How's the show tonight? I keep missing the start, damned cabinet meetings.

ADVISOR

Parliament meetings, sir.

30 INT., TENT, NIGHT

Arntzen looks like he's skirting the REAL ISSUES. Throughout the following, Liles and Lavelle are exchanging glances over their cans of food.

ARNTZEN

Oh, it's uh - the usual story, sir. Pig Killer has defeated most of the cons from Block 12, but the tall skinny guy -

ADVISOR

Click.

ARNTZEN

Click, has something up his sleeve.

STANTON

Oh HAHHAH HAHA HA, I love that show. Simply love it.

ARNTZEN

I hate to bring up a touchy subject sir, but I feel time is of the essence...

STANTON

No, you're absolutely right. Time is indeed working against us. You might even say it escapes us. Just gets right away like...

ADVISOR

Chocolate pudding.

STANTON

What?

ARTNZEN

Sir! Any word on those reinforcements I requested yet?

STANTON

Why, indeed, Mister Arntzen. I have managed to round up a fellow whose assistance I think you'll truly benefit from. His name is Deodato Cumberland.

A 3D image of CUMBERLAND appears. He is dressed only in olive drab boxer shorts and looks very tough.

STANTON

Royal Army Rangers, last one in his unit. Was out in the Volcano Zone, around Montenegro, and he's last man standing. Rest of his men were killed, I think. What's more, he's the genuine item.

ARNTZEN

Meaning, sir?

STANTON

Psychic. Telepath, one of ours. Been trained in it his whole life, apparently his family has been cultivating it for centuries, so he was a shoo-in to the Ranger unit. If anyone can find Planetfall, it's gonna be him.

ADVISOR

Except the Planetfall is shielded against all means of detection, psychic especially. Sir.

STANTON

Well, he'll be of use in OTHER WAYS.

ADVISOR

I'm just saying.

STANTON

Well, don't! Always sitting back there, breathing on my neck...

ARNTZEN

Sir, we'll take him.

STANTON

Good. He'll be at your base camp oh-seven hundred! (to advisor, as he is hanging up:) And you, shut your black hole!

31 INT., "HOTEL ROOM," MORNING

Wendy is packing her things as Ugly awakes. He looks refreshed, and actually smiles. Then he sees Wendy and grimaces, groaning.

UGLY

Ohhh...

WENDY

What?

UGLY

I think I have a psychic hangover.

WENDY

What's that like, then?

UGLY

I know what you're thinking.
Uhhhh.

WENDY

I just paid our bill, and thanks to your healthy intake of the "Dream Water," we're almost broke again.

UGLY

It was that much? Man, organized religion is expensive.

He sits up, then it comes back to him.

UGLY

Wait a minute! I paid!

32 INT., HALLWAY, MORNING

Monk02 is walking down the hall with Monk01 when Ugly accosts him.

UGLY

Hey! Where's my money?

MONK02

What money?

UGLY

You know perfectly well what money, baldie!

He makes a drinking gesture. Then a flighty "I've got psychic powers" gesture.

MONK02

I didn't take your money.

UGLY

Yes you did, I specifically remember handing my money to YOU.

MONK02

It was probably a vision of you giving me money in the future.

Ugly stops following them, apparently buying the story. Wendy walks past, shaking your head.

WENDY

Great. The more you see of the future the more you forget the past.

UGLY

It's the present that I have problems with.

33 EXT., SNOOZE BAR, MORNING

Lux is packed and leaving. She presses a button on her wrist device.

34 INT., ASCENDANCY, SPACE

Shark nearly spills his coffee when the POV VIDEO sparks back to life, showing image at last. He presses an intercom button on his wrist.

SHARK

Tira, we're back on line.

35 EXT., SNOOZE BAR, MORNING

Lux walks off, a moment goes by, and we see that she is being followed surreptitiously by the lawman robot

LEONE.

Back at the entrance, Wendy and Ugly are leaving as well. Some more monks are walking in.

UGLY

I have the feeling we've been
ripped off.

WENDY

Now you know what it feels like.

UGLY

I don't want to know!

He trips one of the monks in spite. While helping him up, apologetically, Ugly does a fast move with his free hand and comes up holding the Monk's necklace. He pockets it.

36 EXT., VILLAGE, DAY

The army guys are packing up when Cumberland arrives. Liles and Lavelle don't like him.

CUMBERLAND

Where is Section Commander
Arntzen?

LILES

What do you want?

CUMBERLAND

I'm his transfer from Beta Unit.

LAVELLE

Yeah, yeah, the guy.

LILES

The psychic guy.

LAVELLE

If you're psychic, why didn't you
already KNOW where Section
Commander Arntzen was?

CUMBERLAND

You wanna start this now?

LAVELLE

Why wait?

Liles circles behind Cumberland. He flips him off from behind.

LILES

I got one: how many fingers am I
holding up?

Without looking, Cumberland grabs Liles' hand and
flips him over his shoulder, simultaneously drawing a
knife and placing it at his throat. Lavelle draws his
BIG GUN and aims at Cumberland's head.

CUMBERLAND

One.

Arntzen sees the proceedings. He rolls his eyes and
rushes out to intervene.

ARNTZEN

Stop it. Now!

He arrives at the scene, and everyone reluctantly puts
away their weapons.

ARNTZEN

Are you Cumberland?

Cumberland hands over his ID card. Arntzen scans it.

ARNTZEN

Fine. We're moving out in ten.

LILES

Dang!

LAVELLE

Get your stuff.

Liles tries to make amends with Cumberland, holding
his hand out.

LILES

No hard feelings?

Cumberland hoists his pack and walks away. Lavelle
nods at Liles.

37 EXT MONTAGE, DAY

We see various scenes of our three groups (soldiers,
Lux, Wendy and Ugly) working their way across the Zita
landscape. THEY ENTER THE VOLCANO ZONE, an area marked
by large signs as being a sort of danger zone.

Wendy and Ugly encounter some locals, do some trading.

TRADER

Wise move, picking this stuff up
before you get too far into the

Zone...

UGLY

What's the big deal about the Zone, anyway?

TRADER

Well, some electronic failure as you get closer to Montenegro is a given. Main thing to worry about is the shipping lanes. It's a no-fly zone; they've been diverted to the south. Seems a lot of ships have been going down in the Zone mysteriously.

Wendy takes a mental note about the ships. She has handed her credit chip to the Trader who is now eyeballing the name.

TRADER

Huh! Does your daddy know you're—

She draws her pistol and puts it up the guy's nose.

WENDY

The next person who says that...

UGLY

(Softly)

Who's your daddy?

Wendy looks at him, grumbling.

38 EXT., RUINS, DAY

Army guys enter the ruins of a small town. Some suffering locals give them dirty looks. Big graffiti on the wall says "ROYAL ARMY OFF OUR PLANET," and other army-unfriendly phrases.

Various business between the boys. Lavelle stops to drink from his canteen, setting down his sonic rifle.

Someone in a sniper tower opens fire on the soldiers. The ground near Lavelle is ripped up by impacting shells. Lavelle, slow on the uptake, does nothing but watch the ground explode around him curiously. Cumberland pushes him aside and grabs his sonic rifle off the ground.

Cumberland fires at the sniper tower. A shock wave erupts from the gun's emitter, crumbling parts of the tower and exploding the man inside with no further argument.

Lavelle looks at Cumberland - disgust.

CUMBERLAND

Everyone in my unit has to hold
their own.

LILES

Yeah, hold this!

Liles grabs his crotch. Lavelle giggles. Cumberland
threatens Liles, right in his face.

CUMBERLAND

You planning on keeping that
little gun of yours?

ARNTZEN

Enough!

Another rebelling LOCAL comes running out from behind
some crumbled masonry, holding a molotov cocktail.
Cumberland quick draws a sidearm and pops a shot off
towards the local.

He hits the bottle, engulfing the local in flames. A
couple of other guys try to run out and quell the
flames.

ARNTZEN

We better keep moving. Clear out
of this unfriendly zone.

LILES

Maybe if we didn't shoot the
locals, they wouldn't be so
unfriendly.

Arntzen knows he's right, but pushes them on anyway.

ARNTZEN

Move out.

39 EXT., RUINS, DAY

Lux enters a different area of industrial ruin, one
that is wholly abandoned by people. Empty streets.
Some video billboards still flashing their sales
messages silently.

She finds an overturned kiosk that says "YOU ARE
HERE!" She sets it upright, it spits some sparks
fitfully but appears partially functional. She sees
that the monitor has some bullet holes in it.

LUX

Poor thing. Why would anyone want

to shoot a poor little kiosk like
you?

She looks around the area.

Not too far to the nearest video billboard. She walks over, drawing her sword. Cuts open a panel on the supports, revealing a tangle of fiber optics. She pulls hard on a handful of it, and starts walking backwards with it, pulling a length of it free.

The billboard above sputters out, no image.

She pulls the cables towards the back of the kiosk, does some quick re-wiring, and the billboard comes back to life as the MONITOR FOR THE KIOSK.

An overly-friendly face appears on screen with a prompt: DIRECTIONS, NEWS, HOROSCOPE, TRIVIA.

LUX

News.

No sound. She makes an adjustment and the voice comes from an unseen speaker system somewhere on the block. It echoes off the empty buildings.

NEWSMAN

Welcome to NewsNet. How long have
you been off world?

A Prompt: all day, two days, a week, two weeks, a month. Longer.

LUX

All day.

Newsman sits there blankly.

LUX

Two days.

Same reaction. There appears to have been very few updates. The sound of rocks settling behind her-- Lux draws her sword and looks to see a PURPLE TIGER meandering through the ruins. Looking for food. Pays no attention to Lux. She resumes her investigation

SHE WORKS THE MACHINE OVER FOR A WHILE, MANAGING TO GET SOME WORTHWHILE INFORMATION, INCLUDING, in a flurry of half-spoken sound bites and video montage, as if downloading massive amounts of information all at once:

NEWSMAN

The drug brand named Psyleneol has
sold in record volumes since the

discovery of its powerful psychic side effects... Psylenol has been declared illegal by the Royal Governing Board under President Arch Stanton... Riots sweep the planet - often involving rioters with powerful psychic and telekinetic powers.

We see some shaky camera footage of the destruction..

NEWSMAN

Martial law is declared by the standing government under Stanton. The drug is confiscated from personal stashes throughout the cities.

Lux, seen from very far away, is watching the screen intently. A head pops into view: LEONE. He raises a long rifle to his one good eye.

We see the SCOPE POV: an enhanced view of Lux, with various ubiquitous digital readouts.

He presses something on the side of the rifle, and a microphone is engaged.

Now we can hear the sound through the scope, along with a small oscilloscope reading of the audio. He has her head in the sights and is zooming in. She stops the playback, and suddenly looks straight at him. And, audibly speaks:

LUX

Not very sporting. Even for a mechanoid.

LEONE is spooked, nearly dropping the rifle. He looks again, and sure enough, she's looking right at him.

LUX

Why don't you come down here and we'll do this right, lawman.

Leone lowers the gun, and swears.

40 EXT., VILLAGE, DAY

Wendy is on a street corner, minding her own business. Leaning against a building.

UGLY

(Off)

So I have this idea on how we can make some money fast.

An army garrison walks past, one of them stops to pin up a new WANTED POSTER of GORTON HEX. The value has doubled. £6000. She looks across the way to UGLY, who is standing in some bushes and blowing his nose (onto the ground), his back to the troops.

UGLY

There's those stations run by renegade doctors, you know, that help out villagers and stuff. What's the name of that organization? Ugh. Anyway, we could sell some blood. That stuff is worth a helluva lot now. And then: we kidnap some people. Make them donate too.

He looks back, and Wendy nods towards the poster.

WENDY

Hey, Ugly!

Ugly finishes, wipes his hand off on his pants, and comes over to the poster. He smiles, then breaks out in laughter, overjoyed at his new value.

UGLY

Hey! I'm expensive.

Wendy cocks her arm back and punches Ugly in the face, knocking him out - his last expression is one of surprise and defeat.

CUT TO:

Wendy is dragging the tied-up body of Ugly by his feet, looking for the soldiers. She spots some standing near a big green tent and pulls his body as fast as she can towards them.

41 EXT., RUINS, DAY

Lux and Leone shoot out. Classic style in streets of ruined city. The on-screen display that had provided Lux with news keeps reminding her to insert payment.

NEWSMAN

You have yet to make payment for Newsman service rendered... In the amount of... Seventy Five... Credits. You have exactly one minute to produce payment. I will wait. You have yet to make payment for Newsman service rendered... In the amount of... Seventy Five... Credits. You now have thirty seconds to

insert payment. Do you want to charge it?

They open fire. Lux shoots Leone's neck, causing his head to hang off by a couple of cables. Sparks are flying. She shoots again, the head comes off. The body seems a bit distraught by this, but then falls over quietly.

NEWSMAN

You have exactly zero opportunities to make payment in full. I am now authorized to contact a law enforcement official.

The newsman is still asking for payment, so she shoots that, too.

LUX

Now I know why someone shot you.

42 EXT., VILLAGE, DAY

Wendy drops Ugly unceremoniously at the feet of a SOLDIER. The guy looks up, and we see it is CUMBERLAND. UGLY recognizes him - from where? He thinks, and in his mind's eye we catch a glimpse of Cumberland in his visions of the future. He starts to get a little worried, tugs at Wendy's trouser leg.

WENDY

Got us a wanted man, soldier.
Gorton Hex. Wanted for armed robbery of citizens, state banks and post offices, theft of sacred objects, receiving stolen goods, selling stolen goods, passing counterfeit money and using marked cards and loaded dice.

She unfurls the old wanted poster, and points at the price tag.

WENDY

This is the old value, I know, but if you could just run along and get your commanding officer I'm sure he can fix that.

Cumberland stares at her. Then gets up and goes for his commanding officer...

Wendy turns to Ugly and says:

WENDY

Talkative bunch!

Cumberland comes out with ARNTZEN. She recognizes him, he recognizes her. And Ugly, too! They both speak at the same time:

WENDY/ARNTZEN

OH SHIT!

He points at her, looks at Cumberland.

ARNTZEN

Arrest her.

43 EXT., RUINS, DAY

Lux looks over Leone's supplies. Some food. And some blister-packed drugs.

LUX

Now what is a biomechanoid like you doing with all this stuff?

LEONE

It's for trading.

Lux jumps at the sound of the voice. The head is still operating. She looks over at it, and sees that the single eyeball is indeed lit up and flashing with each of his words. The neck wires spark a little bit just for show.

She takes all of his stuff.

LEONE

Ah Hah! I got you on stealing, now, too. According to my extensive files, your religion based around respect for the machine. Isn't it some kind of a sin to go around busting up computers?

LUX

I'm sorry. Normally I respect the machine. One: His programming crossed the line of common decency and manners (indicates the newsman kiosk). Two: I didn't like his suit. Three: You were designed for the wrong line of work.

Lux shoulders the pack and starts walking away.

LUX

And Four: I never said I wasn't a sinner.

LEONE

You aren't going to get away with this, Miss Antigone. As soon as I can get my torso systems back on line, I will be following RIGHT BEHIND YOU! You can COUNT ON IT!

She leaves the talking head in the dirt.

44 INT., TENT, DAY

Both Wendy and Ugly are tied back-to-back, and are seated on the floor as Arntzen paces.

ARNTZEN

I'm calling your dad, you know.

UGLY

Who the HELL is YOUR DADDY??

Arntzen starts entering numbers on his field phone.

ARNTZEN

Gimme the President.

UGLY

President?!

ARNTZEN

Arntzen 34826.

President Stanton appears on the video phone, wearing a towel.

STANTON

Arntzen, what's the status on Planetfa -

He trails off when he sees WENDY STANTON tied up on the floor. The word "planetfall" really got her attention, though, which she hides her reaction to as well as she can.

STANTON

Wendy, what did you get yourself into this time?

UGLY

Hey! You said your name was GINA!!

She shrugs.

ARNTZEN

Fraud, conspiring with a wanted criminal.

STANTON

I believe it. Damn it, girl, if you're not in trouble you find a way into it, don't you?

WENDY

Dad...

Ugly mouths the words in surprise: (Dad???)

ARNTZEN

I assume the regular measures don't apply, sir?

STANTON

No, just... Don't let her go, keep her under your guard until I can arrange to have her picked up.

WENDY

I can take care of myself.

STANTON

No you can't!

ARNTZEN

What about the other one?

STANTON

Who is he?

UGLY

Gorton Hex, Mister President. I voted for you, mister sir.

ARNTZEN

Armed robbery of citizens, state banks and post offices, theft of sacred objects...

STANTON

Kill him.

WENDY

Daddy, NO!

STANTON

"Daddy, no?" You can't go up to the president and say "daddy no!" Kill the freakin' guy!

UGLY

You -- I'm gonna tell everyone I

know not to re-elect you!

WENDY

If you kill him I swear to God I'm telling Mom.

The president might be caught on that one. He pauses, then:

STANTON

All right! All right already, by god you kids will be the death of me yet. Keep the ugly guy prisoner, too.

ARNTZEN

Sir.

Ugly holds Wendy's hand - there is a secretive emotional moment between the two.

STANTON

I'll arrange for a shuttle to pick them up once you enter the Volcano Zone.

ADVISOR

Sir, the area is a no-fly zone. Ships don't last long in the air up there. We've already lost two this month.

STANTON

I guess we'll just have to risk it, won't we? Now get back to work Arnie, your orders still stand. We need that shipment back.

Wendy perks up at the mention of the shipment.

45 EXT., WILDERNESS, NIGHT

Lux comes up over a hilltop to see the triple moons of Zita lined up gorgeously on the horizon. She kneels for some kind of ceremony. Her data organizer appears to be acting as a combination bible and altar, projecting the requisite iconography for the ritual. It's an interesting mix of Buddhist stuff, Mecca-acknowledging bows, and Samurai ceremony.

She keys in a series of motions on the floating holographic command bars, and an illusory wall of image comes on line, surrounding her. She appears to be standing on the surface of one of JUPITER'S MOONS

46 EXT., GANYMEDE: MACHINATA TEMPLE, NIGHT

A handful of Machinata women are standing in a holographic temple-representation. The enormous circle of Jupiter fills the sky behind them. They are exceedingly cool looking and everyone is going to want to dress like them at sci-fi conventions.

MACHI ONE

Lux Antigone. Have you come to share in the Wisdom of the Electronic Shugendo?

LUX

I have.

MACHI ONE

We have not had the pleasure of your company for some time.

Lux knows this. They all know this. "One" may be trying to get a rise out of her, but she doesn't allow her the pleasure. She starts a sort of call and response thing:

MACHI ONE

What is the Essential Learning?

MACHI TWO

As with many religions, we believe that god grants us wonderful things when we earn them.

MACHI ONE

How did the original humans think they could earn a soul?

MACHI THREE

By emulating god and his ideals.

MACHI ONE

How did they emulate god?

MACHI TWO

By doing what god does: by creating life and being good to those less fortunate and less helpless than them.

MACHI ONE

We believe that the only way we can truly better ourselves and be granted a soul is to program and care for artificial intelligences.

They wait. It's somebody's line. All eyes are on Lux. "ONE" tries to prompt her with a nod. Lux knows its

her turn and finally throws this at them.

LUX

You think Machines are a direct
link to god?

All of the Machinata except for "ONE" are shocked by
these blasphemous tones. "One" picks it up.

MACHI ONE

Most religions sought god in the
unseen or from what had come
before. God resided in the sun,
the stars or in our elderly
rulers. God resided in ancient
temples or holy lands. Now we have
seen the truth.

MACHI TWO

God resides in the future, what is
yet to be and what is newly
created and

LUX

You guys are full of it. All
you're doing is spitting out
Sunday School nonsense without the
slightest sense of what you're
saying.

MACHI ONE

You are off, Antigone.

LUX

I'm off? You're too sheltered in
this virtual convent; you haven't
seen what it's really like out
here.

MACHI THREE

Lux, don't...

MACHI ONE

You have a chance to redeem
yourself, if you choose. Take your
time and consider your actions.
Stop playing the rogue and return
to the fold.

MACHI THREE

Let me talk to her.

Machi One and Two nod in agreement, and rez-out,
disappearing from the simulation.

MACHI THREE

Lux, this is the third moon. You

have to swear allegiance to a master soon, and put your Ronin days behind you.

Lux smiles.

LUX

It's not the subservience that's getting to me. It's the time. When you see every millionth of a second go by, and can count them... I know exactly how long it's been since I saw my home planet. Or touched another living thing. Or saw a human child.

MACHI THREE

Do you really want to be a hunter for the rest of your life?

LUX

I guess that depends on the length of the life.

She rezzes out of the picture, leaving Machi Three on the Jovian plain, alone.

47 EXT., WILDERNESS, NIGHT

Lux kneels beside her data organizer, now displaying nothing but a faint blue cast to the surrounding area. She presses the button on her wrist device and speaks, hoping that her employers are listening in.

LUX

I assume you're listening up there. One: I don't know what you really sent me down here for. Two: Maybe it has something to do with your secret war. I don't want to know.

48 INT., ASCENDANCY, SPACE

Tira sits at the console, staring at the video screen intently, knowing full well that Lux is addressing her directly. She may as well be in the room with her, Tira's emotion is so thick - thick enough to cut.

LUX

But Three: If I find out you're doing something I think you shouldn't be, you'll be the next number on my list.

Tira breaks something in anger.

49 EXT., VILLAGE, MORNING

The army moves out, with Wendy and Ugly in tow. They are handcuffed together. Cumberland is toting all of their confiscated weapons.

WENDY

One thing you can say about this job: It's never boring.

UGLY

We're alive. Lately, that's an improvement!

CUMBERLAND

Be quiet and walk!

Wendy and Ugly shut up for a moment. Cumberland pulls ahead a bit. Wendy eyes her dart rifle, strapped on Cumberland's back. She turns her attentions to Ugly, who is wearing a rather grim face. They continue, in quieter tones.

WENDY

What's wrong now?

UGLY

I just don't know what to believe. I mean, how much of what you're telling me is true? First you say your name's Gina, then you turn out to be Wendy Stanton. You say you're ex-army, then you're the president's daughter!

WENDY

It really doesn't matter.

UGLY

It does when my life is in the hands of someone I can't trust. When were you going to tell me about that one, huh?

WENDY

It was necessary... Look, I had to stay under cover to finish this job.

UGLY

And just when are you going to tell me what that really is? This bounty hunter scam of yours has nothing to do with it, does it?

She considers it a moment. Then tells him:

WENDY

We've got to get to that shipment
before the army does.

UGLY

That's what this is all about? I
don't believe it: I risk my life,
you reap the profits. Oh, that's
good. How could I be so stupid?

WENDY

That is not the way it is.

UGLY

What is it? And don't tell me it's
one thing and it turns out to be
another.

50 EXT., VILLAGE, DAY

Lux enters the same village that the army guys were
recently at. Some of the VILLAGERS are outside, see
her coming, and call out to her.

VLGR1

Can you help us, please?

VLGR2

Is there any positive news from
the capitol?

VLGR3

They haven't brought supplies.
They usually bring supplies every
third day, but they stopped
coming.

VLGR1

All they do is come through with
regular army, and take what they
want.

VLGR2

As if they don't have enough!

She opens her bag, and gives them Leone's food
supplies. She is about to give them the drugs as well
since she doesn't use them, when one of the women
swats it away.

VLGR2

What do you think we are? Off
worlder? Do you think we're like
THEM?

VLGR1 tries to calm her down.

LUX

I didn't -

VLGR2

This... This is why we're in the
state we're in! This drug and the
psions who use it!

She is led away by one of the others.

51 INT., ASCENDANCY, SPACE

Tira is watching the proceedings with a touch of shock
and dismay - as much as her military training might
allow. Intercut as appropriate:

52 EXT., VILLAGE, DAY

One of the others confides in Lux.

VLGR1

I'm sorry. We do appreciate your
food. The children --

LUX

I'm looking for something, maybe
you can help me.

She turns on the holograph of the shipping crate.
VLGR1's eyes go wide, then she looks over her
shoulder.

VLGR1

Are you crazy? What are you trying
to do to us?

LUX

I'm not -

VLGR1 backs away. Then, someone is heard screaming
from down the block. VLGR1 takes Lux's arm.

VLGR1

Hide. If they've found out that
we've been talking to you...

LUX

Who?

VLGR1

It's the psions. Run.

Lux ducks into the shadows of a building. She runs up

some rotten stairs to a place overlooking the town square.

THREE SINISTER FIGURES are walking into town. THE PSIONS. They are army Rangers, but appear to be on a downward spiral into madness, with various paraphernalia to support this hypothesis (severed fingers on a necklace springs to mind). One is a very small muscular woman: GAMMA. One is a large muscular man: DELTA. One is a severe-looking superior officer, perhaps the maddest of the bunch, Alpha.

ALPHA

Well, well, well. I hear that the LAW has just been through your lovely town.

He ambles over to a local, who is cowering, nearly bowing.

ALPHA

I trust you haven't shared anything with them that would compromise our mission...

Lux observes interestedly.

53 INT., ASCENDANCY, SPACE

Tira does as well. The look on her face may be one of horror and recognition by this point, but a shade of "we are on the right track, now, boy-oh." Shark hovers over her shoulder, face tight with concentration.

54 EXT., VILLAGE, DAY

Alpha sits in the middle of the street as his cohorts begin to toy with the locals. Alpha speaks slowly, softly.

ALPHA

We wouldn't want you to share anything but your hospitality. A heaping helping.

DELTA takes hold of one of the locals. We reveal it to be VLGR1. He sets her up against a wall. GAMMA clenches her fists and smiles. She winds up, from ten yards distance.

GAMMA lets loose with a psychic attack that causes the air to ripple between her and the villager. VLGR 1 explodes from within.

Delta is laughing, wiping the blood off his face. He

still holds her arm in his hand.

ALPHA

Anyone else care to share their innermost with the group? I didn't think so.

Delta tosses the arm to Gamma, who puts it around her shoulders like a fur.

GAMMA

How do I look?

Delta looks at Alpha for guidance.

ALPHA

Very... Army.

He motions for them to follow, and they exit, down the street. Lux is intrigued.

55 INT., ASCENDANCY, SPACE

Tira and Shark confer over a table. They are close together and do this in secretive tones, by a single light.

TIRA

Given the situation, I'm beginning to doubt the mettle of this Machinata of yours.

SHARK

She's the right person for the job. These people never crack, and they never let their humanity drag them down.

TIRA

She's not your average Machinata.

SHARK

I think that's her selling point. Trust me. If it doesn't work, I'll see to it personally.

Tira looks him up and down, smiling.

TIRA

You always know just what to say to me.

Shark touches a button on a nearby control panel, and after a beat, the door slides open behind them. A HUGE REPUBLICAN SOLDIER stands in the doorway.

SHARK

Keep my shuttle on standby alert,
captain.

SOLDIER

Yes, sir.

TIRA

And I love it when you say that.

56 EXT., ZITA, DAY

Wendy and Ugly are handcuffed together, walking down a dirt path. Ugly is still steaming about being lied to. Wendy whispers confidentially:

WENDY

Look, I had planned to tell you
about the shipment as soon as I
felt it was safe, and it's still
not safe.

UGLY

Is it money?

WENDY

No, but it's worth a lot of money.

He thinks it over very carefully.

UGLY

Okay, then.

WENDY

It's crucial that we stick to the
original plan. I can't impress
upon you how important it is that
we get to it first.

UGLY

It's more than just a big score,
though, isn't it?

WENDY

Yes. You're the only one I can
trust. Will you help me?

UGLY

It means that much to you?

She nods, seriously. He can't resist her.

UGLY

You know I will.

57 EXT., VILLAGE, DAY

Lux follows the Psions out of the village carefully. She appears to have gone undetected. Even the remaining villagers missed her exit. They are only a few clicks ahead of her. We pass a sign that reads "SYRUS THEED'S: FOR ALL YOUR NEEDS. ONLY 2 CLICKS AHEAD. LAST STOP FOR USEFUL TECH."

58 EXT., DIRT ROAD, DAY

Liles and Lavelle are arguing in the back.

LAVELLE

He is.

LILES

Isn't, and I'll prove it.

LAVELLE

For fifteen?

LILES

You're on.

Liles and Lavelle start to catch up to the couple. Wendy nudges Ugly, and he snaps into "character."

LILES

Hey, can I ask you a question?

UGLY

Shoot. (sees his gun) I mean, sure.

LILES

You're Gorton Hex, right?

UGLY

Yeh?

LILES

Are you the guy who stole that crystal icon from the cathedral in Kitza back in 42?

LAVELLE

No, Gorton Hex was the guy who splattered the banks at Bartzog, three of 'em in one day. Right?

UGLY

You're both right. But you (indicates Lavelle) are less right than he is.

LAVELLE

Why?

WENDY

It was four in one day. He's very sensitive about that.

Liles and Lavelle are disappointed. Liles stops in his tracks.

LILES

So how we gonna settle this bet?
If he's LESS right, he needs to
give me SOME money. Isn't that how
it works?

ARNTZEN

Liles! Get up here and take point.

LILES

Dang!

59 EXT., SCRAP METAL YARD, DAY

A rusted sign above heaps of starship parts proclaims "SYRUS THEED'S/FOR ALL YOUR NEEDS." A flashily dressed junk dealer named SYRUS THEED is talking to a person on an electronic invoice board (a sort of clipboard/data organizer/phone). We see an angry guy on the monitor screen.

VIDPHONE GUY

I don't know what this surcharge is, so I'm not paying for it, it's that simple.

THEED

The charge is for delivery, you asked us to deliver it, delivery isn't free; ergo, you pay.

VIDPHONE GUY

How does a delivery charge come to more than the product, tell me that?

THEED

These are standard, hourly delivery charges that you agreed to when you signed the order sheet.

VIDPHONE GUY

I didn't! The order form said nothing about you delivering the piece on foot.

THEED

Ships are down, this is the
Volcano Zone, what do you want?

VIDPHONE GUY

I wanted you to deliver it by some
way other than Zitan camels! I
mean you don't charge hourly rates
for things that take... Three Weeks!

THEED

Uh, I'm sorry, I didn't get
thatZZZ. Some kind of ZZZZ
interference. Bad receptionzzz.

Theed makes crackling sounds with his mouth and hangs
up on the guy.

The psions arrive. Theed puts on his business face.

THEED

Ah, my friends. Perfect timing, my
men are boxing up your supplies
right now.

Lux arrives shortly thereafter, observes from behind
some junk.

ALPHA

Mister Theed, it has been brought
to my attention that the psylenol
you supplied us with last week
was... How did you put it?

GAMMA

Substandard.

THEED

I believe if you had run the
shipment through a spectrogram,
you would have seen that it is up
to full quality, as per usual,
doctor. We don't manufacture or
supply any of our customers with
anything but the best.

The psions surround Theed subtly, and get in his face
a bit. His voice starts to trail off.

ALPHA

Are you calling her a liar?

THEED

I am merely suggesting, if I may,
that you and your cohorts may be
developing a tolerance to the drug
and are requiring more of it to

"get you there."

Alpha frowns in dissent. Theed gets their drug shipment off a conveyor belt. It is in an unmarked ammo crate.

Alpha switches on his data organizer, a wristwatch model.

ALPHA

Perhaps, then, you can shed some light on this.

Alpha shows him a hologram of the SHIPPING CRATE.

THEED

Military type container.

ALPHA

(Facetiously)

Really? You see, we have one and we need to get IN IT.

THEED

Lacking in conventional lifter attachments. Interesting dimensions, looks custom to me. Probably impossible to crack without the codes.

ALPHA

Would you bet your life on it?

Theed considers this very carefully, given his clientele.

THEED

No, not without seeing the item in person first. I might have something here that would break it.

ALPHA

I was hoping you'd say that. We've exhausted all the usual techniques. And some of the less usual as well.

THEED

Why don't you bring your crate around tomorrow?

After some internal discussion (perhaps even telepathically internal) they agree to come back. Lux watches them go, then follows cautiously.

60 EXT., ZITA

The army, Wendy and Ugly continue through the Zone. Some crumbled buildings line the path. Arntzen is in the lead and stops to confer with Cumberland. Liles is bringing up the rear, several yards behind the others.

LILES

How much farther?

Cumberland looks back, irritated. He continues to speak to Arntzen. Liles is leaning on some of the ruined buildings. Lavelle is giving Wendy some liquid out of his canteen.

LILES

D'ya think we could stop at the next rest area? I forgot to go before we left.

Cumberland looks up at some of the broken masonry, still talking to Arntzen but somewhat distractedly as:

A large bunch of broken stone breaks free of the building and falls onto Liles, crushing him beneath it.

The only one who doesn't rush into action is Cumberland, who smiles ever so slightly at the results of what MUST be his handiwork. Everything starts to go into slow motion as Ugly looks back at Cumberland, and sees the bemused expression on his face. Their eyes meet, intercut with Lavelle and Arntzen running to the now completely dead Liles. A little tension, a threatening look from Cumberland.

61 EXT., VZ CRATER

Lux follows the psions into their home base, a large volcanic crater with a pool of molten rock off to one side. They have the shipping crate hovering telekinetically over the lava.

62 INT., ASCENDANCY, SPACE

Tira sits at the console, bleary-eyed. But she snaps to attention as soon as Lux has the crate in her sights.

Tira motions for Shark to come over. He sees it.

SHARK

Definitely it.

TIRA

Now the hard part.

Shark can't wait to see how she does this.

63 EXT., CRATER, DAY

Lux ducks back, looking away from the crater and the shipping container. She takes a moment to consider, then starts walking back down the hill the way she came.

64 INT., ASCENDANCY, SPACE

Shark is surprised. Tira is not amused.

SHARK

I guess I didn't expect that.

65 EXT ZITA, SUNSET

Lavelle is standing over the wreckage, his helmet off.

LAVELLE

I'm sorry, man. If I find the psychic scum that did this, I promise to stuff this:

He gestures with the big sonic cannon.

LAVELLE

(Cont.)

Up the first hole I can find and use him to wipe the floor. Promise.

The rest of the gang is moving out. Arntzen puts his hand on Lavelle's shoulder to move him along, too.

66 EXT., THEEDS, DUSK

Lux returns to Syrus Theed's.

THEED

Welcome, my dear. Syrus Theed. For all your needs.

He's looking her over, and really milks the last line for all its worth.

LUX

Don't get your hopes up. I'm looking for something, a military-

type shipping crate.

She shows him her hologram, identical to Alpha Psion's version.

THEED

Hmm. Never seen one.

LUX

I hear you sell psylenol.

THEED

Ha! And bring the wrath of the Zitan government down upon this honest business? No thanks. Since the civil war and martial law, there ain't nobody selling. That stuff's gone, thanks to the good men who confiscated everybody's stash, put it all in one big pile to destroy, presumably.

So far, two lies and she knows it.

THEED

Sure, psylenol has healing properties and is desirable from that standpoint, but I don't deal in it, not even for "medicinal purposes." I do have something that might interest a lady of your persuasion. Machinata, right?

LUX

Perceptive.

THEED

We know our customers. What level?

LUX

Nine.

THEED

So you've got the Tyrellian vision enhancement unit already? Then check this out.

He shows her a small shiny object, an upgrade chip of some kind.

THEED

I may not be able to hook you up with psy-drugs, due to my strict adherence to local laws, but this little number will let you view the psychic grid through your enhancements.

LUX

I'm game. What's a psychic grid,
and why would I want to see it?

THEED

All those psychic powers? There's
nothing mystical about them. It's
tapping into an existing
electromagnetic grid that's
unusually strong on this planet.

She takes the upgrade chip from him and looks at it
carefully.

THEED

It's like a cloud layer over the
planet, not far off the ground and
always shifting. People who use
telekinesis are able to lift
objects by leveraging the power of
the grid. Future events might be
emotionally strong enough to
actually record an image on the
electromagnetism, and boom! You
have "visions."

LUX

Let me guess. With the grid
visible, you can see disturbances
in the psychic atmosphere and spot
psychic users and abusers before
they spot you.

He shrugs, "why not?" She smiles, this is sounding
tasty, given the circumstances. But, there's the whole
issue of his lies...

LUX

Let's take a look at the record so
far. One: You tell me that you
have never seen a crate like that
one, when I know for a fact you
have, and recently. Two: you say
you do not deal in psylenol, but
the same group of individuals that
mentioned the military shipping
crate were very well taken care of
in that respect, too.

THEED

Ah. If you're talking about the
psions, don't. Those that do don't
live very long.

LUX

So tell me. Why should I believe
you about this?

THEED

Who else am I gonna be able to
sell this stuff to out here?
Seriously. And I'll give you a
good price if you don't kill me.

LUX

I'll take it.

67 EXT. ZITA, DUSK

Lavelle is on point. The others are several yards
behind him.

They come upon a chasm, over which there is a metal
temporary bridge, perhaps army engineered. Below,
molten lava. They stop, debate their next move.

ARNTZEN

Looks dicey. All right, as far as
I can tell, the first option is to
continue down the bridge, second
is to circuit the chasm to the
east and find another way around.

Ugly recognizes it from his visions. He tugs on
Wendy's jacket sleeve. He whispers to her.

UGLY

I saw this.

WENDY

What?

UGLY

In my visions, at the snooze bar,
I saw this bridge. Something bad
here.

Wendy decides there's nothing to lose by bringing it
up.

WENDY

Section Commander?

ARNTZEN

What is it?

WENDY

We have reason to believe the
bridge is... Bad, sir.

ARNTZEN

What kind of bad?

UGLY

I saw it in a vision.

Ugly looks at Cumberland, expecting dissent. He appears preoccupied.

ARNTZEN

That's fine. But the eastern direction takes us deeper into the VZ and possible danger.

WENDY

Like what?

Arntzen looks at Cumberland, pointing.

ARNTZEN

That's where your unit was killed by the psions. Isn't it?

Cumberland has a far away look. Lavelle returns to the group, having heard enough.

LAVELLE

Ah, sorry to interrupt, but, no way. No more danger, no more guys getting killed by psions. I got a good look at that bridge, I think I'd like to take my chances with something predictable, like burning hot lava.

Arntzen checks the others for dissent. Nothing.

CUT TO:

Lavelle heads cautiously over the bridge, gets part of the way and falls through, into the lava. It seems the solidity of the bridge was actually a psion illusion, as the majority of the bridge was already out. That illusion fades instantly.

Throughout this, Cumberland has that peculiar look on his face, one of extreme concentration.

ARNTZEN

Damn! Psion illusion...

Arntzen slams his fist into his palm in anger. Ugly has an "I knew it" expression on his face. Cumberland seems to snap out of his trance.

CUMBERLAND

Shall we proceed east, sir?

ARNTZEN

No. Dark's coming. We'll set up

camp here, wait for first light.

68 EXT., CAMP, NIGHT

Arntzen is sitting beside a camp light, biting his nails. The loss of the two soldiers in one day is weighing heavily upon him.

Cumberland is standing guard a few yards away. His attention seems to be directed towards the east.

Ugly is adding up the clues, and whispers to Wendy.

UGLY

It was Cumberland.

WENDY

What?

UGLY

I think he dropped the stones on the first soldier, and how about his performance just now? Seem like he was a little distant? He was concentrating on the bridge. That was his illusion, he's one of these psions.

WENDY

Are you sure? As long as we're cuffed like there's not much we can do.

UGLY

That's the other problem.

Wendy gets a look at Cumberland, who is still staring off to the east.

CUT TO:

CUMBERLAND: In close up, a quiet noise suggests that he is speaking telepathically to his brethren, but it is extremely subtle.

Wendy seizes the opportunity and crawls over to Arntzen.

WENDY

Commander, how long have you known Cumberland?

Arntzen starts to doubt his grasp on the situation.

ARNTZEN

He just got assigned...

This suggestion isn't sitting well with Arntzen. Wendy tips her head in Ugly's direction

WENDY

Some of us think he may be working for the other side.

ARNTZEN

Impossible. Cumberland's unit was wiped out by these psions.

The tone of his voice suggests he's not so sure anymore.

WENDY

Is there anything we can do?

ARNTZEN

You don't have to do anything. We are getting you two out of here via shuttle tomorrow morning.

Ugly seems pleased. Wendy is worried, and rightfully so: it appears that Cumberland has "heard" the exchange. Again, it's subtle, but undeniable.

69 EXT., THEEDS, DAY

Early morning: the psions return with the shipping crate hovering behind them. Theed looks it over.

THEED

Ah, the legendary crate. Wonder what's in it!

ALPHA

Want to find out? Open it.

THEED

And you tried everything?

ALPHA

Everything.

THEED

Turbolaser?

ALPHA

Everything.

THEED

Conventional explosives?

ALPHA

Everything.

He's underneath it, looking at the access hatch. He scans the panel with a device. He makes "not good" noises. Delta and Gamma exchange looks.

THEED

I hate to be the bearer of bad news.

ALPHA

Oh, we can take it.

THEED

This is precision stuff. Very custom, and very locked. No one is getting into this without the correct codes. By way of the correct type of remote. Which I am guessing is completely custom also.

Alpha nods, stepping back.

They drop the crate on Syrus Theed. By the immense sound of it hitting the ground, like that of a dump truck dropped from a skyscraper, we have no doubts that he is very dead. Alpha shakes his head.

ALPHA

What a waste...

The others look at him in surprise.

ALPHA

Of time!

70 EXT., ZITA, DAY

Arntzen is about to call in coordinates for pick up.

CUMBERLAND

Sir, if you're calling in our coordinates, may I suggest a clearing just a few minutes in that direction?

ARNTZEN

You've seen one?

CUMBERLAND

Yes sir: plenty of visibility and a clear spot for the shuttle to set down.

Ugly is suspicious. Arntzen buys it.

ARNTZEN

Arntzen 34826. Request two to pick up at coordinates sending now.

Arntzen gives the signal and they move on. Wendy and Ugly exchange looks, "keep on your toes."

71 INT., SHUTTLE, DAY

Over the shoulders of a helmeted PILOT, as the message is received from a dispatch.

PILOT

Copy. There in three. Standby drop zone.

72 EXT., CRATER, DAY

Lux is observing the psions cautiously from a high vantage point. They have brought the container back and hoist it up into its place over the lava. She sees the psi-grid ripple in her enhanced vision, as a curtain of the molten rock raises up, obscuring the crate.

There is the sound of a ship approaching. She looks.

73 EXT., ZITA PLAIN, DAY

Arntzen holds his hand over his eyes, watching the incoming military shuttle. Cumberland steps into shot behind him.

74 INT., CRATER, DAY

Alpha hears the ship approaching. He orders his brethren to attack the ship psychically.

ALPHA

Tear that ship from the air.

They concentrate.

75 INT., SHUTTLE, DAY

The pilot snaps at the neck, slouching to one side - DEAD!

The ship starts to veer off course.

76 EXT., ZITA PLAIN, DAY

Arntzen and his gang watch as the ship starts to drift downward, disappearing over a hill as:

77 EXT., CRATER, DAY

The ship comes down right on top of Lux. She dodges the worst of it, but is injured by flying debris.

78 INT., ASCENDANCY, SPACE

Shark and Tira see the crash unfold via Lux's vision, and watch with grim intensity as Lux's eyes shut. Darkness.

79 INT., CRATER, DAY

Gamma and Delta exchange simple congratulations on a job well done. Alpha nods to Gamma, and gestures towards the plume of smoke.

ALPHA

See if there's anything we can use, darling.

She trots up the hill cheerily.

80 EXT., ZITA PLAIN, DAY

Arntzen has seen the ship go down. There was no full explosion, so perhaps there are survivors.

ARNTZEN

Better see if anyone made it. Lieutenant?

CUMERLAND

And leave you alone with the prisoners? I think I should take one of them with me, in case they try to team up on you.

Wendy hoists her handcuffs into the air.

WENDY

We're not gonna be able to do much in these.

ARNTZEN

Well, one thing's for sure, you're not putting the President's daughter in danger. You can take

the Ugly one!

UGLY

I'm not going with him! At least
uncuff me so I can hold my own.

Cumberland gestures to all the guns he's got.

CUMBERLAND

Don't worry. I got you covered.
Sir?

ARNTZEN

Get on with it. Move out, Hex.

81 EXT., CRATER, DAY

Lux is half-stuck beneath some wreckage from the
fallen shuttle. She appears dead.

Gamma approaches, eyeing the prone form of Lux with
curiosity... Who is this one? And how did she get
outside the ship, unless...

Gamma gets right up to her and Lux uses her sword,
taking Gamma out. THIS COULD BE A FULL-FLEDGED FIGHT
IF WE WANT TO UTILIZE THE SKILLS OF GAMMA A BIT MORE.

82 INT., ASCENDANCY, SPACE

Tira is amazed.

TIRA

Looks like we're back on line.

SHARK

With a vengeance.

83 EXT., CRATER, DAY

Lux digs out her psyllenol packet that she took off of
Leone. She hesitates a moment, then takes it. A flash
of visions, coming on fast, but gone just as fast.
Flickers of future events too quick to identify. Then,
back to reality.

She tries to lift the wreckage up with her hands.
Nothing will give. She tries again, concentrating on
the item and using only telekinesis. It works, and the
piece of wreckage lifts slowly from her leg. She
checks the wound, slowly looking better and better.

She is very impressed.

84 EXT., ZITA PLAIN, DAY

Cumberland and Ugly tread the barren plain. Ugly knows that Cumberland killed the others, and calls him on it.

UGLY
You haven't fooled everyone, you know.

Cumberland keeps walking.

UGLY
You killed them, and you're going to kill me next.

Cumberland stops walking, and starts taking off all of the weapons, laying them in an orderly fashion on the ground. First his own, then Wendy's confiscated weapons, then Ugly's pistol. He looks at it, and aims it right at Ugly.

CUMBERLAND
This one is yours, right?

UGLY
Whaa? You're gonna kill me with MY GUN?

CUMBERLAND
Wow, you can really see the future, can't you? You should try developing that amazing psychic skill of yours! Maybe you could end up just like me.

Ugly spits at him.

CUMBERLAND
It's cheap, and fast. More than good enough for the likes of you.

85 EXT., ZITA PLAIN, DAY

Arntzen is calling for a new shuttle.

ARNTZEN
We need a backup shuttle to previous coordinates, plus medical team for immediate evac --

The communicator flies off his wrist and into the hands of:

ALPHA, coming over the ridge.

ALPHA

Commander, what a pleasant surprise.

ARNTZEN

Up yours, traitorous scum.

ALPHA

I wasn't talking to you. I was talking to Commander Wendy Stanton. Commander of the Psion Red Unit. My unit. This Unit!

Delta appears behind Alpha, it looks like Wendy and Arntzen are captured!

86 EXT., ZITA PLAIN, DAY

Cumberland and Ugly stand off in the middle of a barren rocky plain. Cumberland has his pistol held at arm's length. Ugly, hands still bound behind his back, has as heroic a face as he can muster given the circumstances. Cumberland takes a careful aim, as we see down the barrel of Ugly's confiscated pistol.

CLOSE ON:

CUMBERLAND.

He grins slightly, finger tightening on the trigger.

CUMBERLAND

Did your visions have this part in them?

UGLY

Yes. It's all here, except there's one thing missing.

CUMBERLAND

What?

CUT TO:

Lux on the hilltop. She sees the standoff below. She draws a small knife, throws it and lets PSYCHIC ENERGY direct it the rest of the way down the hill in a curving path towards Cumberland.

The knife appears in midair behind Cumberland's head, and hits him from behind, hard enough to send his head snapping forward. His face comes up again, shock registering on his face as he crumbles to the ground.

UGLY

That.

Lux comes down the hill towards Ugly.

UGLY

Impressive throw! Are you a psion, too?

LUX

No, I just stole some of their drug.

She starts piling on the guns, taking all four handguns from Cumberland's pile and sliding them into her belt.

UGLY

Stocking up? I don't suppose you can get me out of these cuffs?

LUX

I'll try.

She tries to get them off telekinetically. Nothing.

She shakes her head.

Ugly starts taking stuff from dead Cumberland, his hands behind his back the whole time.

UGLY

My name's Gorty Hex. Thief.

LUX

Lux. Bounty hunter.

He stops stealing Cumberland's stuff for a moment.

UGLY

Look, I'm already under arrest, so don't bother.

She shakes her head.

LUX

I'm after a shipping crate that the psions have.

UGLY

Those guys have the crate? That thing's worth a lot of money, you know.

LUX

It is money.

UGLY

No it isn't. Wendy said it was worth a lot of money, but it isn't

money. Wouldn't say what.

Lux puts it all together.

LUX

Psylenol.

87 INT., ASCENDANCY, SPACE

Tira's face drops. Shark spits a curse.

TIRA

She's figured it out. Get down there right now and try to salvage this fiasco!

SHARK

What am I supposed to -

TIRA

DO IT!

He practically runs out of the room.

88 INT., CRATER, DAY

Alpha walks up to Arntzen. Delta is undoing Wendy's handcuffs.

ALPHA

I understand you are the man that the President trusts with the key.

He takes a remote box off Arntzen's belt. He raises his eyebrows, as if challenging Arnie to prove that this isn't the very article he's looking for.

ALPHA

And a keycode, if you please?

ARNTZEN

You'll have to read my mind, cause I'm not giving it to you.

Alpha's playful expression sours. To Delta:

ALPHA

Get the girl out of here. I must have words with the Section Commander.

He takes Wendy by the arm, and hauls her off to a secluded spot.

Alpha has the remote box and is preparing to enter the

sequence. He uses a telekinetic attack to start crushing Arntzen's heart. He crumbles to the ground.

ALPHA

Give me the codes now. The first number...

ARNTZEN

Scum.

ALPHA

Number?

The attack worsens. Arntzen starts to give him something to gain him time.

ARNTZEN

...Seven...

89 EXT., CRATER, DAY

Lux and Ugly approach the crater's edge and see Wendy in peril. Delta is beating the stuffing out of Wendy, who has fallen to the ground.

LUX

We've got to...

Ugly runs into the crater. Lux tries to stop him but is too late, and follows, hands on two of the four guns in her belt.

UGLY

Hey idiot. Yeah, you, big guy!

Lux appears, Delta lets go of Wendy. Lux throws a pistol towards Wendy, who makes ready to catch it, going deep (away from Delta).

Delta snatches it out of the air, telekinetically swinging its arc closer to him. Now he's aiming at Lux.

Delta telekinetically flies one of Lux's other guns into his remaining free hand, very fast. Now his hands are full so...

Lux flies Wendy a pistol via telekinesis. Delta can't grab it, his hands are full. But he can point one at each of them now.

Lux, Delta, Wendy, everyone is pointing guns at one another, shouting accusations, but one man is laughing: UGLY. His hands are behind his back, and he's laughing. He keeps walking closer and closer to the middle of the standoff and closer to Delta.

WENDY

What are you laughing at, Ugly?

He just keeps laughing away. It grows in strength. We come around behind him to reveal two of Cumberland's grenades, one in each hand.

UGLY

There's only one way this can end...
Remember how I said I'd do
anything you asked?

WENDY

Ugly, no.

UGLY

This is for you.

Delta stares at him, bewildered, as the unarmed man runs towards him, laughing insanely.

UGLY

Bastard!

Ugly arrives at Delta, just as two grenade pins fall through the air, hanging in space as if there is no such thing as time or gravity...

The camera stops, goes right through the pin and up to Wendy's face as Ugly blows himself and the Psion into oblivion. The girls are knocked over by the shock wave. Lux was taking cover, but Wendy takes a pretty good beating from it.

90 INT., CRATER, DAY

Alpha looks up, sees the smoke rising from the nearby pit. He's intent on his work though, and gives Arntzen another jolt of psi.

91 EXT., CRATER, DAY

The dust clears.

Wendy sits up, crushed. Big emotion moment.

Lux tells her to get it together and come with her.

92 INT., CRATER, DAY

Alpha is still squeezing numbers out of Arntzen, and entering them on his keypad. The fire curtain is slowly coming down, revealing the crate suspended in midair. Arntzen finishes, and Alpha thanks him and

kills him.

Wendy takes a shot from the hill, using her dart gun. Alpha is hit with a hypodermic needle in the back. He can't reach the thing, just in that spot you can't get to. He spins, bewildered.

Wendy has reloaded. She fires again.

Another direct hit. Also a needle. It sits there, no reaction from Alpha other than slight surprise and discomfort. He plucks it from his chest.

She swears.

WENDY

FSK! Damn Placebo.

She loads the final Vistersine needle. She fires it, we follow it right into Alpha's chest as he is about to pull out the first needle. POP!

His eyes go wide, he starts foaming at the mouth. He dies a slow horrible death (see GIAN MARIA VOLANTE in FISTFUL OF DOLLARS).

They look to the crate, still hovering in space over the lava pit.

WENDY

Who's keeping that up?

93 INT., SHARK'S SHUTTLE

The guy is approaching the VZ quickly. We can see the enormous peak of Montenegro in the distance. Shark looks pissed off!

94 INT., CRATER, DAY

Wendy and Lux look around the crater.

LUX

Maybe one of them is still alive...

WENDY

Over here.

They head towards a cave opening, cautiously. Weapons at the ready.

95 INT., CAVE, DAY

They enter and see a large medical network of stasis

chambers, filled with the bodies of the rest of the psychic unit. They are hooked up to all manner of electronic machinery, and are "alive."

Lux takes this as the blasphemy it is. Wendy and Lux share information.

WENDY

I was a member of this unit, until they started using the drug. When one of them leaked it out to a pharmaceutical company for money, that's when the whole place went to hell.

Lux looks closely at one of the control panels on the stasis chamber. She gets it to cough up a holographic read-out in front of her with the specs on the "MIND HIVE."

We see some details: number of bodies interred, energy cost to keep alive, estimated psi output per second keeping the container aloft...

WENDY

Psylenol went on sale before anyone could determine the extent of its psychic side effects. The entire population was given the power to destroy each other all at once.

Lux steps back, stares at the network of bodies in horror.

WENDY

All the pent-up anger of a modern civilization was unleashed in the first few days of the psi-revolution. We tried to step in to stop it, but... All we could do was try to collect the remaining stores of the drug.

Shark Sterling steps into the cave mouth, gun at the ready.

SHARK

And you succeeded.

Lux spins, hand over her pistol. Wendy's eyes narrow.

SHARK

That's what's in the shipping crate. All the psylenol confiscated on Zita. And how much is that, Miss Stanton?

WENDY

2 tonnes.

SHARK

A lot. Enough to finish the war between your planet and mine.

LUX

You don't actually expect to use it successfully, do you?

WENDY

He can't - no one took into consideration the long-term effects. Your soldiers will be mad within hours of first exposure.

SHARK

A propagandist's lie. You've come to collect it for Daddy.

WENDY

I've come to destroy it.

Even Shark is unsure, now. Doesn't sound like the Wendy Stanton he's heard about...

SHARK

I thought Daddy was shipping it off, going to make a second attempt at it.

WENDY

He is. I'm going to stop it.

Shark turns his pistol on Wendy.

SHARK

Antigone. I think you know what to do.

There is a moment of hesitation.

LUX

You want me to sell a civilization into war for £75,000?

Shark starts to feel his grip on the situation slipping away. Wendy and Lux's eyes meet. She tells Shark:

LUX

You can keep the other half.

Wendy and Lux both draw fast and shoot the MIND HIVE. It sparks spectacularly and some of the amniotic fluid starts spilling from the cracks. The bodies start

slipping around inside, as their life blood spills onto the cave floor. There is a powering-down sound...

Shark turns to the cave exit, a horrified expression on his face as:

96 INT., CRATER, DAY

The psylenol crate suddenly is overtaken by gravity once again, and falls into the lava. A huge splash of the stuff, which settles gradually as the crate disappears forever.

97 INT., CAVE, DAY

At the cave mouth:

Shark is joined by Lux and Wendy, both of whom have guns pointed at his back.

LUX

You can do this one of two ways.
One: you can walk away, and tell
your queen that it's over. That is
the easy way. Two: we can finish
this hard way, where somebody does
not walk away.

Shark's sour expression says it all. He's been beat. He puts his pistol away. Walks a few yards away. Spins. Salutes them. Walks off.

98 INT., ASCENDANCY, SPACE

Tira is not pleased in the least. She shuts off the video, steaming.

99 INT., CRATER, DAY

Wendy is lighting a cigar. She offers one to Lux, who takes it, smiling.

THE END.