

FADE IN

INT. FRANK'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

One of the walls in the room is being used as a television, which generates the only light in the room. FRANK KIRN (sixty two year old man) sits in an easy chair and drinks a beer. There are many empty beer cans on the end table, along with a half-eaten instant dinner.

CUT TO:

INT. WORK CAFETERIA - DAY

The cafeteria is busy, but Frank eats lunch by himself.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S WORK CUBICLE - DAY

His cubicle is a mess with boxes and equipment stacked on the desk and the floor. Frank types a report.

CUT TO:

INT. A BAR - NIGHT

Frank drinks alone.

CUT TO:

INT. A HALLWAY AT FRANK'S WORKPLACE - DAY

Frank and FOUR OTHER ENGINEERS gather around an Electronic Scroll that is hung on the wall. The scroll displays five pictures of a damaged part. Frank is at the back of the group, with the four engineers discussing what is on the scroll (but their discussion cannot be heard). Frank does not speak and does not even look at the scroll.

CUT TO:

INT. BREAK AREA AT FRANK'S WORKPLACE - DAY

Frank drinks a cup of coffee all alone. A QUALITY ENGINEER (thirty year old woman) approaches him and unrolls her Electronic Scroll.

(CONTINUED)

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QUALITY ENGINEER

Hey...uhhhh...we're walking this ECO for the overshoot problem around 'cause we're trying to ship by three o'clock. Software came up with something that will prevent most of the errors...and if they get an overshoot it's not going to officially declare it...

Frank signs the scroll during the Quality Engineer's explanation. Once Frank signs the scroll, the Quality Engineer stops giving the explanation.

QUALITY ENGINEER (CONT'D)

Thanks...hey I heard this is your last week here.

FRANK

Yep.

QUALITY ENGINEER

We need to take you out for lunch or something.

FRANK

They're having a cake thing on Friday.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRANSPORT STARSHIP

The Transport Starship rockets through space.

INT. FRANK'S CABIN ON TRANSPORT STARSHIP

Frank, fully clothed, just sits on the edge of his bed, staring at nothing in particular.

INT. TRANSPORT STARSHIP'S BAR

Frank enters the bar. The TRANSPORT STARSHIP BARTENDER sees him, nods to him, and grabs a bottle of alcohol. The wall monitor shows the planet CYPRESS 3 coming closer.

INT. TRANSPORT STARSHIP'S BAR - ANOTHER ANGLE

The bar is now almost empty. Frank drinks a bottle of beer. The wall monitor shows a descending aerial view of the city of MASDON: a city in the desert up against a mountain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There are two skyscrapers in this city but only one of them is completed; the other one is just a frame.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Frank, MASDON ENGINEER #1, and MASDON ENGINEER #2 sit at the conference table. MASDON ENGINEER #3 enters the room, sits down, looks over at Frank, and extends his hand.

MASDON ENGINEER #3
I don't think we've met.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - ANOTHER ANGLE

Frank, Masdon Engineer #1, Masdon Engineer #2, Masdon Engineer #3, MASDON ENGINEER #4, MASDON ENGINEER #5, and a YOUNG FEMALE ENGINEER (twenty three year old woman) sit at the conference table. The Young Female Engineer is slightly overweight. The conference has not yet started; people drink their coffee and look over their notes.

MASDON ENGINEER #2
(to Young Female Engineer)
Did you get my message? What's with the organics lately?

YOUNG FEMALE ENGINEER
I don't know. Nothing's changed.

MASDON ENGINEER #2
I can't believe that.

The Young Female Engineer shrugs her shoulders.

YOUNG FEMALE ENGINEER

Okay...

FRANK
Are you using a new batch of the diamagnetic Carbon?

Both the Young Female Engineer and Masdon Engineer #2 look at Frank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (CONT'D)

The specs for Carbon haven't completely caught up with your nanaerobic process. You might have to recalibrate with each new batch.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S NEW CUBICLE - DAY

Frank surfs the Internet at a site involving deep-sea fishing.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR #1 - NIGHT

Frank has a drink in front of him and can barely stay seated on the barstool.

BARTENDER #1

Buddy you don't wanna be walking home by yourself.

Frank adjusts himself on the chair and does not look at BARTENDER #1.

BARTENDER #1 (CONT'D)

Let me get you a ride.

Eventually Frank nods.

INT. FRANK'S NEW LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Frank sits in his easy chair with a beer in his hand and watches the wall monitor. Frank notices in the upper corner of the screen an electronic note saying he has one message.

FRANK

Read.

Frank's speech is very slurred. A window pops up and shows CRAIG ROBERTSON (Forty one year old man).

CRAIG (V.O.)

Hey buddy...I vaguely remember promising to put together a Boys' Night Out that I never followed through on. As fate would have it I'll be at your planet in three weeks so I can at least make it up to you. I'll give you a call when I get in. See ya soon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The window now shows "End of Message".

FRANK

Reply.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TOXIC CLEANUP SITE - DAY

Just outside the limits of the city, some of the old and crumbling buildings have been torn down with the debris pushed to the side. The cleared area now has multiple injection wells into the ground supplied by a large water truck, and multiple extraction wells that take the water to a newly constructed temporary water treatment system next to the cleared area. The water treatment system consists of occasional enclosed structures that are next to multiple reservoirs for the different stages of water treatment.

EXT. WATER TREATMENT SYSTEM

The Young Female Engineer is motionless, just looking at one of the final stages of the water treatment system with its elaborate maze of reservoirs, sifters, valves, and sensors. No water is currently in this stage.

EXT. WATER TREATMENT SYSTEM - ANOTHER ANGLE

There is a fork in the pipe where the water either goes into a pipe that heads back to the city or into the final stages of the water treatment. The Young Female Engineer presses a button and now the water is diverted to the final stages.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S NEW CUBICLE - DAY

A SOFTWARE ENGINEER (twenty five year old man) sits at Frank's desk. Frank sits in the guest chair. The cubicle wall monitor shows a server going through a series of complicated setup routines.

SOFTWARE ENGINEER

Few more seconds...

FRANK

Fine.

SOFTWARE ENGINEER

I'm sorry somehow I set the reminder of setting up your cubicle after your start date...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The setup routine finishes.

FRANK

If you're giving me a Hypercard
Accelerator, it's worth the wait.

The Software Engineer turns around, looks him in the eye, and smiles.

SOFTWARE ENGINEER

I just stick it on the desktop and
let people use it if they want.

FRANK

It's just not that forgiving.

SOFTWARE ENGINEER

I guess.

The Software Engineer leaves and passes the Young Female Engineer, who has been waiting outside the cubicle. The Young Female Engineer holds an Electronic Scroll and comes into Frank's New Cubicle.

YOUNG FEMALE ENGINEER

...so I'm making this...uhhhh...
throughput efficiency stackup and I
guess that's one of the milestones
and I don't know there's sections
that I try to connect and it looks
like they do except when I actually
input the numbers...

Frank takes the scroll and quickly makes radical changes to the schematic.

FRANK

Each time the water is affected,
even just to increase the
temperature, it needs to be defined
as a stage.

Frank finishes rearranging the entire drawing.

FRANK (CONT'D)

If your numbers are right your
conductivity is too high.

Frank hands back the scroll.

YOUNG FEMALE ENGINEER

Okay...thanks...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The Young Female Engineer leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR #2 - DAY

Frank drinks beer and eats his lunch alone.

CUT TO:

INT. FRANK'S NEW CUBICLE - DAY

Frank sits at his desk and stares off into space. The Young Female Engineer comes into the cubicle.

YOUNG FEMALE ENGINEER
You were right about the
conductivity.

Pause. Finally Frank turns to look at the Young Female Engineer.

FRANK
What?

YOUNG FEMALE ENGINEER
The lowest measurement I get is
about .1 Siemens.

Young Female Engineer takes out her Electronic Scroll and hands it to Frank. Frank reluctantly takes it.

FRANK
Maybe they've hit a bad area and
there's toxic shock.

Frank stares at the scroll.

YOUNG FEMALE ENGINEER
I checked that and the last ten
extractions look all about the
same.

Frank gives the scroll back to the Young Female Engineer.

FRANK
I'm sorry I can't help you right
now.

The Young Female Engineer just looks at Frank, but doesn't grab the scroll. Pause. Frank looks away, but still holds the scroll out to the Young Female Engineer. Eventually the Young Female Engineer takes the scroll.

INT. FRANK'S NEW CUBICLE - ANOTHER ANGLE

Frank stares at the floor, alone in his cubicle.

CUT TO:

EXT. MASDON STREET #1 - DAY

Frank walks down the street. Only a third of the stores are occupied. The rest are boarded up and some have been vandalized.

INT. AN ELECTRONIC OUTLET STORE - DAY

Frank looks at all the odd equipment located haphazardly around the store.

INT. AN ELECTRONIC OUTLET STORE - ANOTHER ANGLE

Frank reads a book in the book section of the store. PERRINE ALO (sixty year old woman) and an OUTLET STORE EMPLOYEE (thirty two year old woman) are also in the isle.

OUTLET STORE EMPLOYEE
Have you looked for it online?

PERRINE
You'd think once it was
declassified people would start
writing about it. I can show all
the links see if you can get any
decent information out of them.

OUTLET STORE EMPLOYEE
Uhhh...what are you looking for
again?

Perrine looks at her Electronic Scroll.

PERRINE
TLS communication.

Frank lifts his head and makes eye contact with Perrine.

FRANK
That was a great protocol. I don't
know why it never panned out.

CUT TO:

EXT. A CAFÉ - NIGHT

Frank and Perrine sit at an outdoor table containing finished dinner plates and paper napkins with technical jargon written on them in pen. Perrine plays with a Personal Digital Assistant. Frank works on Perrine's Electronic Scroll.

PERRINE

So the headaches were from me not drinking coffee on the weekends. I switched to tea for a while now it's just hot water.

FRANK

I use to dump so much cream and sugar in I realized I didn't like the taste so why drink it. Here, something like this?

Frank turns the scroll around so Perrine can see it.

PERRINE

That's it! Where'd you get that? How...what operating system?

FRANK

It's just a 7.1 simulator. You can have it but I can't tell you where I got it.

PERRINE

I'll take it thank you. If I can get back to where radiation doesn't take up half my day...

FRANK

What's facilities doing about it?

Long pause.

PERRINE

I can only stay if it doesn't cost facilities. I'm wrapping up my Meissner paper, then they can kick me out.

FRANK

Is that the reason for the all-nighters?

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CONTINUED:

PERRINE

We sleep over there. It's just easier to just stay two or three days so the test runs don't get too broken up.

Perrine gives back the Personal Digital Assistant.

PERRINE (CONT'D)

I forgot how great they are. Here...

Perrine slides an access card over to Frank.

PERRINE (CONT'D)

For the land line, I'll try not to abuse it.

CUT TO:

INT. WATER PROCESSING ROOM - DAY

The Young Female Engineer has trouble loosening a nut on a machine.

INT. WATER PROCESSING ROOM - ANOTHER ANGLE

The Young Female Engineer stares at the schematic (displayed on the Electronic Scroll), then the partially disassembled machine, then back to the schematic again.

CUT TO:

EXT. POWER RELAY STATION - DAY

MASDON TECHNICIAN #1 (fifty year old man) stops putting his tools back in his toolbox when he sees Frank taking off the side panel of a large piece of equipment.

MASDON TECHNICIAN #1

Hey I thought it's fixed.

FRANK

Did you know the whole Phase Lock Energy Loop is disconnected?

MASDON TECHNICIAN #1

Yeah 'cause it's junk.

EXT. POWER RELAY STATION - ANOTHER ANGLE

An extender board has been added between the controller board and the rest of the system. An additional board has been crudely attached to the controller board.

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CONTINUED:

Masdon Technician #1 works the new board. Frank wears safety glasses and earplugs, is behind a beam next to the dangerous high voltage, and looks at the oscilloscope that is connected to the high voltage. The Young Female Engineer wears safety glasses and earplugs also and stands behind Frank.

FRANK

On.

Masdon Technician #1 flicks a switch on the new board. An image appears on the oscilloscope.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Off.

Masdon Technician #1 flicks the switch the other way.

FRANK (CONT'D)

What kind of filtering do you have right now?

MASDON TECHNICIAN #1

Well I got the ten thousand microfarads...

Frank looks at Masdon Technician #1, holds up his hand, shakes his head, and looks at the Young Female Engineer.

YOUNG FEMALE ENGINEER

.02 micron.

FRANK

Seems small enough. What's the pH level?

The Young Female Engineer makes a face and then leaves. Frank turns to Masdon Technician #1.

FRANK (CONT'D)

1.5 degrees, almost there.

MASDON TECHNICIAN #1

Okay...uhhh...I'm not sure the job number for this project is still good.

EXT. POWER RELAY STATION - ANOTHER ANGLE

Now the dangerous high voltage has been modified with large power devices and more new boards. Again Frank is behind the beam.

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CONTINUED:

FRANK
Turn off the power factor
correction.

Masdon Technician looks at him disbelievingly.

FRANK (CONT'D)
We're not going to leave it that
way, but it's got to handle it. It
will.

Frank looks over to sees the Young Female Engineer entering
the area again.

EXT. WATER PROCESSESING AREA - DAY

Frank and the Young Female Engineer walk to the Water
Processing Area.

FRANK
And the flow rate's always below
seventy three.

YOUNG FEMALE ENGINEER
Yes.

They enter a room. Frank goes up to the electronic
monitoring system of the water and focuses in on a small bump
in spectrometer graph.

YOUNG FEMALE ENGINEER (CONT'D)
It's below what it should be.

FRANK
You want to drink it or flush your
toilet, it's fine. You want to
immediately recycle it for the next
insertion and avoid chasing false
resistivity readings for the next
two weeks; you'll need it nanopure
at least 6dB down from this before
entering this stage. That's why
you fail past this point.

Frank leaves the room. The Young Female Engineer stays in
the same spot.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAND LINE ROOM

Frank opens the door, enters the room, and puts the access
card back in his wallet.

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CONTINUED:

There is nothing in this room except for a chair, a desk, a phone, and a 50" monitor built into the wall.

INT. LAND LINE ROOM - ANOTHER ANGLE

Frank has his electronic scroll on the desk, which displays many articles and personal notes concerning radiation suppression. Frank talks on the land line phone and can see Perrine (lit by a red hew) on the wall monitor.

FRANK

What'd it creep up to?...uh huh...but
you're not that far away from
isolation levels...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WATER PROCESSING AREA - DAY

Both the Young Female Engineer and Frank work on some piece of machinery.

YOUNG FEMALE ENGINEER

I'm gonna write it up and send this piece of garbage back.

FRANK

You're lucky you're not on a
starship. Can't send anything
back.

YOUNG FEMALE ENGINEER

I need this working now it's
already Thursday!

FRANK

Having them truck in the clean
water is not the worst thing in the
world. Like they really need this
tagging accuracy with all the
resist tomography, tiltmeters, god
knows what else down there. So
you're late, what would you be
doing if it was working?

YOUNG FEMALE ENGINEER

I got all the retainer pools to be monitored.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

That would be done automatically if system 4.5 went in. I can't believe we haven't been upgraded yet.

The Young Female Engineer is about to say something, then stops and looks away.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Masdon Engineers #1 through #5, MASDON ENGINEER #6, MASDON ENGINEER #7, MASDON ENGINEER #8, and Frank are seated at the table. The SUPERVISOR (forty year old man) stands at the end of the table. Frank has almost fallen asleep.

SUPERVISOR

...so there was some gnashing of teeth with finance, but we are on line with the Energy Autocorrelation. Thank you Frank for your hard work.

This wakes up Frank.

CUT TO:

INT. LANGFORD RESEARCH FACILITY LABORATORY #1

A BEEPING sound is heard. LANGFORD TECHNICIAN #1 (fifty year old man) stops working and heads toward the door. Perrine continues working on her complicated superconductivity test. NATHAN WILLIAMS (thirty three year old man) comes in.

NATHAN

We have to go now!

Perrine turns off power to the equipment.

INT. ISOLATION CHAMBER ROOM

Perrine, Nathan, Langford Technician #1, LANGFORD TECHNICIAN #2 (thirty year old woman), LANGFORD TECHNICIAN #3 (forty year old woman), and LANGFORD SCIENTIST (forty year old man) are crammed side by side in a very narrow room. A red light is on. Next to the 50" wall monitor is an Electronic Scroll (hung up on the wall) which Perrine flips through Frank's scanned napkin scrawls that have been digitally cleaned up.

(CONTINUED)

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LANGFORD TECHNICIAN #2
You can't just dole out land line
access to anyone.

NATHAN
C'mon, no one uses them anymore.

A live feed of Frank in the Land Line Room pops up on the
screen.

FRANK (V.O.)
How bad has it been?

PERRINE
Not bad...

LANGFORD SCIENTIST
It's been three times in the
chamber this week already!

FRANK (V.O.)
I can tell you right now this won't
be solved over the phone.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRAIN CAR #2

Perrine and Frank ride in silence as the train travels in an
underground tunnel.

INT. LANGFORD TERMINAL

Perrine and Frank walk in the completely enclosed terminal.
Through the glass walls of the terminal, Langford is shown as
a small abandoned city (up against the side of a mountain)
with a partially completed dome over it. The dome consists
only of the metal framing. Frank looks out in the distance
at a power plant that has been damaged and part of it has
been capped with cement. Halfway between the power plant and
the terminal, a sensor displays a green light.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LANGFORD RESEARCH FACILITY WAREHOUSE

Perrine and Langford Scientist sit on crates and watch Frank,
Nathan, Langford Technician #1, and Langford Technician #3
rummage through the equipment. Langford Technician #2 stands
by herself and frowns in the direction of Frank.

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LANGFORD TECHNICIAN #1
...and sure enough after around forty
sorties we'd start replacing the
thrust vectoring gimbals because of
the microfissures.

LANGFORD TECHNICIAN #3
Everything from that time frame was
placed in this section but I
haven't really gone through it.

Langford Scientist turns to Perrine.

LANGFORD SCIENTIST
The entire sub four level isn't
really being used; you would have
more square meterage and be closer
to home.

Perrine doesn't respond. Frank takes an electronic module
out of a box, which gets Perrine off of her crate.

PERRINE
Is that a spare?

FRANK
No, but it might help.

EXT. NEXT TO INCOMING AIR DUCT OF THE LANGFORD RESEARCH
FACILITY

Frank and the Nathan are in full protective suits including
breathing apparatuses. Frank holds the piece of equipment.
Nathan looks at the sensor now displaying a red light.

NATHAN
See it's back again. Where do you
want to put that?

FRANK
Nowhere right now; we're too low.

INT. INCOMING AIR DUCT OF THE LANGFORD RESEARCH FACILITY

Nathan opens up the covering to the air duct. Frank looks at
the radiation suppressor. The radiation alarm BEEPING can
faintly be heard.

FRANK
Did somebody move a baffle?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NATHAN

Well yeah we had some installation files and it didn't match with what was out here. That was back when we didn't realize it was the controller starting to die.

Frank moves one of the baffles. The BEEPING stops.

FRANK

I know what the manual says, but it has to be here.

EXT. NEXT TO INCOMING AIR DUCT OF THE LANGFORD RESEARCH FACILITY

Frank holds the piece of equipment and looks at the rafters.

NATHAN

Don't you have it fixed? Do we need that?

EXT. RAFTERS OF LANGFORD - DAY

Frank works alone on attaching the electronic module to a beam. He glances over at the abandoned city of Langford then looks back at the electronic module.

EXT. RAFTERS OF THE LANGFORD - ANOTHER ANGLE

Frank has almost completed the installation. Frank stares out into the center of Langford.

EXT. RAFTERS OF THE LANGFORD - ANOTHER ANGLE

The electronic module is installed. Frank looks toward Langford with binoculars.

FRANK

Yi...yi...yi.