

PROJECT INFINITUM
Pilot Episode

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EXT. LONG SUBURBAN ROAD - LAS VEGAS, 1984

MIKE NEWMAN (27) male, light brown mullet, white, glasses, nerdy but cool, and wearing a slightly ratty SUIT drives a beige CADILLAC down a road in the suburbs of LAS VEGAS. It's a cloudy day and thunder can be heard in the distance.

Mike glances at his watch... he's late. A LIGHTNING STRIKE is seen in the distance and the sound of THUNDER is heard. Mike keeps driving.

Mike drives for a bit longer and a BOLT OF LIGHTNING comes down from the heavens and strikes his rear TIRE. The tire pops and Mike veers out of control.

INT. MIKE'S CADILLAC

Mike attempts to gain control of the car, and grips the wheel with much challenge.

EXT. LONG SUBURBAN ROAD

Mike manages to pull the car to the side of the road by a park. Mike gets out of the car, understandably frazzled and looks at amazement at his tire.

On a park bench nearby a man in a black suit (UMBRA AGENT 1) peaks at Mike from above the paper he is holding to obscure his face.

It begins to RAIN. Mike looks at the sky in disbelief, he reaches into the passenger door and pulls out a small DRAWSTRING BAG that he puts in his pocket. He runs around to the driver door and locks it with his KEY.

Mike holds his arm above his head and runs down the street.

EXT. FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHAPEL

Outside is a SIGN that reads 'Funeral Today 1:00pm'. Mike enters the chapel as the weather is clearing up and opens the door as quietly as he can.

INT. CHAPEL

REVEREND

And so, it is with a heavy heart
that we say farewell to a fellow...

The door opens with a low dull creak that reverberates throughout the chapel. The REVEREND pauses his eulogy. All heads (about 30 or so) turn to Mike and see him soaking wet.

The Reverend clears his throat and continues.

REVEREND (CONT'D)
...soul. And now I call on Dr.
Fergus Abernathy's family to say
farewell... in their own ways.

Mike sits down next to his friend CORY HAYES (28), male, black, suave and well put together, smart, but not super nerdy, and short hair.

CORY
(Under his breath)
You're late, Mike.

MIKE
Thanks for the heads up.

TIME PASSES in a montage of eulogies as FERGUS' family members speak at the podium. Fergus' brother ARVIDE (68) from Scotland, Fergus' niece SALLY (23)(also from Scotland), and his sister, MARY (61) who lives in Connecticut. Their eulogies weave in and out of one another in various shots.

ARVIDE
You didn't know Fergus like I did.
When I was fourteen he blew off me
eyebrows with one o' his damned
science machines.

MARY
I'll never forget when my brother
told me he wanted to try out one of
his new weight loss pills on me...
cause I was fat.

SALLY
Uncle Fergus thought it would be
funny to put a sonic amplifier in
my trombone once. I couldn't hear
for weeks.

ARVIDE
I'll miss him. But not too much
'cause I owed him money.

SALLY

I didn't know me uncle well but he would write to me every Christmas and one year he gave me a diamond that he made himself. He was always sweet.

MARY

He was a bastard... but he was my bastard.

ARVIDE

Why'd ya have to go and die you piece o' shite?

In the pews, Cory leans over to Mike.

CORY

Can you tell they're related to old man Fergus?

He asks, because they are exactly like him.

MIKE

Shh.

The Reverend steps back up to the podium.

REVEREND

Thank you for those... kind words Abernathys. And now, we will allow for the viewing of the body one more time... before we bring him to his final resting place.

Mike waits in line, as does Cory and everyone else. TIME PASSES and once Mike is the last one in line he views Fergus' body. Fergus was 72 with white frizzy hair and a bald spot. He was a bit overweight. He wears a double breasted grey suit.

Mike looks around him, everyone is looking away. He pulls a small 4'' action figure of Barry Gibb from the Bee Gees out of the drawstring bag that is charred.

INT. MIKE'S CHILDHOOD HOME, 1963 (FLASHBACK)

A knock at the door. DIANE NEWMAN (Younger) brown hair, Mike's mom opens it. A younger Fergus stands in the doorway.

FERGUS

(Scottish accent)

Hello, Diane.

(MORE)

FERGUS (CONT'D)

I was wondering if Mike might like to help me with something for a few hours.

DIANE

Mike... Dr. Abernathy is asking for you again.

YOUNG MIKE (7) leaps off the couch. The old black and white *Lost in Space* is on the TV.

YOUNG MIKE

What are we gonna do today Fergus?!

Fergus pulls the action figure out of his pocket conspiratorially.

FERGUS

What say we launch this bastard to kingdom come?

Fergus gestures to his lawn across the street and he has a model rocket set up. Mike looks very excited and rushes towards it.

PRESENT - INT. CHAPEL

Mike places the action figure in Fergus' pocket.

MIKE

I'll miss you, old man.

A tear falls from Mike's eye.

EXT. DESERT

TEXT: '20 Miles North of Las Vegas - 1984'

TEXT: '2 Weeks Later'

Mike steps out of a cherry RED SEDAN with leather seats. He surveys the surrounding area, nods a few times and opens his trunk. Inside is a long (at least 3 feet) CASE. Mike places the KEY in the lock.

As soon as we hear the click, MUSIC CUE: 'Rock you Like a Hurricane' or something similar with a guitar riff in the beginning.

Mike opens the briefcase with a mischievous smile. Inside is a ROCKET BOOSTER. He pulls some METAL BARS, a WRENCH, DRILL and some other tools from his backseat.

The music plays with the OPENING CREDITS as MIKE attaches the ROCKET to the back of his car.

As he finishes attaching the device, he wipes sweat from his brow and chugs a whole bottle of ORANGE GATORADE. MIKE pulls out a BLUEPRINT with complex math and dotted lines drawn over it. He appears to check it over with marvelously quick understanding.

MUSIC FADE: Another CAR pulls up behind him. The car is white. Cory and his girlfriend VERONICA MULLINS (26), female, white, brown hair, sassy and funny, good looking, bit of a NY accent, tall heels, steps out of the car.

CORY

Mike.

(Beat, Mike ignores them
while examining the
math.)

Hey, Mike! Earth to Mike! You gotta
be kidding me, man. There is no way
you're actually gonna go through
with this. Old Man Fergus was outta
his damn mind!

MIKE

(Noticing them for the
first time.)

Ah Cory, Veronica, glad you guys
made it out here!

VERONICA

It was either this or I could watch
my ma get liposuction from a doctor
she met in Salsipeudes. So here I
am.

CORY

There is no way, you're actually
planning on flying this thing are
you?

MIKE

Cory, name one time when I've led
you astray.

CORY

Back in College you told me we
should break into the library
because there was treasure buried
somewhere. We got caught and we had
to do the librarian's laundry for a
year man, a year! I still have
nightmares about polka dots.

MIKE

Touché, but totally different.
(Walks away and examines
the ROCKET, trying to
ignore Cory)

CORY

Or what about that time you told me
we ought to make a reactor with
uranium you just happened to 'find
on the sidewalk'.

VERONICA

(Deadpan, picking her
nails. Not really paying
attention.)
That was pretty funny.

CORY

Damn it Veronica, did I ask you?

VERONICA

You didn't not ask me.

MIKE

Cory, just admit it, you're worried
about me.

CORY

Mike, you've been my friend since I
was 11. I've seen you get out of
more things than I can count. I
ain't worried about you. I'm
worried about me!

(Points to the Red Sedan.)

That right there. That's my momma's
car. If you break it she's gonna
kill...

MIKE

... Was your momma's car. She sold
it to me.

CORY

She sold it? She gave birth to me
in that car. How did you convince
her to do that?

MIKE

Ben Franklin and his nine twin
brothers can sing some sweet tunes
if ya know what I mean.

CORY

Anyway, I know losing Old Man Fergus was hard on you. But performing his last coke induced hysterical stunt is not the way to honor him.

MIKE

He looked after me when my Pa died. He was the only guy on the block back home who encouraged us to get into science. We owe our lives to him!

VERONICA

My ma told me I could do whatever I wanted.

MIKE

Yeah, yeah, I'm sure it was nice growing up in the boonies.

VERONICA

10 miles outside of Jersey City is not what I would consider a 'boony'.

MIKE

Either way, he was confident in his math. I crossed referenced his calculations and it looks like he worked everything out right.

CORY

Mike... come on... don't do this. This is dumb. Even for you.

MIKE

This isn't dumb... It's genius!

Veronica opens the car door and takes a HELMET out, tossing it to Mike.

VERONICA

Put this on at least.

MIKE

Thanks, V.

Cory gives her an irritated look.

VERONICA

What? Safety's important, Cory.

Mike puts on the helmet.

INT. CHERRY RED SEDAN

Mike straps into his seat and turns the ignition. The car slowly starts to roll over the small dunes. He picks up speed.

EXT. DESERT

CORY

(Under his breath, but
loud enough that Veronica
hears him.)

That fool is gonna kill himself.

VERONICA

He'll be fine. This *is* Mike we're
talking about. Ya know, the same
guy who was doing topographical
algebra at the age of 9. If he says
the math checks out, I believe him.

She shrugs and looks back towards the speeding car.

INT. CHERRY RED SEDAN

MIKE goes over 100 mph. As he reaches 127, he flips a makeshift RED SWITCH bolted to the dashboard. Wires run back from the switch to the rocket. The rocket ignites exactly as planned.

EXT. SEDAN

The rocket ignites, with a low dull burn. The car drives along the sand at resoundingly quick speeds.

INT. SEDAN

Mike uncomfortably grips the wheel as he is being thrust backwards by the momentum.

EXT. SEDAN

A long wooden RAMP appears on the horizon, as Mike drives closer to it, which was set up by Mike the night beforehand.

EXT. DESERT

Cory and Veronica watch from afar. Cory is looking through BINOCULARS.

CORY
Oh come on, when did he have time
to build that?

INT. SEDAN

MIKE flips another switch to stabilize the thrust, he gets his bearings and stares ahead more confidently.

EXT. SEDAN

The car swerves back and forth, as it is difficult to control as MIKE aims it for the ramp.

The car eventually lines up with the ramp.

INT. SEDAN

The moment the car lines up perfectly, MIKE flips another SWITCH and kicks things into turbo gear.

EXT. SEDAN

The car sails up the RAMP.

EXT. DESERT

Cory and Veronica shield their eyes from the sun, looking up to the sky in wonder and concern.

EXT. SEDAN

The Sedan sails through the air, flying for several seconds.

INT. SEDAN

Mike flies the car steadily back onto the sand dunes. The mountains are fast approaching in the distance. The car lands with a thud. Although the car is back on the ground, its not slowing down. Mike looks down at the controls.

MIKE
Damn thruster.

Mike slaps the dashboard, trying to get things to stabilize. The ROCKET won't shut off. He takes his foot off the gas, the car slows down, but it's still going about 83 mph.

EXT. SEDAN

The mountains are growing closer and closer.

INT. SEDAN

Mike shrugs and goes for a big red PULL SWITCH.

MIKE
This was not part of the math!

The switch is stuck. Mike flips it again. It does not budge. The mountains are growing closer.

EXT. SEDAN

The car is speeding over dunes and tossing back and forth violently.

INT. SEDAN

Mike keeps getting sloshed to one side or the other before he can get the switch to go. He tries to turn the steering wheel, but its not working.

MIKE
(Furiously)
Come on!

He is perhaps about thirty meters away from the mountain as he gets his hand back on the switch. He pulls it again and... nothing happens. Mike braces for impact and closes his eyes.

A few moments pass and he is surprised that he hasn't exploded yet.

ALPHA
Fine day for a drive, wouldn't you
say, Dr. Newman?

Mike looks at the passenger seat where he sees a man, ALPHA (appears to be in his 40's, short brown hair, fairly tall, wearing an unbuttoned evergreen trench coat).

Alpha's irises are rimmed in black but white like the rest of his eye. However, rainbow colors swirl in them as if they are the reflection of sunlight on oil. Alpha's voice is deep and eerie. Creepy is the way it should come across, not scary or menacing.

Mike is understandably terrified. He is even more afraid when he notices he can't move, save for his eyes. He looks outside. The car is frozen in time, sailing over a dune just as its about to crash into the mountain. Sand granules are frozen in time around them. Mike manages to open his mouth just enough to mutter some words. His words are muffled though, and sound like he's biting on a rag.

MIKE

Wha....wha...what....?

ALPHA

Don't try to speak, Dr. Newman.
You'll only make a fool of
yourself.

MIKE

Am... I...--

ALPHA

No, you're not dead, Dr. Newman.
Thanks to me. For the moment that
is anyway.

Mike glances into the passenger seat. Alpha is gone. He has appeared outside Mike's driver-side window and is walking through the sand with a sleek black cane.

ALPHA (CONT'D)

I've been waiting for this moment a
long time, Dr. Newman.

MIKE

Waiting.... Who... are... you?

ALPHA

A humble business man, from...

Alpha begins to point up at the sky, but then stops himself.

Well, let's just say 'out of town'.

I've come to offer you a deal...

(Beat)

Your life for... a favor.

MIKE

My.... Life?!

ALPHA

You think I'd offer it for free?
Now, Dr. Newman, in every corner of
the cosmos nothing is free.
Everything and everyone... has a
price.

Mike notices his hand is on the pull switch. He notices he's managed to get it just the smallest bit more free. Hope strikes his eyes.

Alpha reappears in Mike's passenger seat.

ALPHA (CONT'D)

I believe it is a fair trade, Dr.
Newman.

(Beat)

And all you have to do is...
shake... my... hand.

Alpha sticks out his hand. Mike can't move his hands, so it doesn't matter anyway.

Mike glances down at the switch again.

ALPHA (CONT'D)

Thinking about taking your chances
are you?

(Beat)

Hmm, it might work... it might not.
But are you willing to take the
risk?

MIKE

How... can... I... trust... you?

ALPHA

A man's word should be good enough.
I never renege on a deal, Dr.
Newman. I can assure you of that.

Mike considers the offer.

MIKE

I... can't...

ALPHA

Ah, such a shame.

Alpha appears outside of the car. He taps his cane and it transforms into an umbrella which blocks the sun and casts him in shadows.

ALPHA (CONT'D)
Fare thee well, Dr. Newman.

Alpha vanishes and time quickly goes back to its normal progression.

The car sails towards the mountain. Mike hurriedly pulls the switch as hard as he possibly can with both hands. Miraculously, his seat is ejected just milliseconds before it smashes into the mountain and blows up in a gargantuan fiery MUSHROOM CLOUD. His seat was rigged with a makeshift PARACHUTE that was made from shower curtains and bed sheets.

EXT. DESERT

Cory and Veronica gasp, horrified. They get into their own car and speed it down the desert to see if MIKE is still alive.

EXT. DESERT, BY THE MOUNTAIN

Mike falls to the ground, and hits it with a thud. His seat tumbles down a sand dune in such a way that the HELMET can clearly be seen helping his head be cushioned. He unbuckles himself and stands up groggily. He shakes himself off and brushes the sand off his clothes. He climbs the sand dune, by the time he does, Cory and Veronica have reached his location.

Mike grins widely and does a bell kick in the air as Cory and Veronica get out of their car. Mike shouts happily.

MIKE
Yea-heh! I'm alive! That was
terrifying!
(To Veronica)
You were right about the helmet,
really broke the fall there.

Mike looks around the desert looking for Alpha.

CORY
What kinda damned fool are you? You
coulda killed yourself!

MIKE
Almost thought I may have there for
a moment or two.
(To himself, mumbling)
The math was right, I guess I just
didn't build the rocket correctly.
(Beat)
(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

Okay, but seriously, you guys are not going to believe this. There was a guy in there with me. And-

VERONICA

-Oh my God! Did he crawl out of the trunk?

MIKE

No. It's almost like... almost like time was frozen. He might have been an ghost or alien or something. I dunno. It was... really weird.

CORY

-What? Stop talking crazy, man! Did old man Fergus leave you his stash or somethin' too?

MIKE

No, I'm serious. Something... weird happened in there.

CORY

Did you hit your head? Do we need to take you to the hospital before I drag your ass to the insane asylum?

VERONICA

Eh, just drop it Cory. Lot's of crazy things happen to people in near death experiences. He's alive, we should just be grateful for now. You need some rest, Mike. We'll take you home.

MIKE

Yeah... some rest. I'm sure that's all I need.

She punches him in the shoulder. She shouts at him with care in her voice.

VERONICA

And don't you ever do anything that damn stupid again!

The camera zooms out on the scene. As it does, the following lines begin to fade in volume.

CORY

We aren't helping you clean this up.

MIKE

Who said anything about cleaning?
One sandstorm later, and no one
will even know what happened.

CORY

You are just unbelievable today.

MIKE

Hey, toss me the keys, I'll drive.

VERONICA

You sure you didn't hit your head?

Mike, Cory, and Veronica get in the white car and drive back towards Las Vegas.

EXT. DESERT, BY THE MOUNTAIN, JUST AFTER SUNSET

Some time has passed. The wreckage of the cherry red sedan is still in the same spot.

HEADLIGHTS are focused on the sedan, as THREE CARS approach the scene of the accident, all of them black as night. The cars shut off and 6 UMBRA AGENTS step out of the car and shine their flashlights on the wreckage. They are dressed head to toe in black shirts, black suits, and black ties. Their faces are not shown (yet), and if they were you would see that they are also wearing black sunglasses.

One female UMBRA Agent, AGENT HEATHER MATHERS (25), blonde, white, good looking, very serious and stern, kneels down. Her face is also not shown yet, but the back of her head is. She examines the ROCKET.

Another man steps up behind her with a menacing deep voice. PRAETOR NEIL TENEBRIS (61), black, tall, grey hair, muscular. His face is also never revealed in this scene, but will be later on.

UMBRA AGENT 4

I don't know what happened here,
Praetor Sir, but the EMF
frequencies are off the charts!

The Praetor seems to ignore him.

PRAETOR NEIL

Agent Mathers, your assessment.

Mathers bolts to her feet and salutes. Her face is now shown on frame, though it is still obscured by sun glasses.

AGENT MATHERS

Praetor, Sir! According to a rudimentary glance, the rocket appears to be made by the subject, Praetor Sir. The fuel appears to be highly sophisticated based on residue from a reaction of Actinides, aluminum perchlorate, and uranium 239.

Still not showing above his torso, Praetor Neil snaps his fingers and another AGENT hands him a FILE. He opens it. Mike's picture is inside with all of his personal information, literally all of it, down to birthdate, social security number, parking tickets, every hospitalized injury, deeds committed in the past, places of work, current address, etc.

PRAETOR NEIL

What do you think, Agent Mathers?
Shall we extend him an invitation?

Mathers appears slightly flattered that the Praetor would ask her such a question.

AGENT MATHERS

I'm honored, Praetor Sir, for the question. I believe the subject still requires further examination.

PRAETOR NEIL

I'll leave the details up to you.
You can decide at your leisure.
(He points a finger at her.)
Don't let it be a waste of time.

AGENT MATHERS

Understood, Praetor Sir!

PRAETOR NEIL

Alright, boys, pack it all up. The rest of us are heading back to Dreamland.

The UMBRA Agents, and Praetor Neil drive off in two of the cars, leaving the third for Mathers. She gets in the CAR and drives off as well. She drives over the sand dunes. The dunes mesh into the same topographical layout of a suburban neighborhood in north Las Vegas.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD, 2 DAYS AFTER THE ROCKET INCIDENT

MIKE drives a beige Cadillac down his childhood street. He pulls up at his mother's house, gets out of his CAR, walks past the CACTUS GARDEN and knocks on the DOOR.

DIANE NEWMAN (51), white, brown hair that's just beginning to grey, she takes good care of herself, wears make up, and has her hair done frequently. She wears a purple blouse.

DIANE

Oh, Mikey!

(She hugs him)

Thanks for getting here so quick,
come on in!

MIKE

Thanks mom.

INT. MIKE'S CHILDHOOD HOME

The inside is filled with retro and outdated (from the 60's or so) TRINKETS. DIANE'S SOFA is pure white leather with a matching RECLINER. An old upright PIANO sits in the corner, next to a period accurate TV. A big old RADIO sits next to the fireplace. A few DUCK FIGURINES can be seen about the room, she clearly likes the animal.

DIANE

Can I get you anything? Water, Iced
Tea, a Beer if you're not driving
anywhere?

MIKE

I'm fine mom, thanks.

Mike sits down on the SOFA.

DIANE

Are you sure, sweetheart, its no
trouble.

MIKE

Like I said, I'm fine mom.

Diane grabs herself an Iced Tea and gives one to MIKE as well. She sits down in the recliner. On a side table next to the recliner is an ANTIQUE BOX.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Not that I'm not happy to see you mom, but when I got your call this morning, you said you had something you wanted to talk to me about.

DIANE

Yeah, there's something. You remember Dr. Fergus Abernathy who lived across the street from us, right? As I recall he made quite the impression on you as a kid.

MIKE

Yeah, actually. He and I stayed pen pals after I moved out. His funeral was... pretty hard on me. Though he did send me some pretty sick plans before he passed.

DIANE

Plans for what? I hope it wasn't dangerous.

Mike reflects on the Rocket Car he built.

MIKE

Nah, pretty mundane actually.

Diane opens the box on the side table and pulls out a LETTER.

DIANE

Well, Dr. Abernathy's lawyer dropped this off today. It's addressed to you.

She hands him the letter. He studies it.

MIKE

It has my name on it, but your address. Why is that? He knew where I lived, he sent me a letter every week.

DIANE

Beats me, he was a nice man, but a real odd ball if you ask me.

Mike opens the letter. He doesn't read it out loud. His eyes move vivaciously across each line with flurrying speed. He finishes reading and leans back into the sofa.

DIANE (CONT'D)

What did it say?

Mike clears his throat and acts 'normal'.

MIKE

It was just him cracking a couple
dirty jokes at me one last time.

DIANE

Oh, well, let me see. I'm always in
the mood for a quip or two.

Diane reaches out her hand. MIKE reflexively leans away and
puts the LETTER in his pocket.

MIKE

No (*drawn out oh sound*), you don't
wanna read these. These are dirty
old man jokes.

Diane frowns.

DIANE

Fine whatever.

MIKE

Anyway mom, I have to get to work.
I'm sorry I couldn't stay longer.

DIANE

They're making you work on a
Saturday? That's ludicrous. Let me
speak to your boss, I'll have a go
at him. You oughta find a new job
if they're working you this hard.

MIKE

It's alright mom, they pay me well.

DIANE

Well, good. Whatever you do, just
remember... always make sure you
love it.

Mike AND Diane hug. She opens the door for him and he leaves.

EXT. DIANE'S HOUSE

DIANE

You take care now, I love you.

MIKE

Love you too, mom. Bye.

Mike gets into his Cadillac and hurriedly drives away with the tires screeching along the asphalt as he does.

A few moments later an 'unsuspecting' (cough cough, very suspecting) black car with tinted windows follows the direction Mike went, going the speed limit. Though one cannot see inside, Agent Mathers is the one driving the car.

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT, DAY

Mike's Apartment is a modest set up. The blinds are drawn, casting an eerie grey light over the room. A basic COUCH and a small TV with out of shape antennae are in his living room. Two folding lawn chairs sit beside the SOFA. Miscellaneous stacks of BOOKS and PAPERS fill the room. A few containers from leftover TAKE OUT MEALS lay on the COFFEE TABLE. The only thing that is organized is MIKE's BOOKSHELF beside his desk. Alongside his DESK is an engineer's WORKBENCH that Mike sits at now with a lone LAMP shining down at the surface.

Mike works vigorously, looking at Fergus' letter. He has another piece of PAPER beside him.

The letter comes into view for the first time. It's a very confusing set of letters (exact coded text below):

"Ipux Qtrs,

Z sjll zltz arl gp ge plzh cryeyx xz fcl. Vy dykqd zcdrtyy
ned mclai zoz asv W irfwfe ex. Avvl pyic ashh Z xszq. Hye
P'zc ajgyx xpsz kujx ix eyfcer jwmk. M'ws ucniws mmgl ap ynqy
oj ta qfzjd nu tcvhvpym xsl gvpwpny M shjv ptxy zs
furvexeuth tu ap ytya yxslkyny xcyichpcr jicyxpuqv.

Mq fcl'ej cyiitcwet yscy, me zsvzx T'g gpcloul ipuj. Lzd
pcrfv u zlzbuyg. Gfn, O llcs faj qctew tsjffry lsc fcl.

Qzp nu czbf tytdy gwdvqznyt tit atav dr, ysye'pw is nnynborr
fcl. Ate nnsdl kyb ptfrio ts, shy T quywk krtjc nnidl tfyp
elgmwpx ltf uxi qhf dbwp xgrlffhx.

T wgr'e ascy dzo clz avvl fcy uv hook gmps ceya gzahp nnij'sz
bath nni dlqfai jia oyvk, pbz vhua? Vlsq ns psk sfa tfe
fyszltuu jhxacimzbg, rai oit'x ov oelysctk zbh fs ysy
uvopbred.

Moz, xslm nvqw nkwe fcl. Cwls esf zitpjp.

O'pw is nnynborr fcl swzg at licmr, Rtek qj icp. Ltf qkvp vbv
bk ebk xcbsjg kcckroz oe bqo ggr wpyv zj niapo ljve btmn jzy.

- Tvelfm"

Mike scratches his head staring at the text.

MIKE
 (Mumbling to himself)
 Seems like a standard Vigenere.
 Can't solve it without knowing the
 code word.

Mike begins to unravel the cipher by figuring out the first line is 'Dear Mike,' which he writes on the other sheet. He starts to work.

Time passes and multiple shots of Mike reading old LETTERS from Fergus, reading books on ciphers, and thinking and being defeated in different positions are shown.

As Mike is falling asleep in his desk chair, he hears Alpha's voice again but it is distorted and frightening.

ELDRITCH VOICE (CHARACTER:
 ALPHA) (V.O.)
 Nnnnnneeeeeewwwwwmmmmmmmmmaaaannnn.

Mike falls asleep.

INT. MIKE'S DREAM - VORTEX

A calm vortex of blues purples and greens in dark shades appears around Mike. Small white droplets whiz past him and are elongated to look like he is traveling past them quickly, but Mike is stationary. Mike looks around him, he is not used to being so conscious during a dream. The end of the vortex is dark, pure black. Mike squints, he sees someone walking toward him from the end.

Alpha approaches him. Alpha's irises are rimmed in black but white like the rest of his eye. However, rainbow colors swirl in them as if they are the reflection of sunlight on oil. As Alpha walks, it's as if he is stepping on a surface of similar design to his irises that appears as he steps and disappears when he moves again. Ripple effects make it appear like a liquid.

ALPHA
 Ah, Dr. Newman... I was wondering
 when you might join me.
 (Beat)
 Congratulations on surviving that
 crash. Fine work, there.

MIKE
 It was real.
 (Beat)
 (MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

Yeah piss off, whoever the hell you are. You were gonna let me die!

ALPHA

Like I said, Dr. Newman. I am a businessman. And business is never personal. I offered you a deal and you refused. My hands were... metaphorically tied.

Mike gazes around him.

MIKE

Yeah right sounds like a convenient excuse.

ALPHA

I do... apologize, Dr. Newman. Let us start fresh. I hope you'll see how... reasonable I can be.

MIKE

Whatever. Where the hell am I? Is this a dream?

ALPHA

No, Dr. Newman... it isn't. I've brought you to a higher plane of existence to communicate with me.

MIKE

(Angrily)

A higher plane of existence?! What is going on? Even if this is all true, you still haven't answered my question, so... I ask again... who the hell are you?

Alpha furrows his brows.

ALPHA

I don't know that I appreciate your tone, Dr. Newman. It is not conducive to a... proper business environment.

EXT. BEACH - MIKE'S DREAM

Alpha dislikes Mike's tone. The calm vortex disappears and the world around them transforms into a BEACH on a beautiful tropical island. ALPHA materializes before MIKE and SNAPS HIS FINGERS.

On the horizon, a fiery red torrent rushes towards them as if it is an explosion but in the form of a tidal wave. Alpha looks at Mike.

Mike feels the heat coming, he's unsure if this is a dream or not but he feels his skin getting hotter, and he begins to sweat. Part of his hands get sunburnt.

ALPHA

You're lucky... you're special.

The tidal wave stops on the horizon. Alpha brings them back to the vortex.

INT. VORTEX

ALPHA

Now let us discuss another deal. It is one of mutual cooperation. Information for information.

MIKE

What information could I possibly have? And how do you expect me to trust you? You won't even tell me your name.

ALPHA

How do you name one who is nameless?

MIKE

You're... you're not God are you?

ALPHA

No... but to your kind, I understand how I could appear that way.

MIKE

An alien then?

ALPHA

You could say that.

MIKE

(Muttering to himself)
Extraterrestrials. This is astounding. Either this is all real or a truly amazing dream.

(To Alpha)

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

Well, since you won't tell me your name... do you mind if I give you one?

ALPHA

I suppose you must address me as something if we do happen to... work together.

Mike thinks for a few moments.

MIKE

...What about... Alpha?

Alpha doesn't care one way or the other.

ALPHA

It will do, Dr. Newman. It will do.

MIKE

So... this new deal, tell me about it.

ALPHA

Allow me to offer you a tidbit... your friend, Fergus, was murdered. If you take my deal... I can show you... why.

MIKE

Murdered?! Are you kidding me?! How? I demand you tell me. Fergus was like a father to me! I have to know.

ALPHA

I'm sorry, Dr. Newman. The privileges of that knowledge come with a... mutually beneficial contract.

MIKE

Seriously. You're not going to tell me? Unbelievable.

ALPHA

No, Dr. Newman. It is a law of the universe. Conversion, exchange... nothing can be taken or given freely.

(Beat)

Especially when this information pertains to the secrets of the... cosmos.

MIKE

You're joking... there's no way
it's that big of a deal. There's no
way Fergus was wrapped up in
something so... unbelievable.

Mike gets excited, but tries to hide it. ALPHA smirks a bit,
he knows he's getting to him.

ALPHA

That and more. Which is why I want
to help you.

(Beat)

And all you have to do..... is
shake... my... hand.

Mike weighs the options and sticks out his hand, but doesn't
shake it yet.

MIKE

What do you want in return?

ALPHA

Nothing other than one favor, which
I will cash in at my leisure when I
deem the moment to be of value to
me.

MIKE

Let me take some time to think
about it.

Alpha is displeased that his deal is not being taken
immediately, but he maintains his composure and walks closer
to Mike.

ALPHA

I warn you not to wait, Dr. Newman.
That may have... adverse
consequences.

MIKE

No, I'd... like some time to think.
If you don't mind.

ALPHA

Allow me to offer you some advice,
Dr. Newman. A man with an advantage
holds more power in a negotiation
than one who is... desperate.

(Beat)

We'll be seeing one another soon.
I'll... be... waiting.

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT DAY

A knock at his DOOR wakes Mike from slumbering at his workbench. He hasn't seemed to make much progress on the letter and he seems shaken from the ordeal of his 'dream'.

A shadow of a beard now crests his face to indicate the passing of time. He wears a dirty white shirt which is shrouded by a light blue robe. His hair is greasy and unkempt.

Mike opens the door. Cory stands in the hallway.

CORY

Mike, I've been... good God you look terrible.

MIKE

(Groggy deadpan glare)
Thanks.

(Beat)

Whadda ya want Cory?

Mike turns away and goes into the kitchen. Cory follows and shuts the door.

CORY

Are you sure you're okay?

MIKE

Yeah I stayed up late and... I had a bad dream.

Mike looks down at his hands. They are indeed sunburnt. Mike studies them, perplexed. He begins to realize what happened to him was no mere dream.

CORY

Well, I called you three times and you didn't pick up.

Mike glances at the phone on the ground.

MIKE

(Still studying his hands)
Yeah, the phone. Yeah, I unplugged it. It was distracting me.

CORY

Can I come in?

MIKE

Sure, why not. I could use a break for a few minutes.

CORY

Man, you gotta clean up in here.

Cory takes a book off of one of the piles, and life fills Mike's eyes as he adopts a sort of idiosyncratic and vibrant personality for the next line only.

MIKE

Don't touch anything please. I know exactly where everything is.

CORY

Alright, but it's gross in here. No wonder you don't get company.

MIKE

(Defensive)

I get company.

CORY

How long do they stay before making up some excuse?

MIKE

Touché.

(Beat)

So, what brings you here, Cory?

CORY

Well, I have some exciting news. I... kinda asked Veronica to marry me.

MIKE

Judging by the fact that you said exciting, I take it that she said 'yes', right?

CORY

She did!

MIKE

That's... that's amazing. Congratulations.

Mike embraces Cory. Cory sniffs him and shudders at his vile smell, but keeps hugging his best friend.

CORY

I want you to be my best man.

MIKE

Of course. I'd be honored.

CORY

Me and some of the guys were gonna go out celebrating. I wouldn't dream of doing that without you, though.

The contentedness flees from Mike's eyes as he realizes he still has a project to do.

MIKE

I'd love to, Cory, but I've got a project I'm working on. I can't seem to figure it out. I can't just walk away from it.

CORY

Maybe I can help.

MIKE

I can't let someone who just has a Master's help me with this. This is advanced stuff.

CORY

Yeah yeah. I didn't get my doctorate like you, but at least I actually showed up to class.

(Beat)

Let me see it.

Mike leads Cory to his workbench.

MIKE

Fergus left me a note. His lawyer dropped it off at my Mom's house.

CORY

But he knew your address didn't he? You still wrote to the crazy coot for some reason.

MIKE

Yeah, he did. I think whatever is in this note is something he wanted to keep hidden. But I can't figure out why. Is someone searching the mail? Did he forget? Did he not want his lawyer to know my address? Something isn't adding up.

Cory studies the letter for a few moments.

CORY

Seems like it's a standard reverse
Vigenere cipher.

MIKE

Yeah, I got that far. But I can't
get anywhere without knowing the
keyword. I've tried everything I
could think of. His favorite food,
my name, his dog's name, and I
can't seem to get anywhere. It's
just gibberish every time!

Mike becomes frustrated and has to breathe a few times to
calm himself down.

CORY

Well, if he left it for you. It has
to be something that you and he
would know and no one else.

MIKE

Like what?

CORY

Something from childhood maybe?
Those lemon squares he used to make
us? No. That game he used to play
with us when he babysat? No.

(Beat)

Hey... what about Flugelhorn.

MIKE

Flugelhorn?

CORY

Yeah, you remember that was the
silly safe word he used with us on
the playground when we got hurt. He
told us it was his wife's safe word
too.

(Beat)

Which now that I think about it is
not all that funny.

MIKE

Let me give it a try.

Mike sits down and begins to decipher the code. He gets a few
words in and it seems to be working.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Cory... you're a genius!

CORY

'Bout time you admitted it.

Mike continues to piece together the letter. Eventually he finishes deciphering it. Mike gets up from his bench.

MIKE

Do you mind if I read it privately first? He left it for me... and I don't know what it's going to say.

CORY

(Respectfully)

Sure, I won't ask if you don't want me to.

Mike reads the letter in his head.

MIKE (V.O.)

Dear Mike,
I fear this may be my last letter to you. It seems someone has found out who I really am.

Mike's voice begins to mesh with Fergus' and fade while Fergus' grows louder.

MIKE AND FERGUS (V.O.)

But I'll never tell them what I know. I'll gladly give my life if it comes to protecting the secrets I have come to understand in my long somewhat miserable existence.

By now, Fergus' voice has overtaken the Voiceover.

FERGUS (V.O.)

If you're receiving this, it seems I'm already dead. How bleak a thought. But, I have one final message for you.
Due to your close association with me, they'll be watching you. Not those who killed me, but I would wager these folk trailing you are far more dangerous.
I can't tell you who they are or what they want since they'll know the second you know, you know? Keep an eye out for anything suspicious, and don't do anything out of the ordinary.

The camera focuses on the next line.

FERGUS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
But they will test you. Pray you
succeed.
I'll be watching you from up above,
Mike my boy. You were one of the
truest friends an old man like me
could ever wish for.
- Fergus.

Mike staggers back, understandably confused and concerned.

MIKE
Oh man.

Mike frantically rushes towards the window and peers out. He
sees nothing.

CORY
What did it say?

MIKE
Oh man.

Mike, freaking out, brings the deciphered letter to the sink.
He opens a drawer and pulls out a match box. He breaks a
match or two before he finally gets one lit. He burns the
letter in his sink.

Cory comes up next to him and watches the letter burn.

CORY
That bad huh?

MIKE
This isn't funny, Cory.
(Under his breath)
First that guy! Now this! Oh man!

CORY
You gonna tell me what's in the
letter?

MIKE
I... I don't know if I should. This
seems like it's my problem. I don't
want you to have this burden.

CORY
So you're not telling me.

Mike sighs.

MIKE

No. At least... at least not right now.

Cory places a sympathetic hand on Mike's shoulder. He laughs sarcastically after a beat.

CORY

If you're not gonna tell me. It'll be funny 'til you do.

Mike looks at Cory, irritated at his quips. Though his demeanor softens as he remembers that this is Cory's way of helping in situations. He softens more as he realizes it's working and gives Cory a kind smile.

MIKE

Fair enough.

CORY

Anyway, put some pants on. You need a drink. Like I said, we're all planning on celebrating.

MIKE

You're probably right. Give me a few minutes to shower and I'll be ready to go.

CORY

Great, I'll call the guys while you do!

Cory goes to plug Mike's phone back into the wall. MIKE has a bunch of plugs stacked in this one outlet. CORY sighs as he tries to figure out where it goes. Mike closes his bathroom door and the sound of water flowing from the shower is heard.

The sound of water from the shower meshes into the roaring water of a massive fountain.

EXT. CAESAR'S PALACE

The fountain flows as Mike, Cory, and three of their friends walk toward the casino. Big Band Jazz music begins to play in the background (in the style of Gershwin or Sinatra).

His friends are DEREK (26) average as average can be, white, goofy smile, math master like Mike and Cory. WILSON (28), olive skin, green eyes, on the taller side, depressed because his fiancée dumped him a few weeks ago. ALLEN (24), buzz cut, white, short, glasses, the 'responsible' one.

A billboard by the street has an advertisement for MAXWELL 'MUGSHOT' MONROE'S Las Vegas Show. He's (45), retired pro-wrestler, white, blonde hair, mutton chops, southern accent, wears a cowboy hat.

INT. CAESAR'S PALACE

The jazz turns into real people singing and playing up on a stage.

The inside is gorgeous. Mike and his friends don't get out all that much, so they're content to be in a place so awesome.

Many people are playing on period accurate slot machines, at blackjack tables, and at poker tables. Most people are dressed casually. There are some who are in very elegant dress.

In the background (the camera should not zoom or pan) there is a beautiful blonde woman in a black dress with a diamond necklace. She smokes a cigarette. It's AGENT MATHERS in disguise. She'll appear in the background a few times before she speaks to anyone.

DEREK

Congrats, Cory! I don't know why
Veronica's with your dumbass, but
Mazel Tov!

WILSON

(Depressing as ever)
Yeah, congrats Cory. I hope you're
happy.

ALLEN

Cory, I'm so happy for you. Just to
let you know, I gotta get back by
11:00. It is a Monday.

CORY

Derek, Wilson, Allen, Mike. Y'all
have fun however you want. Tonight
is my treat. Unless y'all do
something dumb or win it big.

MIKE, ALLEN, DEREK, WILSON

(Variations on:)
Yeah, woo, sweet, etc.

The jazz music picks up in volume and a few vignettes occur. Actors are encouraged to improv lines for the following portions.

INT. BAR

Mike and all the others hit the bar first. For Mike it's scotch, Cory is a vodka man, Derek likes fruity drinks, Wilson orders a golden lager but they're all out, so he gets Guinness instead. Allen orders a coke, he has to drive home.

They toast to CORY's news and head out elsewhere. Agent Mathers sits at the bar and observes them casually.

INT. SLOT MACHINE ROOM

Derek sits down and wins \$300. Wilson takes the one machine next to him and doesn't win anything. Mike leans over to Allen and tries to get him to drink something. ALLEN refuses, but looks tempted. Cory is the glue that holds them together, big smiles, laughing.

INT. JAZZ ROOM

Mike and the others take a table where the band is playing and order some food. Allen has a hamburger. Wilson orders a steak and Derek orders pizza. Mike chows down on some chicken wings and Cory polishes off some shish-kebabs. Agent Mathers sits at a table far in the back, eating some cheese sticks.

INT. POKER ROOM

The jazz music in the background gets very quiet as the five of them play poker against five other guys. It's very serious, they are invested in their cards. Even though they're drunk, they're still incredibly smart guys. Wilson and Allen are the first out. Three of the other randoms get out next round. Derek gets caught cheating and is escorted elsewhere by one of the waitresses. One random person is out during the next round. CORY is the next out. Then it's just MIKE left. Mike beats the other guy in a triumphant cheer with an incredible hand. The five friends, (except for Allen, and Derek who is getting talked to by the police in the background), get another round.

Their cheer is interrupted by a deep voice at another poker table.

MUGSHOT

Hey!

MUGSHOT is the man on the billboard, the retired pro-wrestler. He sits up and eyes them. He has four very muscular bodyguards with him dressed in black T-shirts with earpieces.

MUGSHOT (CONT'D)
Y'all seem to be havin' a good
night.

Mugshot's MEN eye them.

MIKE
Yessir, my pal here is getting
married.

MUGSHOT
Oh... how nice. Y'all are making
quite a lot of noise.

He stands.

MUGSHOT (CONT'D)
I don't like noise very much.

Allen realizes who this guy is.

ALLEN
We're terribly sorry, Mr. Mugshot
sir. We'll leave you and your
friends in peace.

CORY
Mugshot? Ain't he that pro-
wrestler?

Mike catches wind and whispers to Allen.

MIKE
He's the one that nearly murdered
five guys in the ring and they gave
him the nickname Mugshot right?
That Mugshot?

ALLEN
Yep. That one.

Wilson sighs and sees this as just another terrible addition
to his day.

WILSON
Yep, he's gonna beat us up.

Mugshot chuckles and comes over to them.

MUGSHOT
It seems my reputation precedes me.
But instead of doing as your friend
here suggests...

He cracks his knuckles.

MUGSHOT (CONT'D)
What say we settle our domestic
squabble with a round o' poker.
Winner takes all.

CORY
Thanks, but we should be...

MIKE
You're on! Come on guys.
(He turns to Wilson)
Wilson, go get Derek out of his
mess.

WILSON
Whatever.

Wilson talks to the OFFICER now talking to Derek.

CORY
'Scuse us a minute.
(Drags him over for a
sidebar)
You sure about this?

MIKE
Yeah, did you see how we cleaned
those other guys out? We got this.

CORY
I don't know how I feel about
challenging a lunatic to a game
we're sure we can win.

MIKE
What's the worst that'll happen?
There's guards and staff
everywhere. They even caught Derek
being... well Derek.

CORY
Ah... maybe you're right.

MIKE
'Course I am!
(Turns to Mugshot)
We're in!

MUGSHOT
We-he-hell, alright... then let's
rumble!

Mugshot, Mike and the eight others take seats around the table. A CASINO WORKER stands to officiate the game. Mugshot addresses the WORKER.

Many of the guards and official workers clear out to go to the KISS concert playing tonight.

MUGSHOT (CONT'D)
We'll be playing No-Limit Omaha
style. Whenever you're ready.

The worker doles out four cards to each player. Mike takes a gander at his cards. He has the Ace of Hearts, 3 of Clubs, Queen of Spades, and 3 of Spades. He does not react, but looks around at the others for any signs, he gets nothing aside from a disgruntled sigh from Allen.

Initial betting. Mugshot sits left of the worker. He puts in 8 chips. Four of his men put in increasing amounts. When it gets to Allen, he folds. Derek recklessly puts forty chips in. Cory cusses at him, but puts in forty-one. Wilson eyes Derek and follows the bid. Mike cautiously puts in forty-three by the time it gets to him.

The worker puts five cards face up on the table. As they do, Agent Mathers finally is shown on camera. She leans on a wooden rail in her elegant black dress. She smokes her cigarette and watches keenly.

The five cards put up on the table are face down. The worker turns three of them up. They are the 10 of Diamonds, the King of Diamonds, and the Jack of Hearts. Mike sees the best thing he can make is three of a kind. He shuffles his cards. Mugshot and his men raise the bet by another 10 up to 14 (One of the ones in the middle folds). Derek puts in an additional 5 making it 20, Cory raises by one, Wilson folds. Mike puts in one more chip.

Mugshot snickers. The worker turns over one more card. The Ace of Diamonds.

MUGSHOT (CONT'D)
Y'all are real interestin'. But
what say we raise the ante?

Mugshot pushes all of his chips but three into the pool. Everyone save for Cory and Mike fold. Mike is down to one chip left.

The worker turns over one more card. The 9 of Clubs.

Mugshot brushes his three chips in.

MUGSHOT (CONT'D)

All in.

CORY

All in.

Mike reshuffles. The best he's got is still 3 pair.

MIKE

All in.

WORKER

Gentlemen, your hands please.

Mike goes first.

MIKE

Three pair.

CORY

Flush.

Cory places down the 7 of Diamonds and the Jack of Diamonds.

Mike looks gleefully at Cory, they have a chance.

Mugshot laughs.

MUGSHOT

You almost had me beat there.
Almost.

He places down the Queen and Jack of Diamonds.

MUGSHOT (CONT'D)

Straight flush! My game!

The five friends look dejected. They put real money on this game.

Mugshot takes the chips and eyes them very intimidatingly.

MUGSHOT (CONT'D)

Now y'all get your asses outta my
room, and be quick about it.

They arise. Mike turns and takes note of the gorgeous Agent Mathers. He blinks once or twice and turns his head away but catches another glance. She acts as if she is paying him no mind.

They leave the poker room. Mathers casually follows.

CORY

Fuck man! We had real money on that game. Why did I let you talk me into this?

MIKE

Hey, its not like...

CORY

Not like what? I'm gettin' married. I can't be this reckless with my money anymore.

(Beat)

No, I'm... I'm sorry. I'm just angry. Gimme a few minutes to cool off. Y'all go hit the bar. I'll be back in a bit.

Cory heads off.

MIKE

You guys mad at me too?

ALLEN

WILSON

DEREK

No.

Yes.

It's whatever, man.

MIKE (CONT'D)

I gotcha. Well, you guys head to the bar. I have to go to the bathroom. I'll meet you all there.

The three head off.

EXT. BATHROOM DOOR

Mike exits the bathroom, feeling relieved, but still frustrated by the poker game. He starts to head for the bar. Leaning against the wall, is Agent Mathers. She is still smoking the same cigarette.

AGENT MATHERS

(MATHERS delivers all her lines with MIKE with a familiarity between close friends, an ounce of seduction / cuteness / elegance, informality, and with a vast majority of light-hearted nonchalance.)

That was some good playing there.

Mike gulps at seeing the gorgeous Mathers talking to him, but keeps his confidence up.

MIKE

Uh, thanks. Were you... watching us?

AGENT MATHERS

Yeah. You all held your own real good there. The name's Miranda.

She shakes his hand.

MIKE

Mike, nice to meet you.

AGENT MATHERS

How funny, I had you pegged for a Mike.

MIKE

Really, what about me gave it away?

AGENT MATHERS

Call it a... girl's intuition.

MIKE

Well, that's some head you got on your shoulders.

Two of Mugshot's MEN appear around the corner and approach the bathroom. Mathers notices and gets flummoxed.

AGENT MATHERS

Hey, I don't know you very well, and this might be a big ask, but do you wanna make out with me real quick?

MIKE

What?

AGENT MATHERS

(Referencing how hot she is. Yeah, she knows.)
Do you or don't you?

Mike nods as if he's on fire tonight.

MIKE

Yeah!

Mathers grabs onto Mike and makes out with him. She backs up into a wall, giving the illusion that he pushed her there.

Mike is loving every second of this. As soon as the bathroom door shuts, she stops and pushes him away gently.

AGENT MATHERS
Well, thanks for that.

MIKE
So, you wanna tell me what that was all about?

AGENT MATHERS
Okay, look. I didn't want to tell anyone this but...

She pulls a fake BADGE out of her POCKETBOOK. It says OFFICER MIRANDA JENNINGS.

AGENT MATHERS (CONT'D)
I'm an undercover cop. I work for the casino. I've been trailing Maxwell Mugshot Monroe since he got to Vegas. He's come to this casino every night and started picking on some poor group of friends just having a good time. Then he cleans them out for everything they've got. Tonight confirmed it for me. He's illegally rigging the game. I thought... maybe his men might be onto me, which is why I asked you to kiss me.

(Beat)
You're not... you're not bad by the way.

MIKE
So I'm told.

AGENT MATHERS
Come with me, before they leave again.

She takes his hand and guides him away from the Poker area.

EXT. SLOT MACHINE ROOM

The poker area is still visible a ways away.

AGENT MATHERS
Anyway, now that I have proof, I can bring Mugshot, his men, and probably that dealer into custody.
(Beat)
(MORE)

AGENT MATHERS (CONT'D)
Crap, I forgot, everyone who's not normally busy is on guard duty for the KISS concert.

Mathers runs up to a GUARD named DARYL passing by. She is too far away to hear, but she explains her situation. The other guard walks away apologetically.

AGENT MATHERS (CONT'D)
Damn it, Daryl is busy guarding the Swedish Ambassador.
(Beat)
So, listen, I don't think there's anyone else around who can actually help me right now. And I really wanna bring those sons of bitches in. Do you think you'd be willing to help?
(Mike goes to speak, she cuts him off before he does.)
I know it won't be easy. Mugshot has nearly killed people in the ring and his bodyguards have definitely killed people outside of it.

Mike takes a few seconds to think about it.

MIKE
Look, Miranda, I understand you've got a job to do. But this isn't my fight. He may have stiffed me, but the dude literally has a 10-inch knife on his belt. How did he even get that past security?

AGENT MATHERS
So, even though you've been wronged you don't want to get back at him or let other people know? His name will be in every paper in Vegas if we pull this off.

MIKE
Nah, it's... not a huge deal. I don't care about revenge or dragging a guy's name through the mud because he's an asshole. I'd like my money back, but I figure when the concert's over you'll have backup equipped for the task to get it back for me.

Mathers takes note of Mike's response. Her eyes clearly indicate that she thinks long and hard about his answer.

AGENT MATHERS
(Contemplatively)
...Good answer.

MIKE
(Beat)
So, anyway, I've got to get back to
my friends' party.
(He says the next line
very suavely.)
If you want to play hookey you're
welcome to join us.

As Mike finishes his next line, the sounds of CORY yelling at Mugshot in the background make him finish his words very slowly.

MIKE (CONT'D)
But I really need to find them...

Cory's words now are more audible as we see him in the poker room.

CORY
I bet you thought you were real
smart counting cards, and getting
the dealer here to give you a
better hand. But you didn't account
for the fact that we caught you,
you bastard.

MIKE
Shit! Cory!

MATHERS
Well, this wasn't supposed to happen.

Mike and Mathers both run to the poker room.

INT. POKER ROOM

Cory is clearly more drunk than he was before. He is definitely not thinking this through. He points a finger into Mugshot's chest.

MUGSHOT
You'd best think long and hard
before you start this, boy. You
don't know what your gettin'
yourself into. I step on pissants
like you for a livin'.

Cory laughs, drunk off of his behind and kicks Mugshot in the nuts. Simultaneously MUSIC from the JAZZ BAND in the Jazz room play.

INT. JAZZ ROOM

A shot of the musicians beginning to play up tempo chase music reminiscent of Buddy Rich and Woody Herman.

INT. POKER ROOM

MUGSHOT
That tears it!

Mugshot draws his KNIFE. He motions for two of his men to grab Cory. They manage to grab him in his inebriated state quite easily.

A few PEOPLE in the Poker Room get up from their tables and cautiously and make for the exit. Some complain to the workers, others run to go get help.

MUGSHOT (CONT'D)
Now, I'm gon' teach you a lesson
you won't soon forget!

Derek appears from the background and hits Mugshot with a CHAIR. The wrestler is left winded and a bit of blood emerges from a few wounds caused by splinters. Allen and Wilson are by his side.

Mugshot spits in their general direction.

INT. SLOT MACHINE ROOM

Mike and Agent Mathers run towards the commotion.

MIKE
You got a gun hidden in your bra or something?

AGENT MATHERS
No.

MIKE
You sure you can't get back up?

AGENT MATHERS
Told you, just us.

MIKE

Damnit! What can you do?

AGENT MATHERS

You'd be surprised!

Mathers smirks. She could break these foes into a thousand pieces and not even break a sweat.

INT. POKER ROOM

Mugshot punches Derek and knocks him out cold.

Two of Mugshot's men run over the poker table, heading for Allen and Wilson. One bodyguard slides over another poker table, knocking it over as he does.

Wilson hurls a TRAY left on one of the tables at one of the MEN. He swats it out of the air sending it clattering on the ground. One of the men picks up a CHAIR and rips one of the legs off. It's now a very spiky piece of wood.

Allen and Wilson run over tables and chairs, and their chasers do the same. They eventually meet up.

Their pursuers catch up to them. One man throws a punch at Allen, he ducks and it hits Wilson. Allen weaves through the legs of one of the men and books it.

WILSON

Damn it Allen! Where are you going?

Cory is held by Mugshot's men still. Mugshot dropped his knife when he was hit with a chair. He picks it up.

Cory is understandably very frightened.

Mugshot approaches Cory, snickering. A POKER CHIP flies through the air and hits Mugshot in the face, thrown by Mike.

MIKE

Hey, fatso! Time to ante up!

Mike throws another chip at the wrestler. Mugshot spins the knife in his hand, he's clearly been trained to use it.

MUGSHOT

I'm gon' enjoy this!

Mugshot leaps into the air and runs across the tables at breakneck speed. For a man of his size and stature, he is unbelievably light and quick on his feet.

Mugshot reaches Mike and jabs his dagger at him. Mike dodges, narrowly missing the blade that would have punctured his kidney.

Wilson gets punched again. He gets kicked by the other man and he falls over onto one of the tables. He is picked up by his lapel and kneed in the jaw. Wilson falls to the ground, heaving. The two MEN chuckle and approach him menacingly.

Allen appears from the background and hits one of the men with a full beer bottle. It shatters and immediately knocks him to the ground. The man bleeds profusely.

ALLEN

I finally ordered a drink!

Allen looks down at the bleeding man, horrified.

ALLEN (CONT'D)

Oh crap! I think I just killed a guy.

Cory struggles as the two men continue to hold him. A shadow appears behind them, it's Mathers but she's obscured by the lighting.

As Wilson and Allen fight, the other man roundhouse kicks Allen and he quite literally sails through the air about six feet.

Wilson shakily flips a TABLE and it lands on the man's feet. He yelps in pain, but just looks angrier now.

Mugshot continues to try to stab Mike. Mike dodges, trying to get a punch in, but missing the opportunity each time. He tries to sweep the legs, he tries jumping to other tables, but Mugshot is on him. He can't escape.

Out of nowhere, Agent Mathers flies through the air landing a sidekick on Mugshot's head. He falls down on the ground, unconscious in one strike.

Mike looks, the other two men grabbing onto Cory are unconscious on the ground.

MIKE

What the--?

Wilson screams in pain as the man hits him with another punch.

Mathers, sighs exasperatedly as if saying 'we're not done yet?', takes off one of her heels and sends it flying towards the last man standing. It hits him in the head hard and he falls to the ground, unconscious, like the rest of them.

Wilson falls to the ground and Allen helps him up.

MIKE (CONT'D)
You're.... You're amazing!

Mike looks at Mathers, clearly smitten.

AGENT MATHERS
Oh, uh, thanks.

She is not used to the praise and seems unphased by what she's done here.

Mike runs to Cory to make sure he's okay.

MIKE
Cory, what the hell were you thinking?!

CORY
They was counting cards, I saw 'em do it, but I didn't say anything. I wanted to... get our... money...

MIKE
I know pal, I know. But I think you've had just one too many. Let's get you outta here.

Mike takes Cory and drapes his arm over his shoulder.

CORY
Ooh, wait!

Cory reaches into Mugshot's pants and takes his wallet out. He grabs a few hundred dollar bills that were in there.

CORY (CONT'D)
Shhhh!

Cory laughs, the alcohol is doing a number on him.

Agent Mathers and Allen hold Wilson up, and they meet in the middle of the room. Derek is also conscious, Mathers resuscitated him. He walks behind them, holding his head.

AGENT MATHERS
Your friend here needs urgent care.
Get him to a hospital.
(MORE)

AGENT MATHERS (CONT'D)
I'll stay and tie these guys up
while we wait for more cops to get
here.

Wilson moans.

ALLEN
Who is--?

MIKE
Undercover cop. Long story.

WILSON
Remind me never to leave my house
again!

ALLEN
Alright, let's get out of here.

MIKE
Hang on, I'll catch up with you
guys.

Mike waits for his friends to be out of earshot, so it's just him and Mathers.

Mugshot AWAKENS behind them all. As the others walk away, he slinks out of the room quietly enough that no one can see or hear.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Thank you... I'm mean, for helping
my friends. You didn't have to do
that. And...

AGENT MATHERS
It's all part of the job. Or at
least what the job used to be.

MIKE
Is there anything I can do to repay
you?

AGENT MATHERS
Yes, actually. Would you mind if I
met up with you at the hospital?

MIKE
No, not at all. We'll go to the one
across the street. See you then.

Mike looks confused at her request, but pleased that he gets to see her again as he walks away.

INT. HOSPITAL

Mike, Cory, Allen, and Derek hold on to Wilson and bring him to the nurse at the front counter.

MIKE

Nurse, nurse, this man needs to go to the ER.

NURSE

What happened to him?

The Nurse goes on the intercom.

NURSE (CONT'D)

I need a stretcher stat!

Two ORDERLIES appear and help Wilson on the stretcher.

Allen turns to Mike.

ALLEN

Hey, I'm worried about Wilson, but I gotta get home, I have to work in the morning. Since Derek and Cory live down the street from me, I figured I'd drive them home. You okay waiting here until they give us some news?

MIKE

Yeah that's fine, I need to wait for Officer Jennings anyway. She wants to go over some things with me I think.

ALLEN

Great, let me know if we can press charges on those bastards. I'll be seeing you, Mike.

Cory hugs Mike goodbye.

CORY

I'm so happy.

MIKE

I know Cory, Veronica is a lucky girl.

CORY

No, I'm so happy you don't smell like a sewer anymore.

MIKE

Yeah yeah.

(Mike calls to Allen)

Hey Allen, make sure V knows 'this' isn't my fault.

('This' is in reference to Cory's inebriation.)

DEREK

See ya around.

Cory waves goodbye as Derek helps him out the door.

Mike turns around and sees Agent Mathers sitting in one of the waiting room chairs reading a magazine.

MIKE

How the hell did you get here so fast?

AGENT MATHERS

Hey did you see this Footloose movie? Apparently it's all about a dude who wants to dance. That's hilarious!

Mike sits down next to her.

MIKE

Did you turn Mugshot into the other officers?

AGENT MATHERS

No... I... lost him actually. I could have found him, but I decided he'd had enough torment for one night.

(Beat)

On the bright side, I handled his cronies.

INT. POKER ROOM

A few OFFICERS wander in with KISS memorabilia and look at the room. Mugshot's Men are tied very tightly to a bar.

OFFICER #1

What the--?

Mugshot's cronies don't regain consciousness. A note is attached to his chest. It says 'They did it!'

A few other Officers bend down to check for pulses. There aren't any. They go on their walkie talkies.

OFFICER #2

(Into the walkie talkie)
Requesting immediate back up. There have been 4 murders. Get an ambulance and detective Arnold over here now!

INT. HOSPITAL

MIKE

Great, so what did you want to talk to me about?

AGENT MATHERS

Would it be forward of me to say... you?

MIKE

Me? Wha... whaddaya mean?

Mike blushes ever so slightly.

AGENT MATHERS

Yeah, I was wondering what you do for a living?

MIKE

Well, I'm a senior engineer at a small company called Delfor Inc. We work on rocket propulsion for NASA, but you didn't hear that from me.

AGENT MATHERS

That's really cool! Favorite meal?

MIKE

Poutine, Donuts, Fried chicken, anything high in calories, really.

AGENT MATHERS

Great, let's get deeper. Do you think we're alone in the universe?

MIKE

Uh... I mean, statistically speaking the Drake equation predicts there's at least 30 other civilizations in the Milky Way alone.

(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)
I'd be lying if I said I had an
opinion one way or the other
though.

AGENT MATHERS
Interesting... well, last question.
Do you have any plans for the rest
of the night?

Mathers twirls a lock of her hair.

MIKE
Uhhh.....
(Mike questions if this is
really happening to him.
But he ignores everything
else and goes on to
say...)
Yeah, no, I'm free.

AGENT MATHERS
Great then, let's go.

Mathers stands and reaches for his hand.

MIKE
Go?

AGENT MATHERS
Back to your place.

MIKE
Uh... wait, I can't I have to make
sure Wilson is okay.

Mike rushes over to the counter.

MIKE (CONT'D)
Hey, nurse, I was just wondering
how long my friend's operation will
take.

The Nurse looks at Mike, then looks at Mathers.

NURSE
Well we'll keep him overnight. But,
buddy, you better go with that
hunny over there. I'll call ya if
anything happens.

Mike's desires win out and he goes back to Mathers.

MIKE
Yeah, let's go.

Mathers walks towards the door.

MIKE (CONT'D)
(Under his breath)
Damn it! Cory was right. I shoulda
cleaned up!

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT

The door to Mike's Apartment flies open. Mike and Mathers are making out very passionately. Mike moves towards the bedroom and opens the door, never stopping the kissing. He kicks it behind him when they're both inside.

INT. MIKE'S BEDROOM

Mathers pulls away and takes off her dress. She has on a fine black bra and panties. She pushes him onto the bed. Mike shuts off the lamp with a huge grin of disbelief on his face. As the lamp lights fade the scene also cuts to black.

INT. CASINO

The poker room has been closed off and Mugshot's men now lay in body bags.

The coronaries and officers are discussing in the main lobby a ways away. Mugshot enters through the back doorway quietly. Mugshot picks his knife up off the ground and puts it back in his sheath. He begins to hurry away.

Alpha appears and snaps his fingers. He stands in front of the back doorway.

ALPHA
Hello, Mr. Monroe.
(Beat)
How would you like to make a deal?

INT. MIKE'S BEDROOM - 4 HOURS LATER

Mathers lies next to Mike who is peacefully sleeping. A digital alarm clock next to Mike's head reads 3:32am. She opens her eyes almost as if some instinct in her has activated. She eases out of the covers without pulling them or making a noise and quickly puts on her dress over her bra. She grabs her POCKETBOOK from off the floor. Mathers creeps towards the door, not making a sound and goes into Mike's living room.

Mathers scans the area around her briefly before setting eyes on the workbench Mike had been sitting at prior to Cory coming into his home and taking him to Caesar's Palace. She spies the encoded LETTER that Mike never threw away or burnt, since he burnt the translation. She places her pocketbook on the bench. She grabs the letter gently and brings it over to the sink. She opens two or three drawers before finally finding the MATCHES. Mike keeps a CANDLE by the sink, she lights the matches and then the candle.

Mathers cautiously moves the letter over the gentle flame, revealing a heat encoded message on the back.

AGENT MATHERS
(Whispering, pleased with
herself)
You may be gone old man, but
luckily for me, I still know your
tricks.

Mathers reads the note.

FERGUS (V.O.)
Mathers,
Yeah, I know it's you. I never sent
these kinds of heat coded notes to
Mike.
How the hell did you get this off
of him? Knowing you, you probably
did some... less than savory things
to get where you are now. In any
event, I'm grateful you did.
Before you ask... no. I didn't
figure it out yet. The Infinity
Pool is a mystery still.
However, I think I was on the verge
of discovering its secrets before I
got offed.
If there is any man capable of
continuing my work, it's Mike. I'm
glad you took my recommendation to
heart. I implore you; invite him to
Dreamland. With him on the team,
Project Infinitum still has a
chance of success!
-Fergus.

Mathers sighs and relaxes her posture. She clearly knew Fergus well, and this is somewhat hard for her. She'll never feel emotions normally though, UMBRA has trained a lot of that out of her. Still, she contemplates his words.

AGENT MATHERS
You drive a hard bargain, old man.

Mathers returns to where she left her pocketbook and pulls out a small high-tech device that looks like a thin landline phone (no wires) with dots where the numbers should be, but with a sleeker design and chromium plate. She presses the COMMUNICATOR a few times. Each time she does, she dials a number and a green number flashes where she is touching.

AGENT MATHERS (CONT'D)
Praetor, Sir... it's time.

INT. MIKE'S APARTMENT - THE NEXT MORNING

Mike awakes to see no sign of Mathers. It's 5:22am so the sun is not up yet, but the sky is beginning to get lighter. Mathers' clothes and all traces of her are gone. Mike looks confused and disappointed. He gets out of bed, stretches, and stands up. He wears a white t-shirt and blue boxers. He groggily gets up and opens the bathroom door. He takes a leak in the toilet and runs his hands under the sink. He dries them with a towel. Mike proceeds down the (not even 6 ft. long hall) leading to his living room. He scratches his butt.

Mike notices his trash is full. He ties the bag and picks it up.

MIKE
(Under his breath)
Damn it... why is Cory always right?

EXT. MIKE'S APARTMENT

Mike brings the trash outside. Once he drops the bag in the communal bin, he turns back to his building and begins to walk inside.

A shadowy shape appears in some bushes and walks towards him, holding a knife. Mugshot sneaks up on Mike and punches him in the head. Mike falls to the ground and looks up. He realizes what is happening, but it's too late.

MUGSHOT
Die, you damn prick!

Mugshot's knife barrels down at Mike's chest with fury and speed.

Just as the knife is about to make contact... time freezes.

Alpha appears from the shadows.

ALPHA

It appears we meet again, Dr. Newman. You have quite the penchant for danger. Except this time your situation seems a bit more... desperate.

Mike can't move again, his eyes and his lips are the only things he remotely has control over.

Mike glances around him looking for any way he can get out of this situation. He doesn't see any.

ALPHA (CONT'D)

For the final time... I offer you a deal.

MIKE

What... want? One... favor?

Alpha chuckles.

ALPHA

Oh, no Dr. Newman. Given that you hold far less of an impressive hand now... I am altering the deal.

(Beat)

I did warn you not to wait, didn't I?

Mike desperately looks up at Mugshot's unmoving face with hatred written upon it.

MIKE

What... want... then?

ALPHA

It appears you have no choice but to shake my hand... and find out... for yourself.

Mike contemplates Alpha's words. He cannot move his hand entirely, but the audience does see his fingers twitch ever so slightly before the scene cuts to black.

CUE: END CREDITS