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1

INT. NORTHERN W.A. URANIUM MINE - NIGHT

In the inky depths of a uranium mining tunnel, PACE MUNDHI--*mid-twenties, quiet awkward type, of mixed Swedish and Indian descent*--opens his eyes, blinking away water. The rain that trickles down from rocks above keeps him squinting, unfocused.

A wider view of Pace reveals him strapped into an airlift stretcher, four SES VOLUNTEERS buzzing about securing the rig while a pair of PARAMEDICS see to his vitals--one holding an IV bag over his head.

The reflective strips and helmet-mounted flashlights cast a dim glow across the cramped tunnel, all the men balanced tentatively on its forty-five degree downward slope.

Pace, besides being covered head-to-toe in dirt, sports some painful-looking cuts and bruises.

PACE

This is the rescue, right?

VOLUNTEER #1

(into walkie)

Take him up.

Steel cables attached to the top of Pace's medevac stretcher tighten, then begin dragging him up the slope head-first.

The paramedics go with him, using ropes to keep their footing.

The volunteers descend deeper into the mine on those same ropes, treading carefully.

At the sight of floodlights growing brighter from above, Pace falls asleep.

A ringing phone slowly floods audio.

2

INT. PACE AND CALVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Pace, nine months younger than in the mine, clean-cut with shorter hair, sits on his living room couch next to housemate CALVIN SPENT, picking up a cordless handset.

PACE

Hello?

3

INT. JOHANSEN AND KATE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

KATE is curled up in a recliner, the chair surrounded by crumpled tissues.

She cries into her phone.

KATE

Pace...

4 INT. PACE AND CALVIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Pace scowls.

PACE

(looking at Calvin)

Oh *hey* Kate.

Calvin rolls his eyes.

PACE

What's up?

5 INT. JOHANSEN AND KATE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kate struggles to talk between sobs.

KATE

Joey's missing.

Fade out.

6 EXT. GREAT NORTHERN HIGHWAY - ROAD HOUSE - PRE-DAWN

OPERATOR (V.O.)

(on phone)

Will you accept charges from Pace  
Mundhi?

Fade in.

Pace stands at a public phone box, listening to the  
earpiece.

The highway stretches out straight to the horizon, north  
and south.

MRS. MUNDHI (V.O.)

(on phone)

Of course. Pace?

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Go ahead.

PACE

Hi mum.

MRS. MUNDHI (V.O.)

I've been trying to call you.

PACE

Yeah, I haven't had reception since Kalgoorlie.

MRS. MUNDHI (V.O.)

Did you find him?

PACE

I'm not even there yet.

MRS. MUNDHI (V.O.)

Stay in touch with us okay?

PACE

I'll call tomorrow when we stop.

MRS. MUNDHI (V.O.)

Be good. Don't smoke!

PACE

I won't.

He hangs up, lighting a cigarette.

7 INT. PACE'S CAR - PRE-DAWN

Pace drives his beat-up Pulsar north with Calvin in the passenger seat, the moon setting beyond cliffs through his window.

8 EXT. GREAT NORTHERN HIGHWAY - PRE-DAWN

Storm clouds roll in on the horizon as the old car struggles toward them, dwarfed.

9 INT. PACE'S CAR - DAWN

Calvin drives while Pace sleeps, curled into the passenger window.

He slowly wakes, looking around, at Calvin, then the road, being eaten up by the cracking, discolored dashboard.

10 EXT. IRON ORE RIDGE OUTER LIMITS - DAWN

The Pulsar crests a hill, revealing lights, sprawled across the horizon ahead.

11 INT. IRON ORE RIDGE ROAD HOUSE & COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

Calvin leafs through postcards on a revolving rack while Pace stands at the unmanned counter waiting to be served.

MELODY--early twenties, naive but grounded, attractive without being stunning in her apron and sensible shoes--hurries to the register from the diner's rear.

MELODY

Sorry, what can I get you?

PACE

Just two steak sandwiches.

She rings it up.

MELODY

Eleven-eighty.

He hands her a twenty.

MELODY

Where are you guys heading?

PACE

Here actually. Into town.

MELODY

Well if you're looking for accommodation the caravan park is a shithole but it's cheap, or there's a nice motel about four blocks over, but don't let them give you room twelve.

PACE

Haunted?

MELODY

Prostitutes use it.

PACE

Ah.

MELODY

There *is* a hotel in the middle of town but the rooms are over a bar the miners all go to, it gets pretty rowdy.

PACE

Good to know.

Calvin joins them.

MELODY

Should be about ten minutes.

She goes back in rear, leaving them alone.

Calvin grins at Pace.

PACE

The fuck's wrong with you?

CALVIN

She seems nice.

PACE

Fuck off.

12

INT. REAL ESTATE AGENT'S OFFICE - MORNING

Calvin stands at the receptionist's desk in a small real estate agent's office. The agent sitting behind it stares blankly at him.

CALVIN

I'm not saying I won't be in the room with one.

REAL ESTATE AGENT

Okay.

CALVIN

You'll have to wait until my friend gets back, I don't actually know his number, because of the whole phone issue.

REAL ESTATE AGENT

Right.

A long, awkward silence.

CALVIN

He'll be right back, he's just parking the car. For a quiet north-westerly kind of town, you guys don't have a lot of parking.

REAL ESTATE AGENT

Sure.

CALVIN

What did you say your name was?

Pace enters, defusing the moment.

CALVIN

She says we'll need a deposit.

PACE

(to Calvin)

How much?

(to agent)

Sorry, how much?

REAL ESTATE AGENT  
Two hundred.

Pace removes his wallet, counting it out.

PACE  
And we can take it today?

REAL ESTATE AGENT  
After midday, the current tenant  
is moving out.

He hands her the cash.

REAL ESTATE AGENT  
I'll also need a telephone number  
where I can contact you.

He fishes in his coat pocket for a business card, placing  
it down on the desk.

PACE  
That one's current. So is there  
anything to do in this town while  
we wait?

REAL ESTATE AGENT  
I can't think of anything.

Pace shoots a glance at Calvin, who shrugs.

PACE  
Okay, well... I'm sure we'll  
figure something out. Thanks for  
your time.

They go to leave.

CALVIN  
Dude, keys.

Pace turns.

PACE  
(to agent)  
Oh yeah. Keys?

REAL ESTATE AGENT  
Mr. Cumberland has them at the  
property, you'll need to catch  
him before he leaves I guess.

PACE  
Okay. Thanks again.

CALVIN  
Address, dude.

PACE

Oh yeah... um, where is this place?

The agent stifles a sigh.

13

EXT. IRON ORE RIDGE RENTED HOUSE - DAY -8

Pace and Calvin stand beside his car in the driveway of an aging townhouse. The yard is unkept, with gutters rusting and gardens overgrown.

MR. CUMBERLAND pulls out of the drive in his rusted-out, loaded-down VW Beetle, halting briefly beside them, giving them a long, stern look.

MR. CUMBERLAND

Don't spend too long here, guys.  
This town will eat your soul.

CALVIN

What, literally?

Cumberland frowns.

MR. CUMBERLAND

Well... no.

He backs out of the driveway, pulling away. They approach the house, noticing its shittiness.

PACE

Maybe we should have taken a look before paying the deposit.

CALVIN

Yeah, seems like something smart guys would do.

PACE

It's probably nicer inside.

CALVIN

You got the keys off that guy, right?

PACE

Shit.

CALVIN

It's okay. I've seen people break into houses on TV.

14 INT. IRON ORE RIDGE RENTED HOUSE - DAY

Pace and Calvin enter through the laundry door, kicking away broken glass from the small busted out window beside it. They explore the house room by room--eugally shitty inside. Ancient fixtures and decor furnished with items right out of a 50's World Fair, left to rot and gather dust ever since.

CALVIN

On the plus side, we may only be here a few days.

Pace enters the kitchen, followed by Calvin.

PACE

I call this room.

Pace's phone rings. He takes it out, looking a moment, before silencing it.

CALVIN

Gotta talk to her sometime brosef.

PACE

Let's go see the cops first. Make sure this is even a real thing.

15 EXT. IRON ORE RIDGE POLICE STATION - DAY

Establishing shot, the unimpressive police precinct on the main road of Iron Ore Ridge--a small north-western W.A. Uranium-mining town of several thousand, located by the Iron Ore River.

16 INT. IRON ORE RIDGE POLICE STATION - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Pace sits opposite a pair of Iron Ore Ridge Police OFFICERS, all three drinking black tea from polystyrene cups.

OFFICER #1

I'm not sure I understand why you're here, Pace.

PACE

Just to keep up to date with the investigation. My parents want me close, in case you guys find anything.

OFFICER #1

We were hoping you might be able to shed some light on a few of your brother's friends.

PACE

(beat)

I guess. We're not really close anymore, I only know his wife Kate.

The officers say nothing, sharing a glance.

PACE

Have you spoken to Kate?

The second officer writes in his notebook.

OFFICER #1

She wasn't really helpful.

PACE

Yeah that sounds like her.

OFFICER #2

We need to know that you're not looking to cause problems here in town. Johansen's disappearance is kind of a sore subject now. It's caused a lot of tension and negativity.

PACE

(confused)

No, of course... I just want to help find him.

OFFICER #1

Leave that part to us, and we'll let you know if there's anything further you can clarify.

INT. PACE'S CAR - DAY

Pace and Calvin sit in his parked car, eating takeaway food.

Pace sighs.

PACE

I guess we can't put this shit off any longer.

CALVIN

We can try?

Pace packs up his rubbish then tosses it to Calvin, lights a cigarette, and starts the car.

18 EXT. JOHANSEN AND KATE'S HOUSE - IRON ORE RIDGE - AFTERNOON

Pace's car pulls into the driveway of a small brick house in the thick of Iron Ore Ridge's suburban sprawl.

19 INT. PACE'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Pace and Calvin sit there for a long moment, watching the house.

Eventually, Kate appears at the front door.

PACE  
(long sigh)  
In and out. Let's roll.

20 EXT. MUNDHI FAMILY HOME - AFTERNOON (FLASHBACK)

Pace, *seventeen years old* here, walks up the driveway of his home dressed in private school uniform, lugging a backpack.

21 INT. MUNDHI FAMILY HOME - AFTERNOON (FLASHBACK)

Pace enters the house, dropping his school bag.

Walking through to the kitchen, he finds KATE--late twenties, attractive, sociopathic but hides it well--leafing through magazines at the counter.

KATE  
Hey.

PACE  
Where is everyone?

KATE  
Joey went to pick up dinner and your parents are still at work.

A long, uncomfortable silence, as tension becomes evident between them.

Pace walks past her, loosening the school tie, going upstairs.

Kate follows.

22 INT. JOHANSEN AND KATE'S HOUSE - IRON ORE RIDGE - AFTERNOON

Pace and Calvin sit on the living room sofa, while Kate stands in front of the TV, sipping coffee.

KATE

These people are like a cult. You don't understand the kind of influence they exert on your brother. They have him taking drugs and going on month-long nature walks.

PACE

What are they, some sort of hippy commune?

KATE

It goes deeper than that.

PACE

Deeper like, spiritually?

KATE

A lot of the people live here in town. Some work for the mine. Others live on a compound across the river.

PACE

And you're saying Jo's gone and joined them there?

KATE

I don't know *where* he is.

PACE

When was the last time you talked to him?

KATE

He called here on Monday. He said to sell the house and go back to Perth without him.

PACE

Why? What happened between you two?

KATE

Nothing.

Pace seems doubtful.

KATE

We had a fight... about the group. I told him he needs to be here at home now. We have a...

She trails off, distracted.

PACE

A what?

KATE

Sorry?

PACE

You have a what?

KATE

We have a baby on the way.

PACE

(long pause)

You're pregnant.

KATE

Yeah.

PACE

It's... his?

KATE

Of course.

Pace looks at Calvin.

PACE

And he knows this?

KATE

We've known for a month.

PACE

But he left you anyway.

KATE

He didn't leave. They took him.

PACE

Hippies generally don't take  
people against their--

KATE

They're not fucking hippies okay?  
They are dangerous, determined  
people... who subverted Joey's  
better judgment. I'm worried that  
if you don't find him and talk  
some sense to him, he may not  
have a family to come back to.

PACE

(annoyed)

Look I don't know what the deal  
is between the two of you right  
now, but the last thing I plan to  
do is get in the middle again...

(MORE)

PACE (cont'd)  
 if he feels the need to let off  
 steam with the local ravers, good  
 luck to him. Maybe he needs time  
 to think.

Pace stands.

PACE  
 (to Calvin)  
 Let's motor Cal.  
 (to Kate)  
 I can't believe you made us come  
 all the way up here for this weak-  
 ass shit. Leave the guy be, he's  
 not hurting anyone.

Calvin follows Pace to the front door.

CALVIN  
 Nice seeing you again, Kate.

23 EXT. IRON ORE RIDGE STREET - AFTERNOON

Pace's car speeds back toward the center of town.

24 INT. PACE'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Pace leans forward over the wheel, driving aggressively.

PACE  
 Man *fuck* her! No wonder my  
 brother ran off, that bitch just  
 locked him into a lifetime  
 contract.

CALVIN  
 Where do you think he went?

PACE  
 Who knows. No doubt we're only  
 getting half the story. I dunno.  
 Something smells like fish.

CALVIN  
 Should we at least check things  
 out with Jo before leaving?

Pace's demeanour softens.

PACE  
 Probably.

A long pause.

PACE

I haven't even seen him since the wedding.

25

EXT. SHELL SERVICE STATION - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Pace, seventeen again, stands in the service station's car park, next to a hired Rolls Royce decorated with wedding streamers. He wears a tuxedo with hair neatly combed, and shouts into a cell phone.

PACE

We're seriously like *five* minutes away, mum! Tell them to take her around the block a few more--yes, I said we're coming okay?!

He flips it closed, anxiously looking toward the station's tinted automatic door.

After a moment it opens, revealing Johansen--late twenties, clean-cut with a quiet dignity, same mix as Pace--also dressed in wedding tux.

PACE

(shouting)  
Come on bro!

Johansen jogs to the Rolls.

26

INT. ROLLS ROYCE - DAY -10

In the back of the now speeding Rolls, Johansen eats breath mints while Pace adjusts his brother's tux jacket and tie.

PACE

Okay you're moneyed-up.

Johansen stares nervously through his window.

JOHANSEN

You have the ring, right?

PACE

Of course.

Pace pats his breast pocket, double-checking.

Pace's eyes dart about the interior. He seems ill-at-ease.

After a long time he looks at Johansen.

PACE

So I know this is the worst time possible, I know this is like, the biggest day of your life, and right now your head needs to be in the game... but there's something I've been putting off telling you for a really long time, and inappropriate as the moment may be, it can only happen now.

JOHANSEN

Okay?

PACE

There's something about Kate you need to know.

JOHANSEN

She cheats on me.

Pace says nothing, just slowly shakes his head looking mildly confused.

PACE

(restrained)

You know.

Johansen smiles, only a little sad.

JOHANSEN

It doesn't matter.

PACE

It--doesn't?

JOHANSEN

Not after today.

A brief silence.

PACE

You think she's just going to stop now?

Johansen breaks his gaze.

JOHANSEN

Probably not.

PACE

Then... why?

JOHANSEN

(shrugs)

I can't live without her.

(MORE)

JOHANSEN (cont'd)

All I really *can* do is accept my wife, flaws and all.

PACE

You've thought this through mate?

JOHANSEN

It's all I've thought about for the last nine months.

PACE

(surprised)

How would you know she's been doing it for--oh, right yeah, the engagement.

They drive a while in silence.

PACE

Jo... I guess it's like this. Whatever happens, I'll back you up. I just hope you know what you're doing is all.

Pace turns away, watching the scenery fly by outside as they near the church.

ROLLS DRIVER

Thirty seconds, gents.

JOHANSEN

Ready for this?

PACE

Are *you*?

Johansen nods.

PACE

Okay.

As they pull into the driveway, Pace tucks a cigarette behind his ear.

27

INT. IRON ORE RIDGE ROAD HOUSE & COFFEE SHOP - AFTERNOON

Pace and Calvin wait at the unmanned register, Melody running from the back once more.

MELODY

Sorry, sorry--hi again. What can I get you?

PACE

Actually nothing this time, I was kind of hoping you could tell us about the hippy commune across the river.

MELODY

Hippy commune? Ummm... unless that's new I'm pretty sure someone is messing with you.

PACE

Well, it's kind of a long story but my brother has gone missing and my sister-in-law seems to think he's shackled up with some hippy cult across the river.

CALVIN

Apparently they're into nature walks.

PACE

And drugs.

CALVIN

Yeah drugs too.

Melody seems to close up, fidgeting with the register.

MELODY

No... sorry.

PACE

No worries. Cheers.

She watches them leave.

28

EXT. IRON ORE RIDGE OUTSKIRTS - AFTERNOON

Pace's car cuts a swath between two large, tree-spattered hills on a narrow, well-maintained limestone road.

29

INT. PACE'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Pace drives Calvin through the countryside, passing isolated houses amongst the hills every now and then.

30

EXT. MCPHERSON GROUP RURAL ACREAGE - AFTERNOON

Establishing shot--a large seven-bedroom house set back half a kilometer from the limestone road, its modest boundary-marker wire fence and cattle gate secured by an unlocked chain distracting the eye from the taller, electrified fence and rolling steel gate a hundred metres behind it.

A small intercom box sticks out of the ground beside the cattle gate. A rusted-shut letterbox sits atop the gate's pine fence post, overflowing with rain-faded junk mail.

Pace's car approaches the property from way down the limestone road.

31

INT. MCPHERSON GROUP RURAL HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Just inside the large house's front doors, a kid--OWEN, sixteen, unphased by most things and a deep thinker--leans back against the entry wall, sitting on the floor lazily peering outside through the narrow vertical windows that adorn either side of the hefty double-locked doors, floor-to-ceiling.

He sits up suddenly, watching through the glass as Pace's car pulls up outside the property's outer fence.

Owen turns to the house's dark interior.

OWEN

(shouts)

Visitor!

(beat)

Visitor!

ANDRE--stiff, methodical, borderline OCD--walks in quickly from the adjoining room, peering out through those windows on the other side. He looks at the intercom box beside the door, waiting for it to come to life.

As if on cue...

PACE (V.O.)

(on speaker)

Hello?

Andre looks at Owen, who shrugs.

Andre presses the button, speaking into the intercom.

ANDRE

Hello.

PACE (V.O.)

I know this may seem like a weird question, but are you guys in there... like, holding? Do you give free drugs to random cunts and then kidnap them?

Calvin can be heard laughing in background.

Andre shoots Owen another glance. Owen nods, running into the darkened house.

ANDRE

I'm sorry?

PACE (V.O.)

Yeah... that's what I thought.

ANDRE

If you don't mind my asking... who sent you here?

PACE (V.O.)

An idiot named Kate.

ANDRE

Kate who?

Owen returns, followed by ASH--a tall, charismatic man who exudes warmth and carries himself with confident, quiet grace--both standing beside Andre.

PACE (V.O.)

Don't worry. You don't know her.

Andre peers through the window again, watching Pace return to his car, U-turning on the road, going back the way they came.

Andre turns to Ash.

ANDRE

I don't know what this means?

32

INT. IRON ORE RIDGE RENTED HOUSE - PACE'S ROOM - NIGHT

In his new bedroom, Pace sleeps curled up against the drywall on a bare mattress and wire frame.

A shaft of moonlight provides the ambient glow.

Pace stirs as a silhouette crosses the room to his bed, casting shadow across it.

He wakes to see Johansen standing over him.

JOHANSEN

Pace.

Pace rubs sleep from his eyes, blinking in the half-light.

PACE

Jo?

He sits up, squinting at his brother.

PACE

What the hell, man?

JOHANSEN

Come on.

Johansen exits, toward the front of the house.

Pace staggers out of bed, getting dressed.

33

INT. MUNDHI FAMILY CAR - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Pace rests in the back seat of his parents' luxury sedan, returning from the wedding. Both his PARENTS are silent up front, having grown weary of each other decades ago.

Pace's ringing cell phone startles him. He answers it without looking at caller ID.

PACE

Hello?

JOHANSEN (V.O.)

(on phone)

Hey bro.

PACE

Hey. Shouldn't you be... doing stuff?

JOHANSEN (V.O.)

I need to ask you something, and I want you to give me the honest truth.

PACE

O--okay. What's up?

JOHANSEN (V.O.)

How did you find out?

PACE

Sorry?

JOHANSEN (V.O.)  
The thing you told me in the car  
today... how do you know about  
it?

KATE (V.O.)  
(in background, faint)  
Jay?

Pace swallows hard.

PACE  
She's in the room with you now?

KATE (V.O.)  
(faint)  
Who are you talking to?

JOHANSEN (V.O.)  
She is.

PACE  
Does she know we're having this  
conversation?

JOHANSEN (V.O.)  
She doesn't.

KATE (V.O.)  
(louder)  
Who's on the phone?

JOHANSEN (V.O.)  
Just a minute.

PACE  
Jo, we're still on our way home  
from the reception. Maybe I can  
call you back when we get--

JOHANSEN (V.O.)  
Sorry. That's just not going to  
work for me.

Pace looks out front, noticing his father glance at him in  
the rear-view.

PACE  
We can't do this anytime other  
than right now?

Silence.

Pace curls up against the window, phone pressed hard to his  
ear.

PACE  
Jo?

The calm, steady sound of his brother's breath is the only sound.

Tears begin to flow for Pace.

PACE

Jo...

The line cuts out.

Pace stifles a sob as more tears come, holding the phone there, hiding his face while they turn right at traffic lights.

His father watches him in the rearview, eyes sternly burning.

34

EXT. IRON ORE RIDGE BAR & HOTEL - NIGHT

Pace and Johansen sit opposite each other at a booth in the town's main dive bar, both nursing beers.

Nearby, MINERS play pool, others sit at the bar and tables.

PACE

Why does Kate think you're missing?

JOHANSEN

Go home.

PACE

Go home. Yeah. That's great. I can't go home, Jo. Not until I know what's going on up here.

JOHANSEN

You lost the right to know about our private lives a long time ago.

PACE

Hey man, I was happily minding my business in Perth until Kate called. Now she's telling me you're hooked up with some cult and coked out on dissociatives or some shit? What am I supposed to think? What do I tell mum and dad?

JOHANSEN

Tell them what you like.

PACE

So this is how it's gonna be between us forever now?

Johansen stands, leaving cash on the table.

JOHANSEN  
Go home, Pace. I'm not asking.

He goes to leave, pausing.

JOHANSEN  
No one wants you here.

Now he walks away.

Pace watches him exit the bar, chugging the rest of his beer.

The miners playing pool also watch, their attention settling on Pace when his brother is gone.

Pace frowns at them, obtuse.

They return to their game, mildly amused.

35 EXT. IRON ORE RIDGE STREET - NIGHT

Pace's Pulsar is the only vehicle on the roads at around three a.m.

Indicating right, it slows, nearing an intersection.

36 INT. PACE'S CAR - NIGHT

Pace yawns, the ticking indicator flooding audio.

Pace's POV through the windscreen as a MASKED MAN steps out into his path.

He slams on the brakes.

37 EXT. IRON ORE RIDGE STREET - NIGHT

The car slides to a halt feet from the man--who lets a crowbar slip down out of his sleeve, into his gloved hand.

Pace stares at the man, wide-eyed, mouthing "What the fuck?"

Behind his balaclava, the man stares back.

Suddenly the man steps forward, swinging the bar twice, knocking out both headlights.

The masked man walks around to the passenger side, smashing that window, then the one behind it.

While Pace twists in his seat to watch with disbelief, the stranger calmly strolls to the back of the Pulsar, taking out both its tail lights.

Finally he comes around to the driver's side, destroying the rear window, then stopping by Pace's.

The man leans over, tapping on the glass softly with the crowbar.

Pace winds it down, perplexed.

PACE

Hi.

MASKED MAN

Pace Mundhi?

PACE

(hesitant)

Yeah?

MASKED MAN

Leave town, okay?

PACE

What?

The man turns to the car's rear, walking away, back toward the center of town.

Pace winds the window up, watching him in the side mirror.

The masked man stops as if forgetting something, walking back to Pace's window.

With a casual swing of the bar he smashes it, giving Pace a plexiglass shower.

The man walks away again.

Pace sits there for a long time, covered in the sparkling glass, indicator still ticking.

38

INT. IRON ORE RIDGE RENTED HOUSE - PACE'S ROOM - MORNING

Pace wakes in his new bedroom, staring at the wall where hard sunlight and shadows strike it.

Another shadow falls across him. He looks up to see Calvin.

CALVIN

So... jobs?

PACE

Okay.

CALVIN  
Any ideas?

PACE  
No.

Calvin shows him a newspaper, scrunched-up in the left hand.

PACE  
Anything but support.

39 INT. MCPHERSON GROUP RURAL HOUSE - MORNING

Andre strolls through the house's main hallway, tapping twice on each of the doors.

One by one, group MEMBERS exit the rooms, sleepy.

40 EXT. IRON ORE RIDGE MINING HEAD OFFICE - MORNING

Establishing shot. The large three-floor offices of Iron Ore Ridge Mining.

Parked across the street is a late model silver Toyota Camry.

Behind the wheel, sipping coffee, MATTIAS STOKES watches the building.

His attention is drawn to Pace's car, which slows as it approaches, parking right in front of the IORM offices.

He takes a small keno pencil from behind his ear, writing something on a pocket-sized notepad.

41 INT. IRON ORE RIDGE MINING HEAD OFFICE - MORNING

At the front desk, a RECEPTIONIST looks up when Pace and Calvin enter, both wearing wrinkled suits. The folded newspaper sticks out of Calvin's pocket.

CALVIN  
Hi.

RECEPTIONIST  
Hello.

Calvin points to his tie.

CALVIN  
We're here about the job?

RECEPTIONIST  
Which one?

CALVIN  
I.T. ...guy.

RECEPTIONIST  
Both of you?

PACE  
Yeah.

RECEPTIONIST  
I'll give Don a call, take a seat. Would you like me to make copies of your CVs?

CALVIN  
I don't know what that is.

PACE  
She means your resume.

CALVIN  
Oh. I don't have one of those.  
Not on me.

She punches buttons on her phone.

RECEPTIONIST  
Have a seat.

42

INT. IORM HEAD OFFICE - DON'S OFFICE - MORNING -7

Calvin sits opposite DON, at his unimpressive cluttered desk, reading over a single sheet of paper.

DON  
It says on your form that you worked "for a while", doing "a retail-type deal".

CALVIN  
Yeah that's right.

DON  
Would you care to... elaborate?

CALVIN  
Elaborate?

DON  
Can you tell me where it was that you worked?

CALVIN  
(long pause)  
Not... really.

DON  
(beat)  
Okay.

They sit there in silence a moment.

DON  
(reading)  
It says under interests that  
you've studied religions.

CALVIN  
Some.

Another uncomfortable silence.

CALVIN  
I looked into Salienism for a  
while. I guess I thought it was a  
path to enlightenment. It was  
just a path to another path.

DON  
I see.

CALVIN  
You've got to be pretty committed  
with all that.

DON  
I can imagine.

CALVIN  
Religion just seems to be a  
filter for God. The homogenized  
version of whatever raw  
spirituality might actually exist  
in things. I know that isn't  
anything ground-breaking, but  
it's the one universal truth that  
can be established in this arena.

DON  
Absolutely. So thanks for coming  
in, Kevin--

CALVIN  
Calvin. Did I put Kevin?

Don looks at the form briefly, shrugging.

DON  
(standing)  
We'll let you know.

Calvin stands, shaking Don's hand for a long time.

CALVIN  
 (intense)  
 You take care of yourself, Don. I  
 have a good feeling about this.

DON  
 (uncomfortable)  
 I will.

Calvin leaves the office, closing Don's door behind him.

DON  
 (whispered, subdued)  
 Ohhh-kayyy.

43 INT. IORM HEAD OFFICE - MORNING

Back in the lobby, Calvin sits down beside Pace.

PACE  
 How'd it go?

CALVIN  
 Pretty sure you have the job.

PACE  
 Any reason I can't be the decoy guy  
 and you do the shitty job?

CALVIN  
 Specialty skill. Anyone can do IT  
 support, but no everyone can be a  
 good decoy skill.

44 INT. IORM HEAD OFFICE - DON'S OFFICE - MORNING 3

Don looks over another form, Pace sitting where Calvin was.

DON  
 All of this is great, if anything  
 you may be a little *too*  
 qualified. You got your MCSE  
 through Starnet?

PACE  
 They have an accreditation  
 program in house, yeah.

DON  
 I'm going to be honest, Pace.  
 It's between you and one other  
 guy, and the other guy is off his  
 tree. The job is yours if you  
 want it.

PACE  
 (unconvincing)  
 Oh... I want it. Yeah.

45 EXT. IORM HEAD OFFICE - MORNING

Pace and Calvin exit the front door, returning to the parked car.

PACE  
 I think I'm gonna call that guy  
 and back out.

CALVIN  
 Just call your folks, they'll  
 send us cash. You're basically  
 here as a favour to them.

PACE  
 Hah. They probably see things a  
 little different. To them my  
 whole life is the great big  
 favour they did for me, and I'm  
 always throwing it back in their  
 face by not living it well.

46 INT. MUNDHI FAMILY HOME - AFTERNOON (FLASHBACK)

Pace, in school uniform, enters through the front door,  
 dropping his school bag.

Walking into the kitchen he finds his parents, both of them  
 looking up stone-faced when he enters. A cordless phone  
 sits on the counter in front of his mother.

PACE  
 Hi.

MR. MUNDHI  
 Pace, what was that on the phone  
 last week?

Pace looks at the phone.

PACE  
 What's happened?

MRS. MUNDHI  
 Kate called.

Pace freezes, eyes narrowing.

PACE  
 (beat)  
 And?

MR. MUNDHI

What was that about in the car?  
After the wedding?

MRS. MUNDHI

She said they're moving away. Not  
coming back after the honeymoon.

PACE

What?

Anger flashes on his face.

PACE

Why?

His parents share a glance.

MRS. MUNDHI

We thought you might tell *us*  
that.

Complete stillness in the Mundhi family kitchen, as we  
slowly pull back from the scene.

47

INT. MCPHERSON GROUP RURAL HOUSE - CLASSROOM - MORNING

Seven CHILDREN of varying age sit behind school-style desks  
in a small classroom within the group's main building.

Andre stands at the head of the class, addressing the room.

ANDRE

Following up on Friday  
afternoon's discussion, we have a  
guest speaker today. He'll be  
dropping by before lunch, so  
think hard about any questions  
you might wish to ask our awesome  
friend Ash. Books on your desks  
thanks, guys.

48

INT. IORM HEAD OFFICE - DAY

Don leads Pace through a corridor past offices, all of  
which have their doors open--SUITS working behind some of  
the desks.

DON

So the thing is, I'm actually  
going to be leaving next Friday.

PACE

Oh.

DON  
They're still replacing my role,  
they want to move someone out here  
from the eastern states, but it's  
taking a while.

At the end of the hall, Don stops at a door marked 'SERVER ROOM'. He swipes an access card hanging around his neck by a proximity lock, which beeps.

49

INT. IORM HEAD OFFICE - SERVER ROOM - DAY

Pace follows Don into the air-conditioned server room--flourescent white with eight rows of massive server racks to either side of a small walkway.

DON  
This is the main server room.  
You'll only need to come in here  
if there's a hardware failure,  
but it's a handy shortcut to the  
IT department.

They continue along the walkway to another door.

50

INT. IORM HEAD OFFICE - IT DEPT. - DAY

Don then Pace enter an office larger than the others--it contains two desks, set up at a 90 degree angle.

One desk is cluttered with pieces of computer hardware, two PCs, and a Mac.

The second desk has only the three computers atop it.

Don points to the first, then the second.

DON  
That's me. That's you.

PACE  
Okay.

Pace goes around the second desk, sitting at the plain office chair, adjusting it.

DON  
Alright let's go.

Pace gets to his feet quickly, following Don back through the door.

51 EXT. IRON ORE RIDGE OUTSKIRTS - DAY

A mini-bus with 'IRON ORE RIDGE MINING OPERATION' stenciled on one side makes its way out of town.

52 INT. IORM SHUTTLE BUS - DAY

Pace and Don ride in the first row of the twelve-seater mini-bus, alone except for the DRIVER up in front. He watches Pace in the rear-view, eyes darting away when Pace notices.

DON

Most of our work involves fielding calls at the office, talking guys through fixing their own equipment. You'll have access to our knowledge base, so it's not vital that you're familiar with the equipment. What you *will* have to get to know though, is the hardware only we can touch. Server machines, our mine-side disk arrays, all those sysadmin tasks.

PACE

You guys have servers in the mine itself?

DON

Yeah. Most of our cutting data is stored in the mine and batched hourly. There's a lot of it and we don't need it urgently so it makes sense to save the bandwidth for VoIP and realtime apps.

PACE

But doesn't that bottleneck your communications like, every hour?

DON

Yep, ten past the hour 'til about nineteen past, depending on the load.

PACE

What happens in an emergency?

DON

Emergency phones still run on copper lines.

PACE

Oh.

DON  
So, any questions before we go  
underground?

PACE  
Uh... well yeah. Is the mine  
radioactive? Do we have to wear  
special suits or something?

DON  
Nah, only hard hats. You won't go  
near the uranium doing our job--  
and even if you did, it wouldn't  
harm you. Safety's key out here.

Pace looks out through the front window as they crest a hill, revealing IORM's huge uranium mining operation in the distant valley.

53

INT. URANIUM MINE - ENTRANCE STAIRS - DAY

Don leads Pace downstairs, both wearing hard hats, descending the steep slope that Pace was hauled up in our opening scenes--though it's barely recognisable as the same area, while starkly floodlit. The slope itself is a wide, rectangular tunnel cut into the rock at a forty-five degree angle.

Enclosed cargo railcars chug by every few minutes, hauling rock to the surface.

They stop at a flattened out black steel mesh mezzanine level that splits off from the main tunnel on the stairs side.

54

INT. URANIUM MINE - SERVER ROOM - DAY

Don and Pace enter the small group of offices, windows on the back wall revealing more rows of server machines in the next room.

On the side wall another set of windows, overlooking a freight terminal-type staging area, where MEN and machinery haul sealed containers off the lifts and onto the railcars.

PACE  
Is all of that uranium?

DON  
No no, just rocks.

PACE  
With uranium, right?

DON

Pace, it's all quite safe.  
Really. It doesn't become  
dangerous until they enrich it,  
overseas.

PACE

What do I need to do down here?

DON

Usually? Nothing. But if shit  
hits the fan this is defcon five.  
Or one. What's the important one?

Pace shrugs.

DON

This is the closest to the mine  
you'll ever need to go. That  
server room leads into the  
tunnels, but the door is sealed  
for OH&S, it's legacy.

Don looks at his watch.

DON

Okay, that's the basic tour. Let  
me show you some of the hardware  
and we'll head back.

55 EXT. IRON ORE RIDGE OUTSKIRTS - AFTERNOON

The bus heads back toward town, out of the valley.

56 INT. IORM SHUTTLE BUS - AFTERNOON

Don and Pace ride in silence, Pace half-asleep.

The driver glances up at his rearview, double-taking. He  
looks back at the rear window.

Don follows his gaze, to a huge truck, hauling ass up the  
highway, too fast to go around.

DON

Jesus!

57 EXT. IRON ORE RIDGE OUTSKIRTS

The truck slams into the rear of the small van, sending it  
fishtailing off the highway, cartwheeling in a ditch at the  
road's edge.

The engine rumbles as the truck changes down through gears,  
air brakes hissing.

The truck slowly drives by the upside-down shuttle bus, before building speed, driving away.

The bus's wheels slow, then stop one at a time.

A light rain begins to fall, growing steadily heavier, the scene darker. Lightning flashes. Thunder. Harder rain.

A white sedan drives by at a crawl, its driver invisible behind rain-streaked glass. It comes to a stop up ahead, brake lights casting an unsettling red glow across the shiny road.

The masked man who smashed Pace's windows steps out of the sedan, walking to the crashed van.

He pulls Pace unconscious from the van.

58

INT. WINDOWLESS ROOM - DAWN

Pace wakes face-down on the cold concrete floor of an aging, windowless room.

Light ebbs in dimly from beneath the closed, rusted steel door.

He rolls stiffly onto one side, sitting up.

59

INT. WINDOWLESS ROOM - MORNING 2

Pace sits against the far wall, staring at a mug half-full with water on an apple crate beside him.

He picks it up, swilling around its contents, before putting it back.

PACE  
(shouts)  
Hello?

Pace looks at the mug again, snatching it. He tilts it toward his nose, sniffing the water. Cautiously, he takes a sip, then another, then downs the lot.

Pace leans his head back against the dirty wall and closes his eyes.

FADE OUT.

JOHANSEN (V.O.)  
Don't make the mistake of  
thinking familial bond extends to  
this place. I'm only here because  
I was last in.  
(MORE)

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

My role is to provide you with  
the information you need to  
survive the next seven days.

FADE IN.

Pace wakes with a start, blinking quickly, trying to focus  
on the figure standing before him in the half-light.

PACE

Huh?

Johansen comes into focus before him.

PACE

Jo. What's this--what's  
happening?

Johansen sits down on the floor a foot from his brother. He  
crosses his legs.

JOHANSEN

Pretty soon you're going to start  
seeing things that will unsettle  
you.

PACE

What are you--?

JOHANSEN

Don't panic. Don't react to it.  
Just accept it for what it is.

PACE

I don't--

JOHANSEN

You *won't* understand it at first,  
but commit the things you see and  
hear to memory if you can.

Pace's eyes roll back into his head involuntarily, his face  
tilts forward--he's on the verge of passing out.

JOHANSEN

Pace.

Pace comes to suddenly, sitting up stiffly.

PACE

What's happening?

Johansen takes time to choose his words.

JOHANSEN

You've ingested a concentrated  
dose of lysergic acid  
diethylamide.

PACE

You what?

JOHANSEN

LSD, Pace. They've given you acid. A whole lot of it.

PACE

Can I--why?

JOHANSEN

I can't explain that to you.

PACE

Um... why not? Where am I?

Johansen smiles with genuine warmth.

JOHANSEN

Pace... you're home.

Pace finally nods into a troubled sleep.

60

INT. WINDOWLESS ROOM - DAY 2

Pace startles awake, leaning back against the rear wall.

He leans to the right, dry heaving over a small drain in the cement floor at its corner.

JOHANSEN (O.C.)

It's okay. Just relax.

The room blurs and morphs as Pace struggles to sit up again, blinking hard at Johansen.

JOHANSEN

Here...

Johansen removes a permanent marker from his shirt pocket, leaning forward to take Pace's left forearm. He writes, 'LEAN INTO IT', then on the other, 'I'M PACE'.

JOHANSEN

Are you here, Pace?

PACE

I feel...

JOHANSEN

I know.

PACE

I'm here.

Johansen snaps his fingers an inch from Pace's nose.

JOHANSEN

The first thing you need to understand is this. The first layer you will shed through this experience is the spacetime suit. It has been tailored by evolution specifically to accommodate a unit of consciousness, tuned to the physical frequency to the exclusion of other overlays.

Johansen lifts his brother's limp hand.

JOHANSEN

*This*, is not you. It is the machine you pilot through the physical world. His lessons will be based on this simple ideology. Even if you don't agree entirely, try to hold it in mind. Understand?

Pace fights the urge to close his eyes.

PACE

(weak)  
I don't...

JOHANSEN

Frame the rest of what you learn in that cloth, but don't try to give it meaning. Don't analyse it. In your current state information circumvents the logic center. You'll have plenty of time to dissect it later. For now, just listen, and commit what you can to memory. Maintain a thread of awareness, visually write data-rich symbols to the register.

Pace shakes it off again, focusing on Johansen.

PACE

I'm listening Jo.

JOHANSEN

The second thing you need to understand is this. Every waking moment since the day you were born--the world you feel and perceive--passes through a series of filtered lenses that distort and shade the meaning of events long before they land on the conscious mind.

(MORE)

JOHANSEN (cont'd)

Each of these lenses slide into place throughout your life so gradually that they do so unnoticed. You may think, in occasional moments of clarity, that you're aware of the influences that have shaped and defined you as a person, but know that what you know of yourself is the tip of an iceberg infinite in scope, kaleidoscopic in complexity.

Pace leans his head back against the wall, slowly closing his eyes.

PACE

Sounds like... you've been hitting the acid kind of hard yourself. Who fucking talks like this bro?

JOHANSEN

Pace.

He doesn't move.

JOHANSEN

Pace.

Eyes still closed, Pace frowns.

PACE

(annoyed)  
What?

Johansen slaps Pace, who snaps back into focus, swatting at empty air.

PACE

Fucker. What?!

JOHANSEN

The third--

Pace tilts forward, hangs his head, shaking it slowly.

PACE

Jo... please. I didn't... mean it to all go like this.

Pace sighs.

Johansen remains emotionless, pausing only briefly.

JOHANSEN

Pace, are you listening?

PACE  
 (slurred)  
 I will, I promise okay?

Johansen lifts his brother's chin, looking him hard in the eye. Pace has pupils like saucers.

JOHANSEN  
 The third thing you need to understand is this.

61 INT. WINDOWLESS ROOM - AFTERNOON

Pace wakes in the windowless room, alone this time.

Flickering lights from the far wall catch his attention-- Pace still well and truly under the influence of the hallucinogens.

PACE  
 Jo?

On the wall is projected the image of a large medical lecture theatre, groups of STUDENTS working with surgical instruments on cadavers around the large open space at the front, seen from the stadium seating's back row.

A LECTURER stands closest to us on the bottom step, giving loud instruction, but too far away to hear exactly what she's saying.

Pace stares at it for a long time, eyes wide open.

JOHANSEN (O.C.)  
 Second on the right.

Pace turns to his left, seeing Johansen sitting beside him, also watching the scene projected on his prison cell wall.

PACE  
 What?

62 INT. MEDICAL LECTURE THEATRE - AFTERNOON 2

When Pace turns back to the students he finds himself seated in back of the theatre beside his brother.

PACE  
 What is it?

Pace stands, walking slowly down the stairs, watching the students.

He stops halfway down, looking to the lecturer, who despite being close, still sounds far away.

Now he can see what the nearest group of students are doing, watching them make practise incisions in the torso, over and over until it's more pink than grey.

Pace looks at the next group, standing two to a side around a stainless steel gurney, each pair studying half of an elderly man's bisected head.

Pace turns away, kneeling on the large, carpeted step, leaning on one of the built-in plastic chairs for balance.

He dry-heaves, struggling to keep his stomach in check.

Johansen startles him, appearing there in the chair Pace leans on.

JOHANSEN

Don't worry, I had a hard time with this part at first. Before Katie quit medicine she had to do this sort of thing... cadavers and all that.

Pace vomits on the stairs.

Johansen pats his brother's back.

JOHANSEN

When I was initiated, I saw the town morgue. I watched them open a guy's chest with a bonesaw, it was fucking disgusting... for a while. Until I figured out who was getting their shit autopsied in that room.

Pace wipes vomit from his shirt, collapsing in the seat next to Johansen. He avoids looking at the front of the theatre.

PACE

What? You knew the guy?

JOHANSEN

It was me. On the table. They were cutting me up.

PACE

That's a real trip man.

Johansen returns his attention to the front, chuckling a slow, dry rattle.

JOHANSEN

You said it man.

Slowly, Pace looks back there too.

PACE

Oh *fuck* that.

Pace stands, walking in a daze down the stairs, toward the second group from the right--those students studying the bisected head.

Nearing the group he stops, looking at his feet for a long moment, unsure.

Pace walks behind the students as they reassemble the two halves, coming around the gurney to get a clear view of the face.

Despite the man being in his eighties, Pace recognizes his own features.

He stares at it for a long time, joined there by Johansen.

PACE

Is this real?

JOHANSEN

I don't know. Is it?

PACE

What does it mean?

Johansen doesn't answer.

The students begin cleaning up, covering the head with a surgical sheet. Pace can't look away.

PACE

Jo... why was it me? Why is it old?

He feels his own face. A blood stain slowly seeps through the green sheet.

PACE

Am I old now? How long has it been? The last thing I remember... we were in a strange town. Iron Ore. Somthing with iron.

PACE

Shit. Do I remember right? Is it still twenty-twenty?

PACE

Is this just happening in--?

Pace turns to find his brother no longer there.

63 INT. WINDOWLESS ROOM - EVENING

Pace--eyes unnaturally wide--stares at the far wall, Pace's POV of the sheet-covered head projected on it. Slowly, the projection fades to nothing.

He blinks hard, looking around the room.

PACE

Jo?

Beside him, on an apple crate, a mug half-full with water.

He looks at the mug for a long time.

64 EXT. BEACH CLIFFS - NIGHT

Pace stands on a cliff staring out to sea, eyes drifting across the dark, shimmering surface, its scope denoted only by the white crests of waves, almost dayglo white under the light of a full moon and cloudless sky.

Off to his left and right, the cliffs curve outward, revealing their immense height.

Johansen sits on grass a few feet behind Pace, just watching him.

Pace turns to his brother, waiting for him to speak.

PACE

Well?

JOHANSEN

An endless sea of consciousness,  
lapping at the edges of a void  
both looped and infinite.

Pace looks back out to sea, noticing the lights of a distant ship.

JOHANSEN

At first there was *only* the void.  
Consciousness gave it language--  
logic and form. It built the  
physical environment from the  
intangible up, each subsequent  
layer reflecting more accurately  
its idea of what a universe  
should be. Always adjusting, and  
refining. Then one by one we  
splinter from it--branching  
strains of the original tree,  
exploring the vast landscape  
created within and without.

Pace sits beside his brother, watching the waves.

JOHANSEN

Inside of the void, consciousness can only dream. The ebb and flow of its inner workings ever dynamic, but largely unchanging. Everything that exists is static, crystalised by determinism. Time is the light that shines through it to produce layers. And consciousness on any timeline-- true conscious intent--is given opportunities to relain the structure of the whole.

Out at sea, the ship gets slowly closer, the blob of light becoming wireframe rows of running lights.

PACE

I'm pretty sure I see where you're going with this, but I'm sorry to tell you... I've heard it before somewhere. A mistyped Youtube binge maybe.

Johansen turns to Pace.

JOHANSEN

When you meet Ash, don't think of something to say. Don't *think*. Only listen.

PACE

(pause)  
Okay.

Johansen lights a cigarette, which seems to have appeared from nowhere.

PACE

You smoke now?

Johansen leans back on elbows, stretching out his legs.

JOHANSEN

Only on acid.

He tilts his head back, blowing smoke at the stars. He offers it to Pace, who takes a long drag.

JOHANSEN

Who knows *where* on the spectrum consciousness comes tumbling out, when released of the anchoring force. Maybe we go back to the collective. Maybe another place like ours, or even right back here, bouncing between karmic markers.

Pace hands it back to Johansen, rubbing his chest.

JOHANSEN

It frightens me to think that I might be one person living the role of every human being who lived or ever will, in sequential order. Concurrent life sentences. I'm sure some of them would be good, but the ratios would skew in favour of the bleak.

They sit there quiet, watching the ship's lights, a few kilometers out at sea.

Gradually, the lights begin to lean, flickering as the ship slowly SINKS.

Pace staggers to his feet, woozy.

PACE

Oh my God... that ship.

He looks at Johansen, who offers only a blank stare.

PACE

Is it... real?

JOHANSEN

I don't know. Is it?

Pace looks at the ship again as its lights flicker out for a final time.

PACE

Should we call someone?

JOHANSEN

Call who?

Pace looks out at the empty sea.

PACE

(soft)  
Anyone...

Wide on the brothers, their stillness contrasted by the churning sea beyond.

65

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - DAWN

Pace treads water in calmer seas, spinning as the swell bobs him, eyes scanning the horizon in every direction.

PACE

Jo?

Nothing.

PACE

I hope this is all normal dude.  
Shit. Did I start swimming? Is  
this real?

Wide as the sun rises over Pace, alone in open ocean.

PACE

(shouts)

Jo?

Pace keeps treading water for a long time.

66

EXT. OPEN OCEAN - DAWN

Pace struggles to keep afloat in rougher water now, fatigue evident in his face and movement.

Every time he seems to get his head above water, another wave hits him from the side, giving him precious few seconds to gasp for breath.

The swell takes him down a second, then a third time.

After the fourth, Pace doesn't resurface.

67

EXT. UNDERWATER - DAWN

Pace reaches toward the churning surface, pulled deeper into the sea by its current, legs kicking weakly-- ineffective.

As he sinks into darker water Pace watches the sunlit surface fade to nothing.

Now he stops fighting, going limp, falling backward.

Disappearing fast, being absorbed by the analogical sea of consciousness... Pace exhales the last of his breath, relaxing into it.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. DARK ROOM

Flickers of light, and consciousness, a roaring sound fading in and out.

Close on Pace as his whole body suddenly rises at the speed of sound from somewhere dark to somewhere light, arms ragdoll flapping at his sides as he's jerked back and forth, like a helicopter airlift on rapid fast forward. The roaring sound fills audio, then cuts out entirely as we cut back to black.

68

BLACK SCREEN - MORNING

Distressed banging rises through audio, bare fists on metal.

JOHANSEN (V.O.)  
(distant, distressed)  
Pace!

More banging.

JOHANSEN (V.O.)  
(growing closer, more  
urgent)  
Pace!

The banging becomes rapidly louder--harder and more frequent.

JOHANSEN (V.O.)  
(close, screaming)  
PACE! WAKE UP!

CUT TO:

69

INT. WINDOWLESS ROOM - MORNING

Pace sits bolt upright in the windowless room, flinching as Johansen pounds on the steel paneling he slumps against, rattling it.

JOHANSEN  
(screaming, panicked)  
Pace fucking wake up!

Seeing his brother awake, Johansen stops mid-punch, eyes wide.

JOHANSEN  
Pace! You need to go!

PACE  
What happened?

JOHANSEN  
(screams)  
GO!

Pace is confused--scared. High.

PACE  
Where?

Johansen points at the open door.

70 INT. WINDOWLESS HALLWAY - MORNING

Pace stumbles out into a poorly lit hallway--of similar age, and condition, to the small room he's occupied until now.

He stops there in the hall, looking around, then down at his dirty pants.

Johansen exits the room a step behind him.

JOHANSEN  
What? Why are you stopping?

PACE  
I think I pissed myself. And it dried.

JOHANSEN  
(screams)  
GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE NOW!

Johansen runs past him, toward a source of light.

Pace follows, uneasy on his feet.

He stops suddenly, looking at the walls and roof--an underwater seascape projected on them.

Johansen is gone.

PACE  
Jo?

71 EXT. UNDERWATER - MORNING

Pace stands on a seabed lit by rays of filtered, shifting sun.

He seems confused at first, attention drawn to a small school of fish that swim by.

He looks at his hands, blinking at the pruned-up fingers in shimmering light.

His right thumb has a red stain on it. He stares at this for a long time.

Eventually, he looks up, toward the light.

Pace kicks off the bottom, swimming to the surface.

72 EXT. 2KM OFFSHORE - MORNING

Pace resurfaces to still water.



At the sight of his brother, Pace's eyes begin to tear up, lip trembling with fear.

PACE

I don't..? The people. On the beach. You don't see them?

JOHANSEN

Pace...

A tear rolls down Pace's cheek as a chill hits his spine.

PACE

Jo? What's happening?

JOHANSEN

(scared)

Start swimming.

(points)

Out to sea. Go now!

Pace looks again at the beach.

PACE

Who are they?

JOHANSEN

(voice quivering)

Don't keep looking at them. Pretend you don't see.

Pace can't help it. He looks again.

PACE

I don't *understand*. Who are they?!

Johansen tears up too, looking at Pace with deep sorrow.

JOHANSEN

I'm not allowed to tell you.

And with that, he disappears--ripples slowly dispersing to nothing in the water he occupied.

Pace is on the verge of losing his mind.

PACE

What!? Jo?? What the *hell*, man?!

Pace looks at the beach again, in time to see the nearest figure slip stealthily into the water, snake-like. Behind him, several of the people wade into the calm sea.

PACE

Oh shit!

Pace erupts into a freestyle stroke at full-tilt the other direction, back out to sea.

75 INT. WINDOWLESS HALLWAY - MORNING

Johansen looks up and down the hall, walking toward the door at its far end.

He opens it, squinting as sunlight pours in.

76 EXT. WHITE BEACH - MORNING

He exits the door, housed only in its frame here.

He seems momentarily confused.

JOHANSEN

That's...

Further down the beach, the last of the beach-dwelling human shapes that Pace saw from the distance slides into the calm water.

JOHANSEN

Hey!

Closer on one of the SHAMAN as it stops, shoulder deep, turning back to look at Johansen. Of indeterminate sex or race, its face and hair are caked with hardened mud, tribal markings painted over that. Its eyes are white pupils on black cornea. It tilts its head back as if curious, watching Johansen.

JOHANSEN

Uh...

It sinks into the water, disappearing from sight.

77 EXT. SPIDER ISLAND - DAY

Pace walks ashore on a small island, watching a spider scurry across the sand in front of him.

Further up the beach, Johansen sits on a rock looking out to sea. Spiders walk about slowly on the cooler, shaded parts of the rock.

PACE

(shouts)

This is getting a little ridiculous.

JOHANSEN  
 I'm pretty sure this is *your*  
 hallucination. Fear of spiders?  
 I'd forgotten.

Pace joins him beside the rock, peering inland where thick foliage grows.

PACE  
 So where do you suppose I am now?

JOHANSEN  
 Spider Island?

Pace sighs.

PACE  
 I think I've had about enough.  
 How do I end the trip?

Johansen ignores the question.

Pace looks down at his arms, concentrating hard to read the left then the right.

PACE  
 (surprised)  
 Did I get tattoos?

78

INT. WINDOWLESS ROOM - DAY

Pace startles awake in the windowless room, slumped awkwardly into the back corner.

This time, Ash sits where Johansen once did--hair longer than when we saw him before.

ASH  
 Hello.

PACE  
 Hi.

At Pace's confusion, Ash offers a smile.

PACE  
 Do I know you from somewhere?

ASH  
 Don't worry, I know what you're going through. But there *is* good news.

PACE  
 Yeah?

ASH  
Pain is the precursor to change.

PACE  
(beat)  
Okay.

ASH  
You're almost there, Pace.

Pace slowly nods, eyes briefly rolling backward.

PACE  
Do you... know my brother?

ASH  
I did, for a time.

Another long silence between them.

ASH  
You want this to end.

PACE  
Yeah.

Ash picks up a small petri dish from the floor in front of him, removing its lid to reveal what looks like a piece of rock salt.

From his shirt pocket, Ash takes a small bottle of liquid, removing its lid also.

He hands it to Pace, who accepts it hesitantly.

ASH  
Wet your thumb.

Pace looks at it for a long time before pressing his thumb to the bottle's rim, shaking it.

Ash holds out the petri dish in the palm of his hand.

ASH  
Now press your thumb against the crystal.

Pace frowns.

PACE  
You're saying this will make it stop?

ASH  
In time, yes.

PACE  
And this is the only way?

Ash nods once.

Pace presses the wet thumb down against the crystal, crushing it.

ASH  
Hold it there.

They stay like that a moment.

ASH  
Now let go.

Pace withdraws the arm, staring at the thumb.

PACE  
I think you're going to have to explain how this is all supposed to, able to... can go to the, go to get the, get the, get out from the... I... oh wow... oh no... I can't, the thing with, pieces of three, four, three, reaching out, reaches the, sees into the, atmos... phere, moves without resistance, where it was always meant to, meant to, means... I can't feel the... God. Help me, God. I can't...

Pace begins to cry while Ash stands.

ASH  
Now I'm going to need you to come with me.

Pace stares up at him, wide-eyed. Vacant.

PACE  
Okay.

79 EXT. DESERT ROAD - EVENING

An old utility rattles along a gravel road as the day's last sunlight ebbs away.

80 INT. ASH'S UTE - EVENING

Pace sleeps curled-up against the passenger side while Ash drives, listening to AM radio.

ASH  
The forms you meet in the dream won't cross over into your waking life... they don't need to. They won't harm you, physically.  
(MORE)

ASH (cont'd)

It's your mind they're after. And they're patient. They have eternity to chip away at your consciousness. Everyone bends to a will stronger than their own. Eventually, they break us all, in this life or the next. What you're doing now... you're getting it all out of the way at once. And after it, we rebuild.

Pace snaps awake, awareness flickering, staring at Ash. But Ash is gone, replaced by one of the Shaman. One hand draped over the wheel, it looks from the road, to Pace, and back.

Pace shivers, struggling to stay awake.

81

INT. MUNDHI FAMILY HOME - MORNING

Pace, dressed for school, sits eating cereal alone at the dining table. In the kitchen, his mother washes dishes.

PACE

Did we ever live in the country?

MRS. MUNDHI

Hmmm?

PACE

Somewhere North of here... on a hill?

MRS. MUNDHI

Of course not, why?

PACE

No reason. Did we ever go on holiday there?

MRS. MUNDHI

To the country?

PACE

Yeah.

MRS. MUNDHI

No, not at all.

PACE

When I was little, did you or dad ever take us to a place near a wind farm?

MRS. MUNDHI

A "wind farm"?

PACE  
Like a field, with big white  
turbines... windmills.

Mrs. Mundhi thinks.

MRS. MUNDHI  
Not that I remember. Is this for  
school?

PACE  
Yeah.

Pace continues eating, deep in thought.

82

EXT. DESERT CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

Pace slowly wakes on a bedroll, to the flickering and  
cracking of a campfire.

Ash looks up from where he sits, on the other side of the  
fire, staring into it.

ASH  
Welcome back.

PACE  
I'm still high. I'm fucked.  
I'm...

ASH  
At a certain point it stops being  
the LSD. Your mind eventually...  
goes with it. Some people come  
down about a month later. Some  
people don't.

PACE  
(scared)  
I'm going to be like this for a  
fucking month?

ASH  
Maybe.

PACE  
How long has it been?

ASH  
Since thumbing the crystal of  
blotter? Hours. But you've been  
with the group eight days now.

PACE  
Are you ever going to let me go?

ASH  
That's entirely up to you.

PACE  
I can go?

ASH  
Sure.

PACE  
Okay... I'm gonna.

Pace slowly gets to his feet, unbalanced.

ASH  
Feel free.

Ash returns his gaze to the fire.

Pace looks around, trying to get a bearing. Spotting the moon, he walks toward it, away from the campsite.

### 83

EXT. OUTBACK DESERT - NIGHT

Pace staggers over a small, rocky hill, steadying himself on a tree that grows from the red soil.

An eery orange glow falls across him.

From behind the treeline a hundred feet up ahead, a giant BEING made of pulsating light rises from a crouched position, slowly turning its head toward Pace. Its head resembles a traditional Aboriginal painting of a dingo, with a crude body more like that of a man, flickering dark then light again, like hastily animated cave painting fire. A fire-like light also emanates from somewhere within its chest and head, its eyes glowing yellow/orange, flickering more naturally.

As the giant light being lumbers toward him over the trees, sniffing in his direction, Pace takes a cautious step backward.

### 84

EXT. DESERT CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

Pace returns to the campsite, beaten, sitting down again beside the fire.

Ash looks to Pace, then back the way he came.

ASH  
What did you see?

Pace looks at Ash, face pale.

PACE  
A thing. Something new.

ASH  
New?

PACE  
New to me.

ASH  
The souls that roam these planes  
were here long before gas and  
dust.

Pace slowly nods.

PACE  
It told me.

ASH  
You're adapting.

PACE  
No. It's too much. Too soon.

ASH  
Your mind is learning to reason  
again. Only now, the doors are  
all open.

PACE  
Air.

ASH  
Pace... how did you find your way  
back?

Pace slowly turns, looking back over his shoulder,  
pointing.

In the red soil, his footprints give off a rainbow glow,  
feint but clear.

PACE  
Do you see it too?

ASH  
We all do.

When Pace turns back, he's startled by Ash, who now glows  
with the same aura, curled around his shape, radiating the  
shimmering rainbow glow.

PACE  
What are you?

ASH  
Nothing.

A bestial, Earth-shaking roar from beyond the trees.

Pace looks to Ash for guidance.

ASH

It's okay.

PACE

It feels too real.

ASH

It is real.

PACE

It's the acid.

ASH

Yes.

PACE

It's making me hallucinate.

ASH

No.

PACE

Trust me, I'm hallucinating the  
shit out of this situation.

ASH

Everything you see tonight is  
real. Its true form. Its hidden  
dimensions. You see in full  
spectrum here, with all eyes.

Pace stares into the fire.

ASH

How does it feel?

Pace looks up at him.

PACE

What do you mean?

A pause.

ASH

How do you feel?

Pace takes a long time to consider his answer.

PACE

Amazing. I've never been like  
this.

ASH

Soon you always will.

PACE

You said it would wear off?

ASH

The acid will pass. But you can't unthink any of it. You can't unfeel what you overturn in yourself here. When your mind grows accustomed to operating unimpeded, anything else feels obtuse. You're on a trajectory now. Its arc is yours alone. If you lean away, stray from it... there's every chance that you'll die. You can never turn your back. But believe me when I tell you that the road to enlightenment is worth any egoic personal cost.

Pace lays down beside the fire, rolling onto his back, wriggling into the soil, canine-like.

PACE

I'm so fucking stoked right now.

ASH

Yeah. Welcome home.

85 EXT. DESERT CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

Pace lays face-down in the dirt, head rested on his folded arms. He breathes slowly, shuddering.

86 EXT. DESERT CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

Pace and Ash sit cross-legged, facing each other across the fire, staring into one another.

87 EXT. DESERT CAMPGROUND - NIGHT

Pace and Ash sit side by side near the fire, Ash drawing in the dirt with a stick. Pace watches, wholly engaged.

Ash draws a circle.

ASH

This... is everything. Me. You.  
God. The universe.

He draws a square around the circle, boxing it in.

ASH

This is perspective...  
identifying the universe as an  
entity that exists separate from  
ourselves.

He draws a line down the middle, dividing the square and  
circle in two.

ASH

This is how we define the  
physical separation of our selves  
from God. The physical and  
metaphysical. Light and dark.  
Life and death.

Ash draws another line, across now.

ASH

This is where we begin to divide,  
everything we know and see, into  
*things*. Into sectors, and  
boundaried items, with meaning  
layered in.

Ash draws five more lines top to bottom, then five more  
across.

ASH

This is roads. Fences. Blocks.  
Countries. Planets. Galaxies. A  
toolbox. You. Me.

He draws diagonal lines now, all but filling in the spaces.

ASH

This is dogma. Walls. Doctrines  
and creeds. This is the  
difference between the soul, and  
an astral body. The saviour  
within, and the saviour without.

Ash looks up at Pace.

ASH

This is how we blot out the  
reality of a nuclear fireball in  
the sky, and replace it with a  
word called "sun". The  
procreation of meaning, and the  
loss of substance.

Pace looks down at the filled-in square.

ASH

This is what obscures our view of  
God.

Ash places his hand beside the square.

ASH  
This...

Ash wipes the square clean.

ASH  
Is "you", and "me". Sitting in a  
"desert". About to see a  
"miracle".

Ash points east, to the horizon, where light ebbs over,  
turning dark sky purple in that one place.

88 EXT. DESERT CAMPGROUND - DAWN

Pace and Ash watch the sun rise over desert planes, orange  
in its glow.

Tears well in Pace's eyes.

Ash, eyes closed, sighs skyward.

89 EXT. DESERT CAMPGROUND - MONTAGE

A montage as days pass the small campsite in fast  
timelapse, Pace and Ash never straying far from their  
blankets at the fire.

90 INT. ASH'S UTE - MORNING

Ash drives Pace, again sleeping, toward civilization.

91 EXT. PERTH SUBURBAN OUTSKIRTS - MORNING

Wide on the ute, the Perth city skyline in the distance.

92 INT. PERTH CITY CBD - MORNING

The ute crawls through morning rush hour in the heart of  
Perth city.

93 INT. ASH'S UTE - MORNING

Pace wakes as the ute jerks to a stop behind a bus. He  
looks around, unsure.

PACE  
Are we in Perth?

ASH

Yeah.

PACE

What are we doing?

ASH

You've no doubt been curious why they stay. Why your brother stayed. You wonder if there's one big piece of evidence that won them all over to our cult.

PACE

And now I see. You've shown me so much.

ASH

Not yet. This has been clearing the way for what we need to show you.

PACE

(pause)

Should I be worried?

ASH

No. But we have to go over some rules.

They drive in silence.

PACE

Okay.

ASH

When you see it, I don't want you to acknowledge that it's in the room. You can't look at it for too long. Glance as you would at any other point on the wall, then look away.

PACE

What?

ASH

As long as it doesn't know you can see it, it can't hurt you.

PACE

Dude what are you talking about?

Ash pulls into street parking, cutting the engine.

ASH

But Pace, if it sees that you can see it...

(MORE)

ASH (cont'd)  
 there is nowhere on Earth you can  
 flee that it can't follow.

Pace is trembling, shrinking into the passenger door.

PACE  
 What are you doing? Are you  
 fucking with me?

ASH  
 You'll see soon enough.

Ash gets out, walking around to help Pace out.

94

EXT. MCPHERSON GROUP PERTH CITY BUILDING - MORNING

Standing outside McPherson Group's Perth headquarters, a five floor inner city building wholly owned by the firm, Ash helps Pace steady his balance.

ASH  
 Remember, just a second at a  
 time. It can feel your gaze. It  
 knows where your attention is  
 fixed at any given time.

Ash walks into the building. Pace waits, follows, waits, follows again, eventually going inside.

95

INT. MCPHERSON GROUP BOARD ROOM - DAY

Pace and Ash sit opposite three MCPHERSON EXECS at the big boardroom table.

ASH  
 Pace these are the men who run  
 the business side of our network.  
 They negotiate the sale of what  
 we mine in Iron Ore Ridge.

Pace nods to them, pupils still wide, spaceman look on his pale face.

ASH  
 Allen, Craig, Will. This young  
 man is Pace Mundhi. He's a  
 potential new member of the  
 community back home.

They all offer Pace a polite smile.

ASH  
 Craig, would you mind dropping  
 the blinds?

Craig gets up without a word, pulling them down, then returns to his seat.

ASH

You'll remember, Allen, Craig, Will, a short time ago we discussed the importance of *people*. The *people* who drive our trucks... *people* who man the radios, *people* who buy the ores. And of course *people* like Pace, who...

He trails off as Allen, Craig and Will nod forward as one, out cold.

Pace and Ash watch them for a long time. Complete stillness in the room.

PACE

(loud, abrupt)  
Are you guys okay?!

Ash holds up a finger.

ASH

Keep watching.

Pace squints, eyes watering as he maintains the effort to stare.

After a long time, Craig begins to GLOW, an aural halo appearing around the head. It grows bigger, rising from him like steam, filling out around the shoulders, then his torso.

The other two follow, a shimmering light around the three men like sunlight reflected on water, colours dancing in it.

PACE

(awed)  
I saw this in the desert. You were glowing, I saw your--aura?

Ash says nothing, continuing to watch the men.

From the haze of light above Craig's head snakes a translucent TENDRIL, splitting into twelve smaller octopus-like arms that roll out over his face and chest, followed seemingly out of his crown chakra by something reptilian, squid-like, its higher dimensional form shifting and breathing in time with its host as it crawls across Craig's slick haircut, turning darker shades of red, yellow and orange, crawling around in his aura.

ASH  
Remember what I told you in the  
car.

Pace's eyes dart to Ash then back to the men, nervously about their faces, arms, table, picking up pieces of the light creature in his peripheral every time his eyes sweep around the room, sweat pouring from him.

Ash looks directly at the thing, and it looks at Ash.

96

EXT. MCPHERSON GROUP PERTH CITY BUILDING - ALLEY - DAY

Pace bursts from an emergency exit into a car-width alley beside the building, dropping to his knees against the far wall, vomiting.

Ash follows him out, letting the door close behind them.

PACE  
(between sprays)  
Is it real?

ASH  
Everything you've seen is true.

PACE  
I need to go home. I want to see  
my mum.

ASH  
You'll have a chance to relax  
soon.

PACE  
Where are we going?

ASH  
You go alone from here.

PACE  
Ash... what happened to Jo? Is he  
dead?

ASH  
I honestly don't know. I wish I  
could help you find him, but he  
left us during your induction.  
Johansen couldn't handle what he  
saw in there. He wasn't  
comfortable with ideas that he  
encountered.

PACE  
What was that thing?

ASH

The truth about human beings.

PACE

Don't fuck around okay? Just tell me, why did a light squid crawl out of that guy's head?

ASH

Because you're hallucinating.

PACE

You said it's real.

ASH

Right.

Pace leans against the wall, hand in his own puke.

PACE

Take me home. I'm done with this.  
Get me out of here.

Ash slaps Pace with the butt of his palm, so hard that Pace drops.

INT. PACE AND CALVIN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Pace wakes in the bed of his rented house in Iron Ore Ridge, startled.

PACE

Holy shit.

Pace leaps out of bed, immediately falling on his face.

PACE

Oh no.

He tries to get up but falls again.

PACE

How am I even worse than before?

Pace looks around.

PACE

(shouts)  
Yo, Cal!

Pace waits.

After a while Pace crawls to the door, looking down the long hall.

Over his shoulder, the hall warps, fractal tiles unfolding down its walls in clumps.

A banging grows louder until Pace recognizes it as coming from the other end of the hall. He continues crawling, in that direction.

Pace reaches the front door, placing a hand on it, inching the fingers up to unlatch it.

Mattias Stokes stands a few feet from the door, turned away. He turns back to the door upon hearing it open, seeing no one there. He removes sunglasses, then peers through the screen, down that same hall.

MATTIAS

Hello?

He takes half a stunned step backward, reaching for his hip, as Pace makes his presence known from below.

PACE

Hi.

MATTIAS

Shee--are you Pace?

PACE

I think so.

MATTIAS

You're not missing then.

PACE

Missing? No.

MATTIAS

Where have you been the last ten days?

PACE

Been.

Silence. Mattias turns slowly, walking to his car, parked at the curb.

Pace watches him drive away, pushing the screen door open, crawling outside.

EXT. IRON ORE RIDGE RENTED HOUSE - DAY

At the front porch Pace uses an old wooden chair to lift himself to an unsteady crouch, carefully standing, then shifting his grip to the porch railing. Pace watches the car turn the corner, sound fading in the distance.

Pace looks down at his feet, seeing his shoes untied. A harsh, white light bleaches Pace and everything around him suddenly pale, flickering, before fading.

He looks up at the sky to see a mushroom cloud billowing up from, and towering over, the horizon.

Pace looks down at his arms, at faded ink where it used to offer him clear instructions on what to do.

PACE

Okay... reason this out.

He looks up again, at the growing mushroom cloud, maybe 30KM away.

PACE

If that's real, you should get in the car and drive the other way.

Pace's eyes drift over to his car, parked in the driveway gathering leaves, its windows still smashed out, front and side smashed in.

PACE

If it's not real, and there's a reasonable chance that it's not...

He looks again at the mushroom cloud, growing increasingly agitated.

Finally, he goes back inside and shuts the door, still wobbly on his feet.

The click of the lock tumbling closed.

INT. IRON ORE RIDGE RENTED HOUSE

Pace walks very deliberately to the kitchen, picking up the wall phone, staring a while at the numbers on it.

He begins prodding at them clumsily, listening for a moment before dialling more.

A faint voice can be heard from the handset, but he seems too far away, intrigued with the process of punching numbers on the keypad, to notice.

The voice grows louder, becoming Calvin's.

CALVIN (O.C.)

Pace!

PACE

(into phone)

Calvin? Help! Help!

Pace turns as Calvin approaches him from the front door, startling. Outside, through the open front door, we can see that night has fallen.

CALVIN

Where have you been bro? You just disappeared out there on the road.

PACE

The... no. What road? I was *taken*, I think by those people at the compound.

CALVIN

The crazies?

PACE

They pumped me with acid and something else, a lot stronger. I still haven't come down.

CALVIN

That *is* crazy.

PACE

I think they really are a cult. And they took Jo.

CALVIN

Kate was telling the truth about something.

PACE

I know.